

**Evaluating a School-Wide Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports Program for
System Improvement**

by

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The place of inquiry implemented a School-Wide Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (SWPBIS) plan in 2016 with the goal of building a positive organizational climate while reducing the number of discipline infractions and office referrals. Although interventions and supports have been in place since the original implementation of the SWPBIS programming, suspensions and office referrals continue to occur at an alarming rate, particularly in third through fifth grades. These suspensions were creating gaps in learning for students due to the loss of instructional time without effectively addressing the behaviors to reduce further occurrences.

This mixed methods study evaluated the current School-Wide Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (SWPBIS) programming and implementation at the building of inquiry against best practices based on a state-wide model of SWPBIS with the purpose to make recommendations for improvement. These best practices include leadership commitment, resource deployment, collaboration, ongoing staff development, and data-based decision making.

The research included a survey of 20 participants, four focus groups of 16 participants, and five individual interviews with staff who teach grades three through five. The survey results indicated that families were not involved in the PBIS programming, there is not a plan for professional development of staff throughout the year, new students are not properly informed of the PBIS program, and the referral system is not used appropriately. The focus groups indicated the rewards being offered are not appealing to students and the staff would like more feedback

from the office referral data in addition to the office referral system being revamped. The interviews provided historical data as well as reiterated information similar to that of the survey and focus groups.

After considering the key findings from the survey, focus groups, and individual interviews, the researcher proposed six changes: involving students in the selection of rewards, surveying students for feedback, providing orientation for new students on the PBIS programming to address the transient population, involving the families and community in the current and future PBIS programming, improving the referral system based on teacher recommendations, and reporting data out to the teachers during booster sessions for staff.

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Preface

This dissertation would not be possible without a variety of support systems in my life. First and foremost, my parents, who taught me the fundamental importance of education. Secondly, the staff at my building who didn't hesitate to participate in my research and always asked how things were going when I was in the trenches of the writing process. Third, my friends, who were always willing to lend an ear when I needed to talk about my progress, or lack thereof.

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1.0 Problem Statement

The place of inquiry implemented a School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports plan (PBIS) in 2016 with the goal of building a positive organizational climate while reducing the number of discipline infractions and office referrals. These suspensions were creating gaps in learning for students due to the loss of instructional time without effectively addressing the behaviors to reduce further occurrences (Sprague, 2018). The purpose of this PBIS plan was to help create a common system of discipline in order to lower student suspension rates by improving the way the students and staff think about behavior.

In the district of inquiry, 100 percent of students receive free breakfast and lunch due to the poverty level of the community (District Website, 2020), which is just under three times the rate of the Pennsylvania's poverty level (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020). A suspension from school may cause other problems as well. Depending on the student's age, a suspension may result in the need for childcare or, if none is available, a parent may need to stay home from work. In some cases, a suspension may also result in the child being left home alone because taking off work is not an option for the caregiver. In addition to the financial burden a suspension may create for the caregiver, students who are at risk to be suspended also tend to have difficult home lives and dangerous peer groups (Blomberg, 2004). Left unsupervised, already at-risk students then have more opportunity to engage in inappropriate behaviors and associate with others displaying the same types of behavior (Blomberg, 2004; "Out-of-School Suspension and Expulsion," 2013; Williams, 2019).

The building of inquiry was newly constructed in 2014, with staff members from multiple buildings converging into two separate school entities encompassed in one building. There was a

K-2 primary building and a 3-5 intermediate building, both housed in the same physical space under the direction of two separate principals. This move also included no common discipline protocols between the two entities. To create a better support system for the students and staff and to address the behavioral health needs of the building as a whole, the special education department applied for a grant through the county's Department of Human Services. A neighboring school district with a similar student population was receiving funding for a school-based behavioral health team. Due to that school's success, the project funds were extended for an additional site. Utilizing county data warehousing information, the building of inquiry was recommended to the Department of Human Services based on the low socioeconomic status of the families, the mental health needs of the community, the attendance of the students in the neighborhood school, the number of students who have one or more parents incarcerated, and the number of students who have one or more parents receiving government assistance. The building has a student population that is 67 percent Black and 33 percent White, with 82 percent of families economically disadvantaged. Twenty-five percent of students receive special education services (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2020).

