

**Assessing a School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports Program for  
Structured Improvement**

by

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This study looked to assess a School Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) program by using the Pennsylvania Department of education's School Climate Survey and the PBIS Self-Assessment Survey. SWPBIS programs are a school-wide prevention strategy aimed at teaching and supporting behavioral expectations in order to decrease office discipline referrals and suspensions and increase academic learning. The program to be evaluated was implemented in an elementary school serving students in Kindergarten through the sixth grade and had been present for 8 years prior to the study. Using the surveys available online allowed for the assessment to look at parent and guardian perceptions as well as staff and student perceptions. The program was to be assessed in order to identify programmatic needs and structure the improvement.

The surveys used showed marked progress in feelings of safety in and around the school as well as an overall sense of caring and support for students. These themes were shared across student, family, and staff surveys. In addition, the PBIS Self-Assessment reflected a program with some basic structures in place, and others still needed. Of note is the need for the school to delineate between office managed and classroom managed behavior, and create a sliding scale of consequences for problem behavior. These improvements have been shared with the school committee who continues to work on implementation fidelity.

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## Preface

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## **1.0 Problem of Practice**

In 2012 at Shrewsbury Elementary School, there was a School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support program. The program, titled “U-ROCK”, was born of a small team who were trained before developing the program consistent with the acronym used at other district elementary schools. U-ROCK was an acronym developed for the school-wide rules: “U are responsible, Remember to follow directions, Own your actions, Control yourself, and Kindness counts.” Training was limited to a half-hour each for the certified teachers and paraprofessionals used as instructional assistants to start the program, allowing for very little buy-in or understanding of the program. At the close of each school year, modifications for the following year were made based on feedback from teachers. The teachers were then presented with updates for the program at the start of each school year. Staff development was never implemented for new staff coming into the building, and full-scale assessments of the program were never completed. Key factors of a successful SWPBIS program were not in place, such as repetitive training and frequent assessments. In addition, preventative strategies for teaching behavioral expectations only took place in the first year of implementation and were never updated or revisited.

In the years following the adoption of a School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports program, discipline referrals remained high despite implementation of the program. Annual referrals ranged from 289 (a significant low) in 2016-17 to 374 in 2014-15. While these numbers vary from month to month and year to year, the severity of what is written up as an office discipline referral (ODR) is particularly varied. Examples of referrals include one staff member who referred three students to the office for putting a red marker on their own faces, and another staff member who did not write up a student who stabbed another student with a pencil, breaking

the skin. The following table illustrates the previous five years of discipline data broken down by month and includes a count of how many of the referrals resulted in a suspension, either in or out of school. In Table 1, ODR represents office discipline referrals and SUS represents suspensions.

**Table 1. Office Discipline Referrals and Suspensions**

Month	17/18		16/17		15/16		14/15		13/14	
	ODR	SUS	ODR	SUS	ODR	SUS	ODR	SUS	ODR	SUS
<b>8</b>	8	0	2	0	15	1	4	0	3	0
<b>9</b>	27	1	23	0	35	4	30	0	26	0
<b>10</b>	29	1	33	3	49	4	61	4	56	1
<b>11</b>	45	1	38	1	35	3	41	0	39	3
<b>12</b>	33	1	15	1	36	5	22	2	11	4
<b>1</b>	27	1	23	3	20	3	33	5	41	2
<b>2</b>	45	2	36	2	24	0	36	3	34	5
<b>3</b>	55	0	25	2	39	0	43	6	47	3
<b>4</b>	37	2	52	3	59	0	50	3	59	0
<b>5</b>	30	0	42	1	38	0	51	1	25	2
<b>6</b>	3	0	0	0	4	0	3	0	4	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>339</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>354</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>374</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>345</b>	<b>20</b>

These numbers do not tell the complete story. In the chart below, the same discipline data is broken down to show the percentage of students who attend our school for our emotional support classrooms and the percentage of referrals that come from clusters of teachers and students. The student population attending Shrewsbury Elementary for emotional support amounts to 5 percent of the total number of students. These students are, for the most part, mainstreamed into the regular

education classroom, with the support of an emotional support teacher or instructional assistant. Their emotional support needs are met through regular social skills instruction and a Positive Behavior Support Plan in the emotional support classroom while maintaining attendance in academic subjects with their regular education peers. In the chart below, the top three teachers each year are those whose classrooms produce the most referrals. The top student each year is the student receiving the most referrals. Of note is that while calculating this data, none of the students who received the most office discipline referrals each year were students in the emotional support classroom. Additionally, the top three teachers came from one grade level during the 2017-18 school year, and two of these three also appeared in other years as a top referral maker.

**Table 2. Breakdown of Office Discipline Referrals and Suspensions**

	<b>17/18</b>		<b>16/17</b>		<b>15/16</b>		<b>14/15</b>		<b>13/14</b>	
Total ODR	339		289		354		374		345	
Total SUS	9		6		20		24		20	
ODR for ES	55	16%	32	11%	76	21.5%	118	32%	56	6%
SUS for ES	2	22%	3	50%	4	20%	7	30%	2	10%
Top 3 Teachers	125	37%	89	31%	99	28%	141	38%	107	31%
Top Student	20	6%	30	10%	30	9%	22	6%	14	4%

The office discipline referrals come in very high numbers for this school. The data here demonstrate the need for a program implemented with fidelity. Currently at Shrewsbury Elementary, there is a lack of consistency and structure for positive behavior expectations and supports. As the principal at Shrewsbury, where a School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) program was implemented prior to my tenure, I see the need for implementation fidelity of tiered supports for positive behavior on a daily basis. Some teachers give points or tickets for good behavior, some have stores where these are spent, some take away points or tickets for poor behavior, and some escalate behavior situations far more than they de-

escalate them. I became principal in 2016, after these years of shifting leadership and turnover. I spent my first year as the building principal observing and attempting to understand to what extent the inconsistencies in practice existed and why.

Without a structure for setting and teaching expectations, and supporting students through problem solving, classroom teachers are left to fend for themselves and end up either issuing consequences without reinforcing expectations or removing students from the classroom with office discipline referrals, as noted above. Research has shown that punitive discipline is not only ineffective in changing behavior, but can actually put students at risk for problems associated with executive functioning (Talwar, Carlson, & Lee, 2011). While positive behavior supports have increased in popularity over the last 20 years, much school discipline is still of the punitive nature and often includes exclusion from the classroom. In dealing with behavior issues in schools, our job as adults is not to make children feel worse about their behavior and therefore themselves, but to help them choose a better action the next time (Responsive Classroom, 2011). Developing a structure for a School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports program brings consistency and accountability to the program.

A properly implemented School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) program should train teachers in the use of positive reinforcement, provide guidelines for dealing with problems, teach expectations to students, provide opportunities for practice and the reteaching of students, and include tiered supports for students who are not successful under the school-wide program (Barrett, Bradshaw, & Lewis-Palmer, 2008; Bradshaw, Reinke, Brown, Bevans, & Leaf, 2008). When staff are not trained or programs are not implemented with fidelity, they lag behind other implementers in the improvements noted. In the selected building, the program has not been effective due to a lack of staff development and follow-through in the initial

program, and has, therefore, become inconsistently applied throughout the building. In addition to this inconsistency, punitive consequences for misbehavior have lacked the follow-through of reteaching behavioral expectations. I have worked to include significant professional development opportunities in teaching expectations and behavioral support in order to improve the School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) program, and now look to use the resultant literature review and study to assess the program as it is and plan for structured improvement. The problem of practice stems from a poorly implemented SWPBIS program that was never formally assessed or modified and lacked follow-up through professional development.

## 1.1 Operational Definitions

This study uses many acronyms common to the programs studied and terms specific to education. For the purpose of this study, the following terms are defined.

**School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS).** School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports—a school-wide prevention strategy aimed at teaching and supporting behavioral expectations in order to decrease office discipline referrals and suspensions and increase academic learning.

**UROCK.** An acronym used for school-wide rules by elementary schools in Southern York County School District; it stands for:

U are responsible

Remember to follow directions

Own your actions

Control yourself

Kindness counts

**Office discipline referrals (ODR).** An event in which a student or students engage in behavior that violates school rules. The behavior is reported to the office, either on paper or electronically, and results in a consequence based on severity and the number of times the student has exhibited the behavior.

**Suspension.** The exclusion from class or school by either an in-school suspension or out-of-school suspension. Classwork is completed independently.

**In-school suspension.** Exclusion from class activities; student completes classwork in a separate room of the school.

**Out-of-school suspension.** Exclusion from class and school activities. Student may be given the opportunity to complete work at home but is not permitted on school grounds or to attend school events.

**Punitive discipline.** Discipline measures that are exclusionary or take something desired away as a result of behavior; examples include suspension, expulsion, detention, loss of recess or free time, and loss of preferred activity or item.

**Functional behavior assessment (FBA).** The process of gathering and analyzing information on behavior and the circumstances surrounding the behavior to determine the purpose or function of the behavior.

**Professional development.** Staff and teacher training occurring both in and out of the workplace; can include faculty meetings, online classes, book studies, and professional training.

**Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).** A federal law requiring schools to serve the needs of students with disabilities.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

This review of literature and research includes an overview of School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports programs as well as the history and the defined characteristics of those programs. Also included is a statement of inquiry questions.

### **2.1 School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports History**

During the 1980s, needs surfaced for preventative efforts in discipline for students with behavioral disorders (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012). During the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Act of 1997, Congress included language addressing discipline for students with disabilities. Specifically, the new document stated that teams in schools should consider positive behavioral interventions, strategies, and supports to decrease problem behavior. Further, teams working on individualized education plans (IEPs) should consider the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports for any student whose behavior impedes his or her learning or the learning of others (OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, 2017a). In addition, funding was established to create the Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. As the center focused on developing preventative supports for students with behavior disorders, attention spread to schools that lacked the basic structure of behavioral expectations and effective consequences for all students. From here, School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports programs took shape.



## **2.2 School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports Overview**

The United States Department of Education’s Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP, 2010) defines School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) as a “framework for enhancing adoption and implementation of a continuum of evidence-based interventions to achieve academically and behaviorally important outcomes for all students” (p. 13). SWPBIS is not a program or model of support, but rather a compilation of strategies and practices that have proven effective. SWPBIS is preventive, instructionally oriented, culturally responsive, function-based, systems-implementation focused, and evidence-based (McKevitt, 2006; Sugai & Horner, 2002; Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, 2010). Amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (1997) compelled the incorporation of positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) “into policy and practice and into the business of discipline and classroom and behavior management in every school in America” (Sugai & Horner, 2002).

When implemented with fidelity, School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) are linked to improved student behavior (Bradshaw et al., 2008), decreased incidents of bullying (Bradshaw, 2013), and overall improvements in school environments and academics (Barrett et al., 2008). When behavioral expectations are followed, everyone wins. Some students, however, need more than the initial teaching of behavioral expectations and reinforcement for following them. SWPBIS programs consist of three tiers or levels of supports and intervention strategies: tier one is school-wide universal supports, tier two is secondary supports for a group of students with greater needs for behavioral support, and tier three is intense supports for individual students (APA, 2008; Barrett et al., 2008; Bradshaw et al., 2008; Technical Assistance Center on PBIS, 2010; Turnbull, Edmonson, Griggs, & Wickhan, 2002). In primary

supports, less intensity is needed for a greater scope of students. In individual supports, greater intensity is needed for a smaller scope of students. Tier one is the level of support at which school-wide programs are effected. A school-wide set of behavioral expectations is developed, and all students are trained to understand them.

The American Psychological Association (2008) recommends implementing preventative techniques that will improve the overall climate and build a sense of belonging. While at times children's behavior may appear noncompliant, it may actually be an attempt to avoid failure, or it could be the result of a lack of understanding of social skills or sense of belonging (Brendtro, Brokenleg, & Van Bockern, 1990). When noncompliance is treated punitively and with exclusion, this feeling of not belonging or failure is exacerbated and the problems continue. When the teaching of appropriate behavior and social skills is used as a primary prevention as part of a School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) program, behavior of this nature is met with supports and the learning of replacement behaviors for students who have difficulty. Thinking of discipline as a learned behavior means that all staff take part in teaching appropriate behavior while building positive and enriching relationships with students.

Increasing the number of positive verbal reinforcement statements made by a teacher correlates with a decrease in time off-task and/or outside of the classroom, and an increase in students' self-esteem and behavior consistency (Kennedy & Jolivette, 2008). Teachers who use positive reinforcement see increased academic outcomes as a result. Studies have demonstrated that the use of positive reinforcement overrides negative reinforcement effectively and has lasting effects when used continually (Schieltz, Wacker, & Romani, 2017). As part of a School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports program, positive reinforcements strengthen

occurrences of appropriate behavior. Positive reinforcement can be as simple as noticing positive behavior choices or stating when positive results are achieved.

## **2.3 School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports Characteristics**

A School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) program is preventative in nature. These programs proactively establish a positive school climate in which academic performance is enhanced. According to Molloy, Moore, Trail, Van Epps, and Hopfer (2013), SWPBIS “modifies the school environments by establishing clear school rules and through improved systems and procedures that promote positive change in staff and student behaviors.”

### **2.3.1 School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) Programs**

#### **Are Preventive**

School-wide positive behavioral interventions and supports (SWPBIS) programs are preventive, with three tiers of support for students in school-wide, classroom, and non-classroom settings. Alexander Den Heijer is credited with saying, “When a flower doesn’t bloom, you fix the environment in which it grows, not the flower” (Gammill, 2016). Preventive tiers of behavioral support do just this—they change the environment to meet the needs of the student by removing antecedents to problem behavior and adding antecedents to the desired behavior. The school environment is then fixed to help the students grow.

School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports programs are widely researched, and there is general agreement for expectations of the first tier of supports. In order to

prevent problem behavior, SWPBIS programs first establish clear and consistent expectations for all student behavior. Three to five behavioral expectations are positively stated, taught, and reinforced (Bradshaw, 2013; Dunlop, 2013; McKevitt, 2006; OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, 2017b) for all students in the primary tier of behavioral supports. This study will use this exact framework. The goal is to eliminate problem behaviors and increase appropriate behaviors in a system where all students get effective positive behavioral support without the need for identification or referrals. Expected behaviors are widely communicated throughout the classrooms, hallways, buses, and other non-classroom areas. Appropriate behaviors are reinforced either through tangible rewards, like tickets, or systems of reward, like positive referrals for praise (Turnbull et al., 2002). The entire school environment is arranged to teach, practice, and acknowledge appropriate behavior.

Primary positive behavioral supports, like the reinforcement of appropriate behavior, are adequate for most students. Some students, however, are in need of more tailored support in a small group. This second tier of group support benefits multiple students who exhibit behavioral problems simultaneously. These students may need small-group reteaching of behavioral expectations or small-group instruction in social skills or problem solving. This may include tallying behavior patterns for students in order to determine patterns of both appropriate and inappropriate behavior for groups of students. Once patterns are defined, interventions can be tailored to reteach specific areas of expectations or allow for more systematic intervention (McKevitt, 2006; Turnbull et al., 2002).

The third and final tier of a School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) program focuses on students whose behavior is resistant to primary and secondary supports. At the third tier of support, many students have specific behavior plans or individualized

education plans (IEPs). These students, as the Den Heijer quote illustrates, need an environment tailored through more intensive interventions geared toward their own individual and specific needs. In these cases, functional behavior assessments (FBAs) may be used to identify the function of inappropriate behavior for individual students in order to target specific needs. Typically, misbehavior falls into one of three categories of functions: to gain attention, to access something, or to avoid something. In all three cases, plans can be developed to alleviate the need for the behavior through supporting the function.

These three tiers of support take a proactive and preventive approach to behavior in a school as opposed to a reactive approach in which problems are addressed only after they have occurred (Bradshaw et al., 2008). These positive and preventive strategies provide training for behavior expectations and reinforcement for the display of expected behavior. In addition, the tiers allow all students to have the level of support they need to access academics and succeed in school.

### **2.3.2 School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) Programs Are Instructionally Oriented**

As stated above, three to five positively stated behavioral expectations are developed and subsequently taught to students as part of a School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports program. When teaching academics, it is common to see teachers present information, guide students through practice, and then respond with either reteaching or reinforcement when students practice independently. The same techniques used to teach academic content are applied when teachers teach behavior expectations explicitly, supervise their use, and provide positive and/or corrective feedback to students (Sugai & Horner, 2002). When behavioral expectations are

not met, it is important for staff to regard this the same as with academic content: a skill has not been mastered and reteaching and support is necessary.

Along with the three tiers of support, instruction of expected behaviors increases in the intensity of support for each tier. School-wide instruction is focused on defining, teaching, and encouraging expectations in all settings (Technical Assistance Center on PBIS, 2010) by helping students to understand what expected behaviors look like, sound like, and feel like in all classroom and non-classroom areas (OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, 2017b). This means assisting students in practicing structures and posting expectations in all settings. Students need to see that their behavioral expectations are the same regardless of whether they are in or out of the school building. Lessons include exemplars of expectations, opportunities for students to practice and receive feedback, and acknowledgement of and recognition for students who demonstrate expected behavior (Dunlop, 2013; Turnbull et al., 2002). By recognizing behavioral expectations when they are met, staff are reinforcing their importance and giving feedback to students. When feedback is positively stated, even those who may not be meeting the expectation are benefitting. Students not meeting these expectations are retaught every time a student nearby is noticed for explicitly meeting the expectations.

When students are taught academic subjects like Reading or Mathematics, they are offered the opportunity to practice and review content as needed; teaching behavioral expectations is the same. Instruction for exemplars should occur multiple times throughout the year for all students, giving them regular opportunities for practice and review. At the second and third tiers of support in a School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) program, students identified with particular needs are offered more support through reteaching of core skills with a more defined curricula and individualized specific instruction in social skills for prosocial behavior

(Sugai & Horner, 2002; Technical Assistance Center on PBIS, 2010). This additional support may take the form of smaller group participation in social-skills instruction, private meetings with a teacher or counselor to review personal behavior data and expectations, and celebrations for meeting behavioral goals.

### **2.3.3 School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) Programs**

#### **Are Culturally Responsive**

The foundation of a SWPBIS program is a clear set of positively stated, simple behavioral expectations created by a team of staff, students, and families who all agree that the expectations are consistent with their values as a school community and support the vision of the school (Technical Assistance Center on PBIS, 2010). Authentic family and community engagement includes providing families and students the opportunities to be heard in the process of developing an SWPBIS program. This can happen through surveys but is more authentic when families from different demographics are included in the leadership team for program planning and implementation. When this is not possible, subcommittees can be established to allow for both transparency and inclusivity in the process (Levenson, Smith, McIntosh, Rose, & Pinkelman, 2016). Regardless, having all voices heard is a key component in a successful SWPBIS program.

### **2.3.4 School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) Programs**

#### **Are Function Based**

The first tier of behavior support in an SWPBIS program includes setting behavioral expectations, teaching them to all students for all locations, and following up with recognition

when they are met and reteaching when they are not. The second tier is where smaller groups of students can get extra support through social skills instruction or small group interventions and reteaching. The third tier of behavior supports in an SWPBIS program includes a functional behavior assessment (FBA) to identify the specific function of problem behaviors for individual students in order to plan for individual behavioral interventions (Technical Assistance Center on PBIS, 2010). Typically, students' problem behavior has one of three functions: it obtains attention, it accesses something desired, or it avoids something that is not desired. An FBA is a formal process to determine which function the behavior is for and how to best address replacing problem behavior with preferred behavior. In the cases where a student has an individualized education plan (IEP), the behavior may impede a student's learning or the learning of others (Turnbull et al., 2002). In these cases, an FBA is completed in order to identify the specific relationships between a student's behavior and the circumstances that trigger behavior that impedes the student's ability to learn. This allows the team to determine patterns of behavior and develop supports and interventions tailored to a specific student for help. School teams can emphasize targeted social skills and self-management instruction in a positive behavior support plan (PBSP) (Sugai & Horner, 2002). A positive behavior support plan does just what its title implies: it supports positive behavior. With a PBSP, a student is acknowledged for displaying preferred behavior, and this data is tracked over time.