Once the building was selected for funding of the school-based behavioral health team, the district was able to choose a service provider. Through a competitive interview process, the University of Pittsburgh's Matilda Theiss Early Childhood Behavioral Health Program was the successful candidate. Matilda Theiss was responsible for being part of the school team to identify students who were at-risk and in need of intensive therapeutic behavioral interventions. This service, paid for through the students' insurance program, is for students ages three through twelve. It became part of the building's tiered mental and behavioral health services and worked specifically with those students with the most intense needs based on the Student Assistance

Program (SAP) referral process. Teachers can refer a student to the SAP team to discuss possible interventions for academics or behaviors. The SAP team is composed of trained staff members including two guidance counselors, an administrator, a teacher, a member of the community mental health program, and a member of the Matilda Theiss team. The team can make recommendations ranging from group counseling sessions with the guidance counselor, biweekly counseling sessions with the community mental health program, or a client referral to the Matilda Theiss program.

Due to the inception of this behavioral team, the special education department was also able to secure a partnership through a grant for PBIS training from the Watson Institute, an educational organization that provides resources to students and families with special needs, including behavior health services. This grant was awarded for a multi-year process to design and monitor the implementation of the School Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports plan. Although the grant was written for the Watson Institute to provide support and services to numerous school districts throughout the area, the building of inquiry received a series of four one-hour trainings during the first year. This also included approximately 10 hours of support from the coordinator throughout each month for monthly meetings, quality review, and her planning and preparation. After the first two years, the support became less structured and more as needed for booster sessions. The building of inquiry was not billed for the training or support services and there was not any transfer of funds. Although the original written PBIS plan was provided as a result of the partnership, some components of the PBIS plan were either not implemented or not continued with fidelity after the second year.

With the Watson Institute's guidance, this PBIS plan was implemented in 2016. The entire building staff began working in small groups to brainstorm acronyms and matrices for the PBIS

framework. ROAR was chosen as the acronym to represent the school rules, reminding the students to be Responsible, On-Task, Always be Safe, and Respectful. Once the theme was decided, the building chose a committee of teachers representing the multiple grade levels, as well as the special education department. From there, a behavioral matrix was developed to identify what each of the letters meant in the various areas of the school: Classroom, Hallway, Restroom, Cafeteria, Recess, and Bus. (See Figure 1: Behavior Matrix).

	CLASSROOM	HALLWAY/STAIRS	CAFETERIA	RESTROOMS	BUS	RECESS
R- responsibility	Be prepared. Be on time. Clean up your space. Follow dress code.	Stay in line. Hands to yourself.	Stay in assigned seat. Clean up your area.	Flush. Wash. Pitch.	Stay in seat. Remember to take your belongings with you. Get on your assigned bus.	Be aware of others. Follow directions.
O- on task	Pay attention. Complete all work. Participate.	Go right to class.	Eat in a timely manner.	Be quick and move along.	Go right home. Know your stop.	Wait your turn.
A- Always be safe	Always walk. Hands and feet to yourself. Stay in your seat. Keep chair legs on floor.	Always walk. Hands and feet to yourself. When walking stairs, one hand on the railing, one step at a time.	Always walk. Stay in your area. Hands and feet to yourself.	Feet on floor. Always walk.	Listen to the bus driver. Stay seated. Eyes forward. Keep hands and feet to self.	Walk to and from playground safely and orderly. Use playground equipment appropriately.
R- Respectful	Raise your hand. Use kind words. Respect others' property and personal space.	Respect others' personal space. Quiet. Use kind words.	Use good manners. Follow directions Use kind words.	Report incidences. Respect privacy. Keep it clean. Use kind words.	Keep it clean. Throw trash away. Share your seat.	Include others. Help others. Use kind words.

Figure 1. Behavior Matrix

In addition to the behavior matrix, posters were created for each area of the school as well as each classroom. These posters were printed and hung around the building as reminders for the students about their expected behavior in that particular area. An incentive system was developed to reward students with prizes or privileges, distributed based on a weekly drawing. In order to communicate these rules and rewards to the students, the PBIS team introduced them at a ROAR assembly at the beginning of the 2015-2016 year. However, with a highly transient population and no process in place to inform new students throughout the school, only those students who were present on the day of the assembly at the beginning of each school have a formal introduction to the PBIS program.

While the PBIS programming was meant to be a proactive approach to minimizing the behaviors, an office referral system was still needed as a way to document the infractions and analyze the effectiveness of the PBIS system. The PBIS team developed tiered levels of infractions, which were transformed into an office referral system (Figure 2: Write Up Form). Level one infractions are minor or one-time occurrences and generally meant to be handled by teachers in the classroom setting. Teachers are expected to call the parents when writing students up for repeated level one infractions after having applied interventions or consequences for the behaviors. If the behaviors continue, teachers can then refer students to the office. Level two and level three infractions result in immediate office referrals. At the point of a level two or three infraction, the teacher will also call the office for security to have the student removed if there is a safety concern.