### **2.3.5 School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) Programs**

#### **Are Systems-Implementation Focused**

School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) programs are systems-implementation focused according to three features: common vision, common language,



and common experience. When all stakeholders are in agreement, the SWPBIS program is driven by a common vision and purpose to help all students succeed. Common language is developed as part of established behavioral expectations and the lessons used to teach them. When applied with consistency across all classroom and non-classroom areas, the program is universally practiced and experienced by all (Technical Assistance Center on PBIS, 2010). Teams of stakeholders are encouraged to work together throughout implementation and assessment through the School-Wide Evaluation Tool (SET) (Horner, Lewis-Palmer, Sugai, & Todd, 2005). By using the SET assessment, they are able to monitor progress and plan for improvements and adjustments (Bradshaw et al., 2008). In addition, the leadership team monitors commitment to the program and analyzes ongoing discipline data to plan for interventions, targets, and how to celebrate successes (McKevitt, 2006; Osher, Bear, Sprague, & Doyle, 2010). The leadership team includes teachers and other staff members to analyze the data for the school and determine where there are needs, what they are, and how to address them.

### **2.3.6 School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) Programs Are Evidence Based**

School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) programs are evidence based in that they are “derived from studies that (a) carefully identify and control for variables that are and are not associated with practice or curricula and (b) demonstrate level of confidence with which outcomes and results can be associated with those variables” (Technical Assistance Center on PBIS, 2010, p. 68). This may include utilizing evidence-based programs within an SWPBIS program. Many studies have linked SWPBIS implementation fidelity with positive behavioral and academic outcomes (Bradshaw et al., 2008; Goldys, 2016; Kennedy &

Jolivette, 2008; Speights Roberts, Tingstrom, Olmi, & Bellipanni, 2008). One study found that inappropriate behavior was maintained by negative reinforcement and improved through positive reinforcement (Schieltz et al., 2017), which is the basis for SWPBIS programs. SWPBIS programs have been linked with improvements of both student and staff behavior, particularly when implemented with fidelity and ongoing training and coaching (Bradshaw et al., 2008).

## **2.4 Inquiry Questions**

The problem of practice stems from a poorly implemented positive behavioral intervention and supports program that was never formally assessed or modified and lacked follow-up professional development. This is evident in the data; the literature review also reveals a need for program fidelity in order to meet with success in a SWPBIS program. School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support programs allow for universal components to stabilize the entire school and reduce overall problem behavior (Barrett et al., 2008). McKevitt (2006) points out that when implemented with fidelity, “the benefits of having these core features in place in a school include having an orderly and predictable environment, a school culture that supports and rewards appropriate behavior, a reduced number of office discipline referrals which in turn increases academic learning time, and possibly even improved academic achievement resulting from a behaviorally stable and supportive environment” (p. 2). At Shrewsbury Elementary, the SWPBIS program has lacked implementation fidelity and follow-through with professional development. This leads me to the inquiry questions:

1. How has professional development on School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports at Shrewsbury Elementary influenced the overall climate as told by the Pennsylvania Department of Education School Climate Survey?
2. What are our priorities for the improvement of a School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports Program based on the PBIS Self-Assessment Survey?

### **3.0 Methodology**

This chapter describes the methodology, data collection procedures, and analysis used during the case study of professional development and a School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) program at Shrewsbury Elementary School in Southern York County School District. A description of the context, participants, approach, data collection, and data analysis follows.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of a School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) program that had previously been implemented within the school. As stated before, the school program in this case was not implemented with fidelity. School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports programs include three tiers of support, including school-wide primary supports, secondary supports for a smaller group of students with greater needs for support, and a third tier of intense supports for individual students (Barrett et al., 2008; Bradshaw et al., 2008). Primary supports include the creation and teaching of a school-wide set of rules and positive behavior reinforcements. By using professional development to improve these core characteristics of a School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports program, the program can be more effective.

## **3.1 Context**

### **3.1.1 District**

Southern York County School District serves just over 3,000 students from a 68-square-mile rural and suburban area in south-central Pennsylvania. There are three elementary schools serving students in kindergarten through the sixth grade, one middle school serving students in seventh and eighth grade, and one high school serving students from ninth grade through graduation. The overall population of the district is 90 percent White (not Hispanic); 5 percent African-American; 3 percent Hispanic; and 2 percent Asian, Native American, Pacific Islander, or Multi-racial. Seventeen percent of district students are enrolled in special education, and 1 percent are English language learners. Twenty-one percent of students in the district come from families who are economically disadvantaged as defined by their qualification for free and reduced meals and making under \$40,000 annually for a family of four.

### **3.1.2 School**

Southern York County School District serves just over 3,000 students from a 68-square-mile rural and suburban area in south-central Pennsylvania. There are three elementary schools serving students in kindergarten through the sixth grade, one middle school serving students in seventh and eighth grade, and one high school serving students from ninth grade through graduation. The overall population of the district is 90 percent White (not Hispanic); 5 percent African-American; 3 percent Hispanic; and 2 percent Asian, Native American, Pacific Islander, or Multi-racial. Seventeen percent of district students are enrolled in special education, and 1 percent

are English language learners. Twenty-one percent of students in the district come from families who are economically disadvantaged as defined by their qualification for free and reduced meals and making under \$40,000 annually for a family of four.

## **3.2 Participants**

### **3.2.1 Staff**

The sample is the staff of Shrewsbury Elementary and includes 40 professional staff and 12 paraprofessionals. Professional staff includes teachers of regular and special education, special area teachers, specialists in areas like speech and reading, a school counselor, and a school nurse. The paraprofessionals are all working directly with students as instructional assistants. All 52 adults have been provided with professional development on positive behavioral interventions and supports and were invited to participate in both the Pennsylvania Department of Education's School Climate Survey (see Appendix B) (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2015b) and the self-assessment survey from PBIS (see Appendix D) (OSEP Technical Assistance Center on PBIS, 2009). The surveys were voluntary; however, all of the staff responded. The researcher made personal contact with all 52 staff to ask them to respond. Responses were anonymized through their participation in the surveys via Qualtrics. Together, both surveys took each participant approximately 40 minutes.

Surveys were offered from February 10, 2019 to February 24, 2019. During this time, staff had evening conference time on February 13 and 14, typically consisting of at least 30 minutes of unscheduled time during which they could take these surveys. In addition, team meetings for

teachers during the week of February 18 were cancelled to allow time during the school day for all staff to complete the surveys. All staff had the opportunity to take the survey on district-issued electronic devices during the working day.

### **3.2.2 Students and Parents and/or Guardians**

All parents and/or guardians of the 550 enrolled students at Shrewsbury were invited to participate in the Pennsylvania Department of Education School Climate Survey (see Appendix C) (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2015a). Parents were sent numerous communications from the researcher starting on February 1, 2019 in the school monthly newsletter. Repeated communications invited parents and/or guardians to participate in the survey beginning February 10, 2019. The communications were sent both electronically and through paper invitations sent home with students. Reminders were sent weekly, with an anticipated return of 20 percent. In the past, this survey has yielded a return of 10 percent, but with the repeated reminders, more response was expected. A total of six communications were sent. In addition, the researcher greeted parents during our two conference nights on February 13 and 14, 2019 and reminded them of the survey. We opened the computer labs in the building on these nights for parents to take the survey on sight; however, none of our families used them. There were two other evening events at the school during this time period when the labs were opened again for parents to take the survey, again without anyone taking advantage of them. This survey is given every other year district-wide, but this year was given only at Shrewsbury Elementary for the purpose of this study. Responses were anonymized through participation in the survey via Qualtrics.

In addition, students in grades three, four, and five were invited to participate in the student survey for those grades, given written parental consent to participate in a research study (see

Appendix F) (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2015c). Though the school serves students in grades kindergarten through six, the Pennsylvania Department of Education School Climate Survey for Students at the elementary level is targeted to students in grades three through five. The researcher scheduled each class of students to administer the survey to any students with written parental consent. Initially planned for the same dates as the adult surveys, student surveys were administered from February 26, 2019 to March 8, 2019 because of inclement weather closings at the school. Responses were anonymized through their participation in the survey via Qualtrics.

### **3.3 Approach**

The survey, entitled “Self-Assessment Survey – PBIS” (Appendix D) (OSEP Technical Assistance Center on PBIS, 2009), was created in Qualtrics. A cover letter was included with instructions on how to complete the survey, anonymity associated with the survey, and provision of consent to participate in a research study. The survey consists of 46 total questions. The format is a rating scale of “In Place, Partially in Place, or Not in Place.” Ratings are broken into four categories: School-Wide Systems, Non-classroom Setting Systems, Classroom Systems, and Individual Student Systems. Each category asks survey participants to list whether specific components of each category are present in the school according to their own experience. This survey was chosen based on its applicability to evaluating a School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports program.

The additional Pennsylvania Department of Education climate surveys for teachers, students in grades three through five, and parents (Appendices A, B, and C) (Pennsylvania



Department of Education, 2015b, 2015a, 2015c) were also created in Qualtrics with cover letters including instructions for completion, anonymity associated with the surveys, and provision of consent to participate in a research study. The student survey (Appendix A) (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2015c) required written consent from parents and includes a total of 29 questions asking students to agree based on a “yes,” ”no,” or “sometimes” response. The staff survey (Appendix B) (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2015b) includes 56 questions in which participants are asked to rate their agreement on a four-point scale from “strongly disagree” to ”strongly agree” and rate their feelings of safety. One question of grades taught was removed in order to maintain anonymity. The parent/guardian survey (Appendix C) (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2015a) includes 17 questions with the same four-point scale. One question of student grade level was removed in order to maintain anonymity. These surveys were chosen based on their universal evaluation of the overall school climate, which in the past has been strongly influenced by poor behavior supports.

All surveys were given in Qualtrics due to the ease of use, speed of response, and accessibility for respondents. Qualtrics allows respondents to start and stop, save partial surveys, and leave the survey at any time. Electronic responses in Qualtrics allows for ease of use in analyzing data as well.

### **3.4 Data Collection Procedures**

Families and staff received an email explaining my role as a researcher, the scope of the study, and an invitation to participate in the survey(s). The invitations to participate outlined the meaning of School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports and how the surveys

would help to measure the effectiveness of our work on SWPBIS during this school year. Invitations to participate (Appendices E and F) were included in the electronic mailings.

Both the Pennsylvania Department of Education School Climate Survey for Staff (Appendix B) (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2015b) and the self-assessment survey for PBIS (Appendix D) (OSEP Technical Assistance Center on PBIS, 2009) were offered to the staff at the school. A total of 52 staff members were identified to participate in the surveys. This includes 40 professional teachers and 12 paraprofessionals. Of the professional teachers, 23 are regular education classroom teachers, six special education teachers, and 11 special area teachers and other professional staff. Of the 12 paraprofessional staff, seven are full time and five are part time. All 52 staff were given time during the working day to complete the survey on district-issued electronic devices. Surveys take approximately 30 minutes in their entirety and were not a requirement of the job. Invitations were sent out electronically (see Appendix F) with follow-up reminders twice during the survey period, from February 10, 2019 to February 24, 2019.

All parents and/or guardians of the 550 students at Shrewsbury Elementary School were invited to participate in the Pennsylvania Department of Education School Climate Survey for Parents/Guardians (Appendix C) (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2015a). Invitations (Appendix E) were sent electronically and by paper through students. These invitations were also shared via the school newsletter, emailed to parents weekly, and distributed via the school Dojo communication application. Reminders that the survey should take approximately 10 minutes were sent weekly from February 10, 2019 to February 24, 2019.

In order to complete the student survey (Appendix A) (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2015c), parents of students in grades three, four, and five were asked for written consent for their children to participate in a research study. The invitation letter included a written

permission form to be completed and signed by a parent for a child to participate in the survey. While the school includes students from grades kindergarten through sixth, the survey from the Pennsylvania Department of Education is only intended for students in grade three through five.

All completed surveys generated data into Qualtrics. This allowed for exportation into the Statistical Package for Social Services (SPSS) and comma separated values (CSV) for statistical analysis.

### **3.5 Response Bias**

Consideration was made regarding the staff completing the surveys as disseminated by their principal. Both implicit bias and a concern for desirable responses were taken into consideration. To lessen the potential for these biases, surveys were completed with complete anonymity, which was stated specifically in the invitation to participate.

Implicit bias exists when bias is present on behalf of the survey participant but is unknown or unrecognized by the participant. Since the researcher is also the school principal, it is natural to assume implicit bias on behalf of the staff, students, and families taking part in the surveys. For the self-assessment survey for PBIS, staff were specifically instructed to only mark what they know to be in place or not from their own experience. By stressing this factor, implicit bias is still a limitation of the study but is somewhat minimized.

### **3.6 Data Analysis**

Through the Statistical Package for Social Services (SPSS) and comma separated values (CSV), descriptive statistics can be used, including mean, median, mode, frequency, variance, count, and percentages. This information is calculated in Qualtrics for each question and subgroup of questions. Once data was analyzed and calculated this way, priority areas for improvement were identified and an action plan developed.

## **4.0 Results**

The focus of this study is to assess the School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports program in order to structure a plan for improvement. The study focused on a single elementary school in a rural district in Central Pennsylvania, Shrewsbury Elementary School, whose current SWPBIS program is ineffective.

### **4.1 Participant Demographics**

#### **4.1.1 Staff**

The sample of staff at the school is comprised of 40 teachers and 12 paraprofessionals for a total of 52 possible respondents. The total response rate was an average of 40, with 39 staff responding to the Pennsylvania Department of Education School Climate Survey for Staff (Appendix B) (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2015b) and 41 staff responding to the self-assessment survey for PBIS (Appendix D) (OSEP Technical Assistance Center on PBIS, 2009). One respondent did not answer the questions relating to position or years of experience. Table 3 lists the descriptive data for the 38 respondents who answered the questions about years of experience. The highest percentage of respondents were classroom teachers (65.79 percent), which was expected due to the number of teachers on staff compared to the number of paraprofessionals on staff. The highest response rate also came from those with the most experience. Of the respondents, 39.47 percent have more than 15 years of experience; this was

followed by those with 11 to 15 years of experience (23.65 percent), those with six to 10 years of experience (21.05 percent), those with fewer than two years of experience (10.53 percent), and those with three to five years of experience (5.26 percent).

**Table 3. Years of Experience in Any Position in Education**

<b>Experience in Years</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Total</b>
Fewer than 2 years	10.53%	4
3 to 5 years	5.26%	2
6 to 10 years	21.05%	8
11 to 15 years	23.68%	9
More than 15 years	39.47%	15
Total	100%	38

#### **4.1.2 Parents and/or Guardians**

With 550 students at Shrewsbury Elementary, there are a total of 395 households for a sample. Of these, there were 79 respondents to the survey invitations, with three declining to take part. This left a total of 76 respondents. The results indicated a distribution of survey completion by race similar to that of the school-wide demographics. Table 4 lists descriptive data about the participants' demographics. Seventy-five respondents also identified as parents, while one identified as a legal guardian.

**Table 4. Ethnicity/Race of Parent/Guardian Respondents**

<b>Ethnicity/Race</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Total</b>
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.00%	0
Black/African-American	6.58%	5
Hispanic	3.95%	3
Multi-Racial	3.95%	3

**Table 4. Ethnicity/Race of Parent/Guardian Respondents (continued)**

White/Caucasian	81.58%	62
Asian	1.32%	1
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0.00%	0
Unavailable/Unknown/Decline	2.63%	2
Total	100%	76

### **4.1.3 Students**

A total of 175 students responded to the survey. Of these, 54 were third graders, 56 were fourth graders, and 64 were fifth graders. There were a total of 82 males and 84 females. The question about race and ethnicity was confusing to students, so reports of ethnicity and race by students are not reliable.

## **4.2 Inquiry Questions**

### **4.2.1 Inquiry Question 1**

*How has professional development on School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports at Shrewsbury Elementary influenced the overall climate as told by the Pennsylvania Department of Education School Climate Survey?*

This question sought to examine the current school climate using the Pennsylvania Department of Education’s PA School Climate Surveys (Appendices A, B, and C) (PDE, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c). Professional development this school year has focused on safety efforts, positive

behavior supports, and adult language and its effect on students. The PA School Climate Surveys for parents, students, and staff were administered in order to determine participants’ perceptions of the effectiveness of these efforts.

Students in grades three, four, and five with written parent permission were invited to participate in the PA School Climate Survey for Students (PDE, 2015c). Questions addressed the students’ feelings about the school, their fellow students, and their teachers. Students were asked to respond either “yes,” “no,” or “sometimes.” Mean agreement was calculated based on a score of three for “yes,” two for “sometimes,” and one for “no.” Table 5 illustrates responses to these questions for the 175 respondents. The results show that, in general, students are happy with our school and feel cared for by the adults. The highest agreement from students reflected a safe school (mean=2.8563) and teachers who truly care (mean=2.8343).

**Table 5. Student Responses — Climate Survey**

<b>Category: Students Range: 1–3</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Mean Agreement</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Variance</b>
Teachers and other staff in this school are fair to all students.	175	2.5257	.55520	.308
Teachers and other staff in this school are willing to give students help.	173	2.8382	.38480	.148
I wish I went to a different school.	175	1.3314	.55074	.303
I am bored in school.	173	2.0405	.67650	.458
I feel safe outside around the school.	174	2.6034	.64350	.414



**Table 5. Student Responses — Climate Survey (continued)**

I feel safe in the hallways and bathrooms of the school.	174	2.7069	.58917	.347
I feel safe in my classroom.	174	2.8563	.47728	.228
Most students in my school treat each other with respect.	174	2.3103	.59498	.354
Most students in my school stop and think before they get too angry.	175	1.9371	.60794	.370
Most students in my school do their part when we work together on a group project.	174	2.3678	.55067	.303
Most students in my school do their best, even with their school work is hard.	173	2.5202	.57657	.332
Most students in my school get mad when they disagree with people.	174	2.0345	.68760	.473
Most students in my school try to talk to other students if they are having a problem with them.	172	2.3314	.71782	.515
Students at my school are bullied.	174	1.8161	.72173	.521
Students at my school are teased, picked on, made fun of, or called names.	175	1.8343	.70382	.495
My teachers want us to talk with others about things we are studying.	174	2.3506	.71973	.518
My teachers ask me to explain my answers.	175	2.7429	.46380	.215



**Table 6. Staff Responses — Climate Survey: School Safety**

<b>Category: School Safety Range: 1–4</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Mean Agreement</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Variance</b>
The school is badly affected by crime and violence in the community.	39	1.28	.456	.208
The school provides positive experiences for parents.	39	3.33	.621	.386
The school provides a welcoming environment.	39	3.49	.644	.414
Students in this school are often threatened.	39	1.69	.569	.324
Students in this school are often bullied because of certain characteristics (for example, their race, religion, weight, or sexual orientation).	39	2.03	.584	.341
The school provides a safe environment for teaching and learning.	38	3.21	.577	.333

Table 7 presents responses about feelings of safety in and around the school. Staff were asked to rate their agreement with statements using a Likert scale (1=not safe, 4=very safe) to indicate how safe they feel in and around the school. The results demonstrate a general feeling of safety outside the school (mean=3.46), in the hallways and bathrooms (mean=3.79), and in the classrooms (mean=3.79).

**Table 7. Staff Responses — Climate Survey: Feelings of Safety**

<b>Category: Feelings of Safety Range: 1–4</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Mean Feeling of Safety</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Variance</b>
How safe do you feel outside around the school?	39	3.46	.720	.518
How safe do you feel in the hallways and bathrooms of the school?	39	3.79	.522	.273
How safe do you feel in your classroom or work area?	39	3.79	.469	.220

Table 8 represents responses about school community safety and environment. Staff were asked to rate their agreement with statements using a Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 4=strongly agree) to indicate their feelings regarding the safety of the school community and environment. Consistent with the other reports, the results convey a feeling of an overall safe community around the students in the school. The results reflect stronger agreement with statements about students treating each other with respect (mean=2.74), doing their share of work (mean=2.79), and trying even when the work is hard (mean=2.85), though all of the mean agreements ranged from 2.03 to 2.85 with similar scores for variance.