The office referral system was originally a paper system but was converted to an electronic system in 2018 after this practitioner became assistant principal in 2016; it has not been revised since. With the new system, a principal would receive the referral via email and either call the

student to the office or visit the classroom to speak with the student. The goal for this process was to avoid multiple students lined up in the office as well as allowing the principals to prioritize the referrals. In addition, this process addresses the safety concern of sending students to the office without escorts. This process does not allow students to roam the hallways if they are sent to the office.

A new option was added when the system was converted to an electronic system. Teachers could also refer students to the guidance office through the same process. This referral was not considered to be disciplinary but rather an organized way of communicating information to the guidance department for issues that did not require an administrator, including behavioral or mental health concerns. These referrals might then become Student Assistance Program (SAP) referrals, through which students could be referred for additional counseling services through Mon Yough, an outpatient counseling program for children and adults, or more intensive services through the Matilda Theiss program.

Although interventions and supports have been in place since the building-wide implementation, suspensions and office referrals continued to occur at an alarming rate, particularly in third through fifth grades. While the ROAR rules are utilized throughout the building, this inquiry focuses on third through fifth grade office referrals since the rates of suspension in these grades are significantly higher than the lower grade levels. The PBIS model has been far less successful than expected because suspensions have continued to occur, and students have continued to lose instructional time. Since the implementation of this program five years ago, there has been significant staff turnover, no ongoing professional development on the PBIS model, a highly transient student population, and a deterioration of the initial program into a simple office referral process rather than a behavior prevention model. The purpose of this inquiry

is to evaluate the program and to identify possible changes to the current PBIS systems in order to provide a more meaningful behavior support system for students.

Student Name: _____ Gender: _____ Time: _____ Date: _____
 Referring Staff: _____ Student Homeroom: _____
 Location of Behavior: _____

Level 1 Behaviors Teacher Managed Behaviors	Level 2 Behaviors Office Referral/Recorded	Level 3 Behaviors Office Referral/Recorded
<input type="checkbox"/> Class Disruption <input type="checkbox"/> Unsafe Behavior <input type="checkbox"/> Late to Class <input type="checkbox"/> Defiant Behavior <input type="checkbox"/> Teasing <input type="checkbox"/> Inappropriate Gesture/Language <input type="checkbox"/> Leave Assigned Area within Classroom <input type="checkbox"/> Touching Property of Others <input type="checkbox"/> Throwing Object (Minor) <input type="checkbox"/> Minor Destruction of Property	<input type="checkbox"/> Bullying <input type="checkbox"/> Chronic Class Disruption <input type="checkbox"/> Create Unsafe Conditions <input type="checkbox"/> Cut Class <input type="checkbox"/> Chronic Defiance of Staff Member <input type="checkbox"/> Dress Code Violation <input type="checkbox"/> Threat to Student <input type="checkbox"/> Significant Inappropriate Gestures/Language <input type="checkbox"/> Leave Assigned Classroom <input type="checkbox"/> Theft <input type="checkbox"/> Throwing Object <input type="checkbox"/> Significant Destruction of Property <input type="checkbox"/> Harassment	<input type="checkbox"/> Endangering Another Student <input type="checkbox"/> Severe Class Disruption <input type="checkbox"/> Leave the Bldg./Cut School <input type="checkbox"/> Threat to Staff/ Striking Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Fighting <input type="checkbox"/> Leave Building <input type="checkbox"/> Throwing Object <input type="checkbox"/> Vandalism <hr/> VIOLATION OF PA CRIMINAL CODE <input type="checkbox"/> Violation of Weapons Policy <input type="checkbox"/> Violation of Drug/Alcohol
Level 1 Interventions	Level 2 Consequences	Level 3 Consequences
<input type="checkbox"/> Verbal Warning <input type="checkbox"/> Reteach Expectations <input type="checkbox"/> Change of Work Setting <input type="checkbox"/> Classroom Behavior System <input type="checkbox"/> Loss of Privileges <input type="checkbox"/> Student Conference <input type="checkbox"/> Parent Phone Call/Contact <input type="checkbox"/> Parent Conference <input type="checkbox"/> Behavior Contract <input type="checkbox"/> Daily Contact Sheet <input type="checkbox"/> Other *After three different documented attempts (in one day) to manage the behavior in the classroom, an office referral is made.	Administrative Use <input type="checkbox"/> In school suspension <input type="checkbox"/> Out of school suspension *SAP referral may be made after a level 2 misconduct.	Administrative Use <input type="checkbox"/> In-school suspension <input type="checkbox"/> Out-of-school suspension <input type="checkbox"/> Expulsion
	Administrative Use: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	