**Table 8. Staff Responses — Climate Survey: Students**

<b>Category: Students Range: 1–4</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Mean Agreement</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Variance</b>
Don't really care about each other.	39	2.03	.584	.341
Like to put others down.	39	2.15	.630	.397
Don't get along together very well.	39	2.05	.560	.313
Just look out for themselves.	39	2.28	.605	.366
Treat each other with respect.	39	2.74	.549	.301
Stop and think before doing anything when they get angry.	39	2.46	.505	.255
Do their share of the work when doing group projects.	39	2.79	.615	.378
Give up when they can't solve a problem easily.	39	2.56	.598	.358
Get into arguments when they disagree with people.	39	2.49	.601	.362
Do their best, even when their school work is difficult.	38	2.66	.481	.231
Think it's OK to fight if someone insults them.	39	2.23	.627	.393
Do all their homework.	39	2.56	.598	.358
Say mean things to other students when they think the other students deserve it.	39	2.64	.537	.289





Table 10. Staff Responses — Climate Survey: School

<b>Category: School Range: 1–4</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Mean Agreement</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Variance</b>
The principal asks students about their ideas.	38	3.29	.515	.265
Students and parents receive effective communication about academic progress.	37	3.43	.502	.252
When students break rules, they are treated fairly.	39	2.90	.680	.463
I am happy working at this school.	38	3.32	.620	.384
This school is making steady progress implementing rigorous academic standards.	39	3.23	.536	.287
When students in this school already know the material that is being taught, they are given more advanced assignments.	39	2.97	.743	.552
School staff members have a lot of informal opportunities to influence what happens here.	39	2.87	.570	.325
School staff members are supported by administration.	37	3.05	.664	.441
In this school, staff members have a “can do” attitude.	39	3.18	.556	.309

Table 11 presents responses from parents and guardians about the school climate. Parents and guardians were asked to rate their agreement with statements using a Likert scale (1=strongly



disagree, 4=strongly agree) about the school climate. Results illustrate an overall positive feeling from parents in respect to the school. They reported the school to be a supportive and inviting place for students (mean=3.33) and indicated that their children like their teachers (mean=3.48). Responses showed less agreement for supports for all students (mean=2.91) and believing that adults in school have high expectations for all students (mean=3.01). Variance scores on this survey were greater than the others.

**Table 11. Parent/Guardian Responses — Climate Survey**

<b>Category: Parents and Guardians Range: 1–4</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Mean Agreement</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Variance</b>
My child’s school is a supportive and inviting place for students.	75	3.33	.664	.441
My child is safe at school.	74	3.26	.741	.550
I feel welcomed at this school.	75	3.39	.655	.430
I am satisfied with communication with my child’s teachers.	73	3.12	.781	.610
My child is getting a good education at this school.	75	3.16	.658	.434
My child is treated fairly at this school.	74	3.12	.721	.519
My child likes his/her teachers.	75	3.48	.623	.388
At this school there are good supports for all children, including children with learning problems.	74	2.91	.863	.744



**Table 12. Parent/Guardian Additional Comments**

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Count</b>
Overall praise	41%	7
Discipline	35%	6
Other	35%	6
Diversity	24%	4
Problem Behaviors	18%	3

#### **4.2.2 Inquiry Question 2**

*What are our priorities for improvement of a School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports Program based on the PBIS Self-Assessment Survey?*

The PBIS Self-Assessment Survey is broken into four parts: School-wide, Non-classroom, Classroom, and Individual Student. Each part asks respondents their perception of whether key areas of a School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports program is in place, partially in place, or not in place. Lower mean scores in these categories represent parts of a program that are in place.

Table 13 presents responses from school staff on their perceptions of school-wide systems. Staff were asked to rate their perceptions of key areas of an SWPBIS program using a Likert scale (1=in place, 3=not in place). Several strengths and needs are apparent through this data. Areas dealing with consequences for problem behaviors (mean=2.39), booster activities for students based on data (mean=2.23), and distinctions between behaviors dealt with by the office versus the





Table 14 presents responses from school staff on their perceptions of non-classroom setting systems. Staff were asked to rate their perceptions of key areas of an SWPBIS program using a Likert scale (1=in place, 3=not in place). Lower mean scores in these categories indicate parts of a program that are in place. Means trended between 1.5 and 2 in this area, demonstrating an overall perception of non-classroom settings typically having the components of a SWPBIS program at least partially in place.

**Table 14. PBIS Self-Assessment Survey: Non-Classroom Setting Systems**

<b>Category: Non-Classroom Settings Range: 1–3</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Mean Not In Place</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Variance</b>
School-wide expected student behaviors apply to non-classroom settings.	39	1.46	.643	.413
School-wide expected student behaviors are taught in non-classroom settings.	38	1.47	.603	.364
Supervisors actively supervise (move, scan, and interact) students in non-classroom settings.	37	1.73	.508	.258
Rewards exist for meeting expected student behaviors in non-classroom settings.	38	1.92	.673	.453
Physical/architectural features are modified to limit (a) unsupervised settings, (b) unclear traffic patterns, and (c) inappropriate access to and exit from school grounds.	37	1.76	.683	.467
Scheduling of student movement ensures appropriate numbers of students in non-classroom spaces.	38	1.58	.599	.358

**Table 14. PBIS Self-Assessment Survey: Non-Classroom Setting Systems (continued)**

Staff receives regular opportunities for developing and improving active supervision skills.	38	1.89	.689	.475
Status of student behavior and management practices are evaluated quarterly from data.	36	1.89	.785	.616
All staff are involved directly or indirectly in management of non-classroom settings.	38	1.68	.574	.330

Table 15 presents responses from school staff on their perceptions of classroom setting systems. Staff were asked to rate their perceptions of key areas of an SWPBIS program using a Likert scale (1=in place, 3=not in place). Lower mean scores in these categories represent parts of a program that are in place. Classroom systems data shows similar results to non-classroom setting systems with one noted exception: problem behaviors receive consistent consequences (mean=2.21, variance=.588).

**Table 15. PBIS Self-Assessment Survey: Classroom Setting Systems**

<b>Category: Classroom Range: 1–3</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Mean Not In Place</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Variance</b>
Expected student behavior and routines in classrooms are stated positively and defined clearly.	39	1.18	.389	.151
Problem behaviors are defined clearly.	39	1.51	.644	.414
Expected student behavior and routines in classrooms are taught directly.	39	1.18	.389	.151

**Table 15. PBIS Self-Assessment Survey: Classroom Setting Systems (continued)**

Expected student behaviors are acknowledged regularly (positively reinforced) (>4 positives to 1 negative).	39	1.56	.598	.358
Problem behaviors receive consistent consequences.	39	2.21	.767	.588
Procedures for expected and problem behaviors are consistent with school-wide procedures.	39	1.92	.739	.547
Classroom-based options exist to allow classroom instruction to continue when problem behavior occurs.	39	1.69	.521	.271
Instruction and curriculum materials are matched to student ability (math, reading, language).	39	1.21	.469	.220
Students experience high rates of academic success (> 75% correct).	39	1.31	.468	.219
Teachers have regular opportunities for access to assistance and recommendations (observation, instruction, and coaching).	39	1.51	.556	.309
Transitions between instructional and non-instructional activities are efficient and orderly.	39	1.69	.521	.271

Table 16 presents responses from school staff on their perceptions of individual student systems. Staff were asked to rate their perceptions of key areas of an SWPBIS program using a Likert scale (1=in place, 3=not in place). Lower mean scores in these categories represent parts of a program that are in place. Respondents noted higher means with a larger variance of two areas



being either “partially” or “not in place”: a behavior support team (mean=2.03, variance=.583) and formal opportunities for families to receive training on positive behavioral supports (mean=2.23, variance=.593).

**Table 16. PBIS Self-Assessment Survey: Individual Student Systems**

<b>Category: Individual Student Range: 1–3</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Mean Not In Place</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Variance</b>
Assessments are conducted regularly to identify students with chronic problem behaviors.	39	1.62	.590	.348
A simple process exists for teachers to request assistance.	39	1.79	.732	.536
A behavior support team responds promptly (within 2 working days) to students who present chronic problem behaviors.	37	2.03	.763	.583
Behavioral support team includes an individual skilled at conducting functional behavioral assessment.	38	1.37	.589	.347
Local resources are used to conduct functional assessment-based behavior support planning (~10 hrs/week/student).	33	1.85	.755	.570
Significant family and/or community members are involved when appropriate and possible.	35	1.57	.608	.370
School includes formal opportunities for families to receive training on behavioral support/positive parenting strategies.	35	2.23	.770	.593

**Table 16. PBIS Self-Assessment Survey: Individual Student Systems (continued)**

Behavior is monitored and feedback is provided regularly to the behavior support team and relevant staff.	37	1.65	.716	.512
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### 4.3 Summary

Staff, students, and family perceptions of the overall school climate of the inquiry site and staff perceptions of the SWPBIS program at the site were obtained through survey and analysis. The data regarding the climate and SWPBIS program at the school provided a springboard for improving both the climate and the SWPBIS program.

Inquiry Question 1 (How has professional development on School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports at Shrewsbury Elementary influenced the overall climate as told by the Pennsylvania Department of Education School Climate Survey?) showed that overall, the school has a safe feel and generally positive relationships between adults and students, with work still needed in the areas of consistency of behavior supports to include consequences for poor behavior and supports for improving behavior. Students specifically noted that the staff are willing to give students help (mean=2.8382) and that their teachers truly care for them (mean=2.8343). Staff shared a general feeling of safety in and around the school (mean=3.46 outside, mean=3.79 in halls and bathrooms, mean=3.79 in classrooms) but were not convinced that when students break the rules they are treated fairly (mean=2.9, variance=.463). Parents and guardians who responded agreed that overall the school is an inviting and supportive place for students (mean=3.33) and that their children like their teachers (mean=3.48) but were not as convinced that the school had supports for all students, including those with learning problems

(mean=2.91). Overall, the data from all three climate surveys reflect a need for more consistent practices when dealing with problem behaviors.

Inquiry Question 2 (What are our priorities for improvement of a School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports Program based on the PBIS Self-Assessment Survey?) identified strengths and opportunities for growth in the SWPBIS program at the inquiry site. Positively and clearly stated rules are defined throughout the building (mean=1.15), a team exists for behavior support (mean=1.13), and the team includes an administrator (mean=1.1) and a person skilled in conducting functional behavioral assessments (mean=1.37). In addition, procedures are in place to address emergency situations (mean=1.17). Staff noted the following specific portions of an SWPBIS program as "not in place": consequences for problem behaviors being defined clearly (mean=2.39), distinctions between office- and classroom-managed problem behaviors being made clear (mean=2.28), and consequences being implemented consistently (mean=2.21). Similar to the climate surveys, the PBIS Self-Assessment Survey showed a need for consistent practices when dealing with problem behaviors.