Figure 2. Write-up Form

1.1 Operational Definitions

1. Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports: A preventative behavior model aimed at promoting positive behavioral choices in efforts to increase student engagement and reduce problematic behaviors that result in loss of instructional time (Barrett et al., 2008).
2. ROAR: The acronym used building-wide to remind students of the expectations

Responsible

On-Task

Always Be Safe

Respectful
3. Caregiver: A person over the age of eighteen who is responsible for the well-being of the child/student (e.g., an older sibling, a parent, aunt, uncle, grandmother, grandfather, or other family relative or friend of the family) (Beydoun et al., 2019).
4. In-school Suspension: An exclusionary discipline consequence in which students are removed from the regular learning environment and placed in an alternative location, still on school grounds, to receive their education under the supervision of a trained teacher (Blomberg, 2004).
5. Out-of-School Suspension: An exclusionary discipline consequence through which the student is removed from the regular learning environment and not permitted on school property during the time of the suspension for a period not to exceed 10 days (Blomberg, 2004)
6. Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP): A government department with a mission to “lead the nation's efforts to improve outcomes for children with disabilities, birth through

21, and their families, ensuring access to fair, equitable, and high-quality education and services” (U.S. Department of Education, 2018)

7. Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN): An organization that works with the Pennsylvania Department of Education’s Bureau of Special Education to “provide a full array of professional development and technical assistance targeted to improving student results” (*PaTTAN*, n.d.).
8. Specials/Itinerant Teacher: A teacher who instructs art, gym, math lab, STEMology, or music. These teachers see the students for one class period on a six-day rotating basis, except for STEMology, which is allocated a 30-day block. While these teachers are with the students, the homeroom teachers utilize the time for a plan/prep period.

2.0 Review of Literature

2.1 Introduction

Students experiencing academic failure, limited family and community supports, disabilities, membership in negative peer groups, or poverty are less likely to respond to primary prevention efforts and remain at risk for developing patterns of problematic and challenging behavior unless they receive additional support (Bambara & Kern, 2005). These students are more likely to display behaviors that result in discipline consequences such as in-school suspension (ISS) and out-of-school suspension (OSS). In-school suspension is defined as removal of the student from the classroom and placement in an alternate location in the school with the goal of allowing the learning of others to continue. Out-of-school suspension is defined as the removal of a student from school property for a period of one to 10 days (Blomberg, 2004).

Loss of instructional time resulting from these exclusionary practices create learning gaps and reduces the opportunity for students to remain engaged in academic instruction. Research shows that these students are more likely to drop out of school before graduation (Suh et al., 2007) and that the suspensions do not effectively reduce reoccurrences and tend to increase the behaviors upon return (Lo & Cartledge, 2007; Sprague, 2018).

This review of literature provides an overview of the Multi-Tiered Support System (MTSS) as well as Response to Intervention (RTI), which is the multi-tiered approach to academics, and Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS), which is the multi-tiered approach to behavior. Since this inquiry is focused on student behavior, this review of literature also includes

a comparison of two PBIS models and the components deemed necessary for successful implementation.

2.2 Multi-tiered Support Systems

One of the great debates within the education realm is over the purpose of schooling. Theorists such as John Dewey, dating back to 1916, have provided various rationales for the existence of schools throughout history. Although the initial purpose of providing children opportunities to learn essential life lessons has evolved over time, current research still sees schools as a venue for preparing youth to participate in a 21st century civic culture (Elias, 2014).

In order to adequately prepare students, schools must develop and maintain an atmosphere and climate that is conducive to student learning. If students are not able to function within the school environment, negative behaviors have a tendency to increase, which can then lead to students losing out on valuable instructional time (Cheney et al., 2004; Guiding Principles: A Resource for Improving School Climate and Discipline, 2014). Therefore, implementation of behavioral supports and intervention fosters student success both academically and socially.

It is from this need for preventative methods, as well as the Reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Act of 1997, that schools began considering positive behavior supports, strategies, and interventions in order to decrease problematic behaviors and build more conducive learning environments. President Bush signed the reauthorization of Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) in 2004, maintaining the original focus of the Education for All Handicapped Children of 1975, which provided safeguards for students with

disabilities and access to special education services (Jimerson et al., 2016; Sugai & Horner, 2009). This legislature paved the way for a multi-tiered approach as an alternate means of identifying students with learning disabilities. This revision to IDEA was meant to enhance the learning of all struggling students through proper prevention, intervention, monitoring, and instruction in regular education (Jimerson et al., 2015).