The data received from all of the surveys supports that the school is a safe and caring place. Student, staff, and family responses indicate a clear need for more consistent and spelled-out consequences for both positive and poor behavior as well as a more structured delineation of classroom- versus office-managed behavior problems. School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports programs require collaboration among all school staff to bring consistency to supports for behavior and learning. The results of this survey suggest that this consistency needs to be further developed and communicated.

## **5.0 Summary and Conclusions**

This chapter contains the summary of the study, including an interpretation of the findings and a plan for future improvement.

### **5.1 Summary**

The purpose of this inquiry is to assess the climate and current School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports program at Shrewsbury Elementary School, a school serving students in kindergarten through sixth grade in Southern York County School District in central Pennsylvania. Through this inquiry, a plan for improvement can be developed and applied.

This study attempted to answer the following research questions:

1. How has professional development on School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports at Shrewsbury Elementary influenced the overall climate as told by the Pennsylvania Department of Education School Climate Survey?
2. What are our priorities for the improvement of a School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports Program based on the PBIS Self-Assessment Survey?

The first question investigated perceptions of the school climate by students, staff, and families. This question sought to analyze the feelings of safety and security in the building as part of the overall school climate. Safety is a primary goal in any school and can be influenced by an SWPBIS program. By looking at all of the perceptions of the school climate, a deeper picture of

the SWPBIS program in the school is realized and the effectiveness of professional development during this school year on positive behavior supports and school safety can be analyzed.

The second inquiry question identified perceptions among staff at the school as to which components of a School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports program were in place, partially in place, or not in place. By looking at each item through the systems of school-wide, non-classroom, classroom, and individual students, findings can be tailored to make specific improvements. These improvements can then be prioritized and tackled via the school team.

The samples surveyed included 174 students in grades three, four, and five; 39 teachers and paraprofessionals on staff; and 75 parents and guardians of students in the school. When compared to all of our students in grades three, four, and five, an average of 72 percent of students responded to the survey. Seventy-one percent of third graders, 78 percent of fourth graders, and 69 percent of fifth graders received written parent permission and responded to the survey. Of 395 households constituting our school community, 79 parents and guardians (or 20 percent of households) responded to the survey, with only three declining to take part. Of a total of 52 staff, 40 staff members responded to the survey. Twenty-eight respondents were teachers, representing 70 percent of the teaching staff, and 12 were paraprofessionals, representing 100 percent of the paraprofessional staff.

## 5.2 Inquiry Questions

### 5.2.1 Inquiry Question 1

*How has professional development on School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports at Shrewsbury Elementary influenced the overall climate as told by the Pennsylvania Department of Education School Climate Survey?*

Some conclusions can be made regarding the influences of professional development this year on the overall school climate. Professional development this year focused on school safety measures and positive behavior supports, including how teacher language may be used to support expected behaviors. Professional development on school safety measures centered on considerations for *Run, Hide, Fight*, a new response to dangerous situations that may occur. This professional development initiative included a presentation by the York County Sheriff's Office, a handout on active shooters, a hands-on training session with our school resource officer in each work-space environment, and ongoing scenario reviews with all staff during monthly meetings. The scenarios in monthly faculty meetings and paraprofessional meetings allow for ongoing discussion to keep safety measures fresh throughout the year and permit questions and discussions for further understanding.

While the PA School Climate Survey responses show an increased feeling of safety around and in the school, it is not clear if the climate is related to the School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports program in the school. Faculty meetings this year also focused on a book study. The entire teaching staff has been reading and discussing *The Power of Our Words* (Denton, 2015). Paraprofessionals have read and discussed portions of the book in their monthly meetings as well. Discussions in these meetings have centered on how we as adults speak to

students, the language we use, and how that language either helps students learn and grow or stops them and leaves them feeling defeated. Students reported in the climate survey that they felt the teachers truly cared about them and that teachers asked them to explain their answers in class. This suggests that the book discussions and professional learning have made a difference, but the conclusion cannot be undeniably drawn.

### **5.2.2 Inquiry Question 2**

*What are our priorities for improvement of a School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports Program based on the PBIS Self-Assessment Survey?*

A School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) program is intended to be preventative. The program modifies the environment of the school by “establishing clear school rules and through improved systems and procedures that promote positive change in staff and student behaviors” (Molloy, Moore, Trail, Van Epps, & Hopfer, 2013). The PBIS Self-Assessment Survey (OSEP Technical Assistance Center on PBIS, 2009) measures these systems and procedures in order to best improve a school program. As Alexander Den Heijer said, “When a flower doesn’t bloom, you fix the environment in which it grows, not the flower” (Gammill, 2016). Through the survey findings, plans may be implemented in order to begin improving the environment for students.

SWPBIS programs are preventative. There are three tiers of support for students through school-wide systems, classroom systems, non-classroom systems, and individual student systems. The first tier of support is through school-wide behavior programs to teach and recognize expected behavior. The results of the survey show that we have a small number of clearly and positively stated student expectations that have been defined and taught in all settings of the school.

Expectations were developed and refined by a school-wide team of students and taught by these students to their peers in an all-school celebration. In addition, posters of the expectations were created, printed, and delivered to all classrooms and hung in all areas of the building. Portions of the school faculty meetings focused on teacher language centered on using the school behavioral expectations in “reminding language” for students. For example, if a student is treating a friend poorly, the adult may say, “At Shrewsbury, we are kind. Is there a kinder way you can say that?”(Denton, 2015). This approach keeps the expectation at the forefront and focuses on the student’s language without making a judgement that makes the student feel that they are labeled as unkind. The survey demonstrates that the preventative measures within the school are aligned to the SWPBIS framework and supported by the staff.

An opportunity for growth that appeared in both the PBIS Self-Assessment Survey and the PA School Climate surveys was defining consequences for problem behaviors and creating a clear delineation between office-managed behavior and classroom-managed behavior. In regards to consequences for both expected and problem behavior, the school does not currently have a consistent response to behavior. A properly implemented SWPBIS program has a consistent and logical response to behavior that addresses problems and allows for interventions as needed (McKevitt, 2006; Turnbull, Edmonson, Griggs, & Wickhan, 2002). In order to implement such practices, the school’s behavior support team, developed through the process of this study, will need to have access to behavioral data at the school-wide level. Developing a more consistent pattern of dealing with behavior is the first priority for improvement based on the data accumulated.

Another area for growth identified in the self-assessment survey is the need for developing and implementing booster training activities for students. A School-Wide Positive Behavioral



Interventions and Supports program is intended to level support in the same manner as academic interventions. When students display a need, interventions may be put in place to help, reteach, and practice so that the student is able to improve. Introducing, modeling, and reinforcing positive behavior is as important to the students as evaluating their academic work (Bradshaw, Reinke, Brown, Bevans, & Leaf, 2008; Dunlop, 2013). With more consistent tracking of behavioral data and identified booster activities to use as the data demonstrates a need, reteaching and modeling appropriate behavior becomes part of the consistent process.

With a low staff turnover rate in the building, improvement is not only possible, but probable with the teams already established. Developing consistency across grade levels and in the school as a whole for the positive behavior support process benefits students, staff, and families.

### **5.3 Limitations**

There are limitations to this study. The findings represent the inquiry site but may not be replicable outside of the site. With two teachers and an assistant principal who specialize in emotional support, the school is in the unique position of being able to rely on in-house experts for help in determining the function of ongoing behavior problems and developing plans for intervention. While this is a limitation of the study being replicable, it is a true benefit to the school and its plans for furthering consistent practices for behavior.

In addition, the survey data may also have problems with validity. As noted previously, a recent incident in the district is evident in some of the additional comments made by parents and guardians in the climate survey and may have also influenced other staff and parent survey

responses. While anonymity was stressed with all respondents, the researcher is also the principal at the school, which may therefore have further skewed the responses. The author stressed to all potential respondents that the surveys were designed to help the school make improvements, which helped to reduce this limitation.

#### **5.4 Discussion**

This study contributes to research on School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports programs for the assessment and further development of a program. Education often happens in silos i each classroom has its own look, feel, and, ultimately, outcome. An SWPBIS program aims to end the silo structure for behavior in a school, and create consistency of expectations and responses to both productive and problem behavior. While much has been written about the benefits of SWPBIS in schools, there has not been much research on developing a consistent program from the leftover bits of a previous program without multiyear trainings and development. By examining the school climate in addition to the intricacies of the SWPBIS program, this study brought the perspective of families and students into the assessment process.

As part of this assessment, a plan for improvement is necessary. The school currently has both a behavior committee of teachers exploring best practices and making recommendations, and a behavior support team to help teachers with classroom behavior problems. By defining these teams further, a more consistent practice can be brought about. The behavior committee will have access to behavior data throughout the building. By using one of the two monthly meetings to analyze the data, this team can make recommendations for students who need further intervention. In addition, this team will create a consistent structure for delineating between classroom-managed

behavior and office-managed behavior. From there, the principals can work with the team to develop leveled consequences for both positive and problem behavior. Because this team already meets twice monthly, this part of the improvement plan will take effect immediately with the goal of having a presentable structure with which to train the staff at the start of the 2019-2020 school year.

In order to help students in their behavioral growth, the behavior support team will develop booster activities to align with students' needs in the classroom. Currently, the team includes administrators, a school counselor, a teacher specializing in emotional support, and a school psychologist. When teachers express a behavior concern, they meet with the behavior support team to identify specific behaviors and the team develops supports for the student to be implemented by the teacher. The team meets again every two weeks for eight weeks in total, all while continuing to refine supports to targeted needs. At the conclusion of eight weeks, a decision is made to assess for further supports, if needed. To improve the reach of this team, the process of referring a student will be streamlined with the help of the behavior committee. School-wide data can be analyzed to look for places in the building that need additional support, or students in the building requiring more individual support.

This application of data analysis for the identification of further needs in behavioral supports is an essential part of an SWPBIS program, and one that this school has been missing. This study contributes to the overall assessment of SWPBIS programs as well as offering a unique perspective for leaders in education to use for their own improvement.

Appendix A Pennsylvania Department of Education Office for Safe Schools, 2015

Students Grades 3-5 Survey

# PA School Climate Survey

## Student Grade 3 to 5 Climate Survey

We have a police officer/school resource officer (SRO) in our school: (Choose one)

- Yes     No     Not Applicable

The school police officer/school resource officer helps to make our elementary school a safer place. (Choose one)

- Yes     No     Not Applicable

What grade are you currently enrolled this school year? \_\_\_\_\_

Rank how safe you believe your school is because of the school police officer. (1-just as safe, 2-somewhat safer, and 3-much safer; choose one)

- My school is just as safe as before the school police/SRO came to the school
- My school is somewhat safer as before the school police/SRO came to the school
- My school is much safer as before the school police/SRO came to the school

Which category best describes your Ethnicity/Race? (One or more categories may be marked)

- American Indian/ Alaskan Native

- Black/ African American
- Hispanic
- Multi-Racial
- White/Caucasian
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- Unavailable/ Unknown/ Decline

What is your Gender? (Choose one)

- Male  Female

Please mark whether you agree with these statements about your school

Teachers and other staff in this school are fair to all students.

- Yes  No  Sometimes

Teachers and other staff in this school are willing to give students help.

- Yes  No  Sometimes

I wish I went to a different school.

- Yes  No  Sometimes

I am bored in school.

- Yes  No  Sometimes

I feel safe outside around the school.

- Yes  No  Sometimes

I feel safe in the hallways and bathrooms of the school.

- Yes  No  Sometimes

I feel safe in my classroom.

Yes     No     Sometimes

Please mark whether you agree with these statements about students in your school.

Most students in my school treat each other with respect.

Yes     No     Sometimes

Most students in my school stop and think before they get too angry.

Yes     No     Sometimes

Most of the students in my school do their part when we work together on a group project.

Yes     No     Sometimes

Most students in my school do their best, even when their school work is hard.

Yes     No     Sometimes

Most students in my school get mad when they disagree with people.

Yes     No     Sometimes

Most students in my school try to talk to other students if they are having a problem with them.

Yes     No     Sometimes

Students at my school are bullied.

Yes     No     Sometimes

Students at my school are teased, picked on, made fun of, or called names.

Yes     No     Sometimes

Please mark whether you agree with these statements about your teachers.

My teachers want us to talk with others about things we are studying.

Yes     No     Sometimes

My teachers ask me to explain my answers.

Yes     No     Sometimes

My teachers really care about me.

Yes     No     Sometimes

My teachers treat some students better than others.

Yes     No     Sometimes

The homework I get from my teachers helps me learn.

Yes     No     Sometimes

My teachers notice if I have trouble learning something.

Yes     No     Sometimes

My teachers help me do better on my school work.

Yes     No     Sometimes

My teachers give me work that is interesting.

Yes     No     Sometimes

Additional Comments:

**Appendix B Staff Climate Survey**

**Pennsylvania Department of Education Office for Safe Schools, 2015**

# PA School Climate Survey

## Staff Climate Survey Printable Form

What is your role in this school? (Choose one)

- Administrator  Classroom Teacher  Other Certified Staff  
 Classified Staff  Other \_\_\_\_\_

Rank how safe you believe your school is because of the school police officer. (1-just as safe, 2-somewhat safer, and 3-much safer; choose one)

- The school(s) is/are just as safe as before the school police/SRO came to the school  
 The school(s) is/are somewhat safer as before the school police/SRO came to the school  
 The school(s) is/are much safer as before the school police/SRO came to the school

At what level do you work? (check all that apply)

- Elementary  Middle  High  District Office

How many years have you worked, in any position, in education? (Choose one)

- Less than two years  3 to 5 years  6 to 10 years  
 11 to 15 years  More than 15 years



We have a school police or school resource officer (SRO) in our school building: (Choose one)

- Yes     No     Not Applicable

The school police officer plays an important role in keeping our school safe. (Choose one)

- Yes     No     Not Applicable

How many years have you worked, in any position, in this school? (Choose one)

- Less than two years    3 to 5 years    6 to 10 years  
 11 to 15 years    More than 15 years

Which category best describes your Ethnicity/Race?

(One or more categories may be marked)

- American Indian/ Alaskan Native    Black/ African American    Hispanic  
 Multi-Racial    White/ Caucasian    Asian  
 Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander    Unavailable/ Unknown/ Decline

What is your Gender? (Choose one)

- Male    Female

Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree

This school is badly affected by crime and violence in the community.

- Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree

This school provides positive experiences for parents.

- Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree

This school provides a welcoming environment.

- Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree

Students at this school are often threatened.

- Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree

Students at this school are often bullied because of certain characteristics (for example, their race, religion, weight, or sexual orientation)

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree

This school provides a safe environment for teaching and learning.

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree

How safe do you feel:

Outside around the school?

Not Safe     Somewhat Safe     Mostly Safe     Very Safe

In the hallways and bathrooms of the school?

Not Safe     Somewhat Safe     Mostly Safe     Very Safe

In your classroom or work area?

Not Safe     Somewhat Safe     Mostly Safe     Very Safe

How much do you agree with the following statements about students in your school?

Don't really care about each other.

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree

Like to put others down.

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree

Don't get along together very well.

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree

Just look out for themselves.

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree

Treat each other with respect.

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree

Stop and think before doing anything when they get angry.

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree

Do their share of the work when doing group projects.

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree

Give up when they can't solve a problem easily.

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree

Get into arguments when they disagree with people.

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree

Do their best, even when their school work is difficult.

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree

Think it's OK to fight if someone insults them.

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree

Do all their homework.

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree

Say mean things to other students when they think the other students deserve it.

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree

Try to work out their disagreements with other students by talking to them.

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree

Think it's OK to cheat if other students are cheating.

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree

Try to do a good job on school work even when it is not interesting.

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree

How much do you agree with the following statements about your teaching: (only answer if you answered teacher previously)

Work to connect what I am teaching to life outside the classroom.

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree

Encourage students to share their ideas about things we are studying in class.

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree

Require my students to explain their answers.

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree

Prepare all students for success in the next grade, in college, or in a job.

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree

Really care about my students.

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree

Help my students make up work after an excused absence.

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree

Give my students feedback on class assignments that helps improve their work.

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree

Provide accommodations to students who need them.

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree

Believe all students can do challenging school work.

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree

How much do you agree with the following?:

The principal asks students about their ideas.

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree

Students and parents receive effective communication about academic progress.

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree

When students break rules, they are treated fairly.

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree

I am happy working at this school.

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree

This school is making steady progress implementing rigorous academic standards.

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree

When students in this school already know the material that is being taught, they are given more advanced assignments.

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree

School staff members have a lot of informal opportunities to influence what happens here.

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree

School staff members are supported by administration.

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree

In this school, staff members have a "can do" attitude.

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree

Students have adequate access to computers at this school.

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree

Students in this school are encouraged to take advanced classes, such as honors, Advanced Placement (AP), or International Baccalaureate (IB), or classes that lead to professional certification.

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree

This school provides positive experiences for students.

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree

Additional Comments:

**Appendix C Parent Climate Survey**

**Pennsylvania Department of Education Office for Safe Schools**

# PA School Climate Survey

## Parent/Guardian Climate Survey Printable Form

What is your relationship to the child you are reporting about?

- Parent(s)
- Legal guardian
- Other adult in the household : \_\_\_\_\_

Which category best describes your Ethnicity/ Race? (One or more categories may be marked)

- American Indian/ Alaskan Native
- Black/ African American
- Hispanic
- Multi-Racial
- White/ Caucasian
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- Unavailable/ Unknown/ Decline

Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree

My child's school is a supportive and inviting place for students.

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree

My child is safe at school.

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree

I feel welcome at this school.

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree

I am satisfied with communication with my child's teacher(s).

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree

My child is getting a good education at this school.

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree

My child is treated fairly at this school.

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree

My child likes his/her teachers.

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree

At this school there are good supports for all children, including children with learning problems.

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree

This is a supportive and inviting place for parents/guardians.

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree

Adults at this school respect cultural diversity.

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree



Adults at this school have high expectations for all children.

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree

Teachers at my child's school are interested in what I have to say.

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree

I feel like I am actively involved in my child's education.

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree

I would recommend my child's school to others.

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly Agree

Additional Comments:

**Appendix D Self-Assessment Survey PBIS**

**Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports**

**Table 17. School-Wide Systems**

Current Status			Feature	Priority for Improvement		
In Place	Partial in Place	Not in Place		High	Med	Low
			<b>School-wide</b> is defined as involving all students, all staff, & all settings.			
			1. A small number (e.g. 3-5) of positively & clearly stated student expectations or rules are defined.			
			2. Expected student behaviors are taught directly.			
			3. Expected student behaviors are rewarded regularly.			
			4. Problem behaviors (failure to meet expected student behaviors) are defined clearly.			
			5. Consequences for problem behaviors are defined clearly.			
			6. Distinctions between office v. classroom managed problem behaviors are clear.			
			7. Options exist to allow classroom instruction to continue when problem behavior occurs.			
			8. Procedures are in place to address emergency/dangerous situations.			
			9. A team exists for behavior support planning & problem solving.			
			10. School administrator is an active			

**Table 17. School-Wide Systems (continued)**

			participant on the behavior support team.			
			11. Data on problem behavior patterns are collected and summarized within an on-going system.			
			12. Patterns of student problem behavior are reported to teams and faculty for active decision-making on a regular basis (e.g. monthly).			
			13. School has formal strategies for informing families about expected student behaviors at school.			
			14. Booster training activities for students are developed, modified, & conducted based on school data.			
			15. School-wide behavior support team has a budget for (a) teaching students, (b) on-going rewards, and (c) annual staff planning.			
			16. All staff are involved directly and/or indirectly in school-wide interventions.			
			17. The school team has access to on-going training and support from district personnel.			
			18. The school is required by the district to report on the social climate, discipline level or student behavior at least annually.			

Table 18. Nonclassroom Setting Systems

Current Status			Feature	Priority for Improvement		
In Place	Partial in Place	Not in Place	<b>Non-classroom settings</b> are defined as particular times or places where supervision is emphasized (e.g., hallways, cafeteria, playground, bus).	High	Med	Low
			1. School-wide expected student behaviors apply to non-classroom settings.			
			2. School-wide expected student behaviors are taught in non-classroom settings.			
			3. Supervisors actively supervise (move, scan, & interact) students in non-classroom settings.			
			4. Rewards exist for meeting expected student behaviors in non-classroom settings.			
			5. Physical/architectural features are modified to limit (a) unsupervised settings, (b) unclear traffic patterns, and (c) inappropriate access to & exit from school grounds.			
			6. Scheduling of student movement ensures appropriate numbers of students in non-classroom spaces.			
			7. Staff receives regular opportunities for developing and improving active supervision skills.			
			8. Status of student behavior and management practices are evaluated quarterly from data.			
			9. All staff are involved directly or indirectly in management of non-classroom settings.			

Table 19. Classroom Systems

Current Status			Feature	Priority for Improvement		
In Place	Partial in Place	Not in Place		High	Med	Low
			<b>Classroom settings</b> are defined as instructional settings in which teacher(s) supervise & teach groups of students.			
			1. Expected student behavior & routines in classrooms are stated positively & defined clearly.			
			2. Problem behaviors are defined clearly.			
			3. Expected student behavior & routines in classrooms are taught directly.			
			4. Expected student behaviors are acknowledged regularly (positively reinforced) (>4 positives to 1 negative).			
			5. Problem behaviors receive consistent consequences.			
			6. Procedures for expected & problem behaviors are consistent with school-wide procedures.			
			7. Classroom-based options exist to allow classroom instruction to continue when problem behavior occurs.			
			8. Instruction & curriculum materials are matched to student ability (math, reading, language).			
			9. Students experience high rates of academic success (> 75% correct).			
			10. Teachers have regular opportunities for access to assistance & recommendations (observation, instruction, & coaching).			
			11. Transitions between instructional & non-instructional activities are efficient & orderly.			

**Table 20. Individual Student Systems**

Current Status			Feature	Priority for Improvement		
In Place	Partial in Place	Not in Place		High	Med	Low
			<b>Individual student systems</b> are defined as specific supports for students who engage in chronic problem behaviors (1%-7% of enrollment)			
			1. Assessments are conducted regularly to identify students with chronic problem behaviors.			
			2. A simple process exists for teachers to request assistance.			
			3. A behavior support team responds promptly (within 2 working days) to students who present chronic problem behaviors.			
			4. Behavioral support team includes an individual skilled at conducting functional behavioral assessment.			
			5. Local resources are used to conduct functional assessment-based behavior support planning (~10 hrs/week/student).			
			6. Significant family &/or community members are involved when appropriate & possible.			
			7. School includes formal opportunities for families to receive training on behavioral support/positive parenting strategies.			
			8. Behavior is monitored & feedback provided regularly to the behavior support team & relevant staff.			

## **Appendix E Participation Invitation to Participate in a Research Study: Students and Families**

Dear Shrewsbury families,

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports is a programmatic way of creating school-wide supports for students in behavior. The framework allows for the creation and teaching of rules, as well as reinforcements for positive behavior. Our school has been working on improving our behavioral supports through teacher language and student involvement in the creation and teaching of school rules. As part of the evaluation of this program, a short web-based survey is being conducted for students in grades three, four, and five, parents, and staff. This will help us to continue to build a positive learning environment for all.

**If you have a child in grades three, four, or five please complete the attached permission to participate in a research study form and return it to your child's school no later than Monday, February 11, 2019.**

Your child's perspective can provide valuable information as to the effectiveness of PBIS practices based on what they see in the school. Participation in this research study is entirely voluntary. All results will be kept confidential; names will not be included on any documents. The survey should only take approximately 10 minutes to complete. Our students' responses are very important to the success of this research study. The information gained from this research study will provide valuable insight into practices used in our school.

If you have any questions or concerns about the survey, please feel free to contact me directly at [mary.dankosky@sycsd.org](mailto:mary.dankosky@sycsd.org). Thank you in advance for your help. Your participation is greatly appreciated. Thank you so much and have a wonderful day!

Mary W Dankosky

\*See next page for Parental Permission Form to Participate in a Research Study for grades 3, 4, and 5

**Pennsylvania School Climate Survey**  
**Parental Permission Form to Participate in a Research Study**

Your child is invited to participate in a web-based online survey on our school climate. This survey will help us analyze what we are doing well and what we still need to work on with the school climate and the positive behavior supports in our school. This is a research project being conducted by Mary Dankosky, principal at Shrewsbury Elementary and doctoral student at the University of Pittsburgh, and Dr. Diane Kirk, Associate Professor at the University of Pittsburgh. It should take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

**PARTICIPATION**

Your child's participation in this survey is voluntary. Your child may refuse to take part in the research or exit the survey at any time without penalty. You/your child are free to decline to answer any particular question you do not wish to answer for any reason.

**BENEFITS**

Your child will receive no direct benefits from participating in this research study.

**RISKS**

There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this study other than those encountered in day-to-day life.

**COMPENSATION**

Your child will not be paid for completing this survey.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

Your child's survey answers will be collected via Qualtrics. Therefore, your child's responses will remain anonymous. No one will be able to identify your child's answers, and no one will know whether or not your child participated in the study.

Results of the study will be shared with you/your child at the completion of the study.

**CONTACT**

If you/your child have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact Mary Dankosky at 717-235-4811, extension 5500 or [mary.dankosky@sycsd.org](mailto:mary.dankosky@sycsd.org).

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject or wish to talk to someone other the research team, please call the University of Pittsburgh Human Subjects Protection Advocate toll-free at 866-212-2668.

Please select your choice below. You may copy this consent form for your records. Checking the "Agree" box indicates that

- You (the parent/guardian) are 18 years of age or older
- You have read the above information
- You voluntarily agree to participate and you provide permission for your child to participate.



I understand that, as a minor (age less than 18 years), my child is not permitted to participate in this research study without my consent. Therefore, by checking “agree” below, I give my consent for my child’s participation in this research study.

Agree

Disagree

Please print your child’s name, grade, and homeroom below and sign your name.

\_\_\_\_\_

Child’s Name

\_\_\_\_\_

Grade

\_\_\_\_\_

Homeroom Teacher

\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature

## Appendix F Participant Invitation – Staff

Dear Shrewsbury teachers and staff,

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports is a programmatic way of creating school-wide supports for students in behavior. The framework allows for the creation and teaching of rules, as well as reinforcements for positive behavior. Our school has been working on improving our behavioral supports through teacher language and student involvement in the creation and teaching of school rules. As part of the evaluation of this program, a short web-based survey is being conducted for students in grades three, four, and five, all parents, and all staff. This will help us to continue to build a positive learning environment for all.

Your perspective can provide valuable information as to the effectiveness of PBIS practices based on what you see in the school. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. All results will be kept confidential; your name will not be included on any documents. The survey should only take approximately 30 minutes to complete. Your response is very important to the success of this study. The information gained from this study will provide valuable insight into practices used in our school. To complete the survey, just click on this link: (survey link embedded here).

If you have any questions or concerns about the survey, please feel free to contact me directly at [mary.dankosky@sycsd.org](mailto:mary.dankosky@sycsd.org). Thank you in advance for your help. Your participation is greatly appreciated. Thank you so much and have a wonderful day!

Mary W Dankosky

## Appendix G IRB Approval

**University of Pittsburgh**  
**Institutional Review Board**

Human Research Protection Office  
3500 Fifth Avenue, Suite 106  
Pittsburgh, PA 15213  
Tel (412) 383-1480  
www.hrpo@pitt.edu

### APPROVAL OF SUBMISSION (Expedited)

IRB:	STUDY19010037
PI:	Mary Dankosky
Title:	Assessing a School Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support Program for Structured Improvement
Funding:	None
Date:	February 7, 2019

On 2/7/2019, the Institutional Review Board reviewed and approved the above referenced application through the administrative review process. The study may begin as outlined in the University of Pittsburgh approved application and documents.

#### Approval Documentation

Review type:	Initial Study
Risk Level:	No greater than minimal risk
Approval Date:	2/7/2019

Expedited Category:	(7)(b) Social science methods, (7)(a) Behavioral research
Determinations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children</li> <li>• Waiver of consent documentation</li> </ul>
Approved Documents:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PBIS survey permission for child</li> <li>• Consent to Participate in a Research Study in Qualtrics</li> <li>• Participant Invitation</li> <li>• Written Parental Permission for Student to Participate in Research Study SWPBIS</li> <li>• SWPBIS Self Assessment Survey</li> <li>• Parent Climate Survey Printable</li> <li>• Staff Climate Survey Printable</li> <li>• Student Grade 3 to 5 Climate Survey Printable</li> <li>• SYCSD approval for study</li> <li>• Consent to Participate in a Research Study in Qualtrics</li> </ul>

As the Principal Investigator, you are responsible for the conduct of the research and to ensure accurate documentation, protocol compliance, reporting of possibly study-related adverse events and unanticipated problems involving risk to participants or others. The HRPO Reportable Events policy, Chapter 17, is available at <http://www.hrpo.pitt.edu/>.

This study meets eligibility criteria to be released from continuing review (renewal), so there is no longer an expiration date associated with this study. Please, however, note the following statements

**University of Pittsburgh**  
***Institutional Review Board***

Human Research Protection Office  
3500 Fifth Avenue, Suite 106  
Pittsburgh, PA 15213  
Tel (412) 383-1480  
www.hrp@pitt.edu

highlighted below as they pertain to your responsibilities going forward:

- Please note that because your study is not federally funded, there is no longer a requirement for continuing review. If at any time you obtain federal funding, notify the IRB immediately.

- It is still your responsibility to submit modifications, reportable events, and a termination report when the study is complete.

- Please be advised that your research study may be audited periodically by the University of Pittsburgh Research Conduct and Compliance Office.

Research being conducted in an UPMC facility cannot begin until fiscal approval is received from the UPMC Office of Sponsored Programs and Research Support (OSPARS). Contact [OSPARS@upmc.edu](mailto:OSPARS@upmc.edu) with questions.

If you have any questions, please contact the University of Pittsburgh IRB Coordinator, [Amy Fuhrman](#).

Please take a moment to complete our [Satisfaction Survey](#) as we appreciate your feedback.

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