Many different models began to emerge as a result of the push from the Department of Education to better support students. Multi-tiered Support Systems (MTSS) are considered the umbrella under which academic and behavior support systems such as Response to Intervention (RTI) and Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) are classified. Regardless of whether MTSS is used for academics or behavior, the major components of an effective program remain the same across all applications. Those components include: (a) consistent, high-quality, evidence-based core intervention for all learners; (b) screening and progress-monitoring procedures to predict responsiveness to tiered instruction; and (c) more intensive interventions designed to supplement classroom instruction for students identified as at risk based on screening indices or progress-monitoring measures (Kovaleski & Black, 2010; O'Connor & Freeman, 2012). The MTSS system is comprised of three levels or tiers: Tier 1 (primary or universal), Tier 2 (secondary or targeted), and Tier 3 (tertiary or intensive).

The MTSS approach begins with a universal screening process for all students and is usually conducted at the beginning of the school year in order to identify students who are at risk for poor learning outcomes or at risk for displaying challenging and disruptive behaviors. From an academic standpoint, students who score below the cutoff score are identified as needing more support services. Therefore, in addition to the primary level of core instruction all students receive, these students receive additional, more intense support. All students are monitored throughout the

year, and movement between tiers is based on data from the progress monitoring. If students respond adequately to the secondary level of support, they return to the primary core instruction. Otherwise, their intervention is increased to the tertiary level. This fluid process can change as needed throughout the school year based on the progress monitoring data. This same process is parallel for students in a behavioral model, with supports geared towards reducing negative behaviors, promoting positive behaviors, and building a strong climate conducive to learning.

2.2.1 Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTII)

Response to Intervention (RTI), while initially used as a screening process for early identification of students with learning disabilities, is widely used as a tiered approach to monitor student progress in order to make good instructional and intervention decisions (Sugai & Horner, 2009). Similar to Kovalski & Black (2010) and O'Connor & Freeman (2012), the National Center on Response to Intervention (NCRTI) identifies four components of the RTI process, which is an example of a multi-tiered support system: screening, progress monitoring, multi-level prevention system, and data-based decision making. While the aforementioned researchers do not name data-based decision making as a component of the MTSS process, it is implied through their explanation of the tiered system of supports. NCRTI explains that the goal of RTI is to “minimize the risk for long-term negative learning outcomes by responding quickly and efficiently to documented learning or behavioral problems and ensuring appropriate identification of students with disabilities” (2010, p. 4).

2.2.2 School-Wide Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS)

While programs such as The Child Development Project; Olweus Bullying Prevention Program; Project Achieve; and Prevention, Acting Upon, and Resolving (PAR) Comprehensive Behavior Management System have been used in the past to alter the behaviors of students in order to produce a more conducive learning environment, Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) is increasingly popular throughout schools in the United States (Bradshaw, Koth, Thornton, et al., 2008).

PBIS is a noncurricular program that can be implemented through current staff instead of additional resources and is therefore adaptable to meet the needs of different school cultures and climates. Authors such as Jimerson et al (2016) and Sugai and Horner (2009) suggest that School Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) evolved from the preventative nature of RTII as the premise of PBIS is to prevent problematic behaviors and teach students desired skills and behaviors to replace the less desirable ones. The three-tiered approach of both systems mirrors the public health model in that Tier 1 (primary) is focused on providing supports to the whole school, Tier 2 (selective) targets small groups that are isolated for redirection, and Tier 3 (tertiary) focuses on individual students to support prevention of disruptive and problematic behaviors (Bradshaw et al., 2012; Hulac et al., 2011).

In an effort to reduce the loss of instructional time, Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) systems have been utilized in schools to better support students' social skills and school climate (Bradshaw, Koth, Bevans, et al., 2008; Taylor-Greene & Kartub, 2000). While originally used to support students with behavior disorders, these systems of intervention were developed to transform behavior through instruction and learning (Lohrmann-O'Rourke et al.,

2000). Systemic approaches to modify behavior target change in both staff and students as the program attempts to shift the focus from a reactionary to a preventative process.

Studies have also shown that schools with PBIS systems in place have fewer office referrals and a reduced number of suspensions (Sugai & Horner, 2009) as well as improved academic performance (Jimerson et al., 2016; Sugai & Horner, 2009). There is also research to suggest an overall reduction of problematic behaviors at the school, classroom and individual levels (Hulac et al., 2011). However, PBIS systems need to be implemented with fidelity and consistency by utilizing the major components of an effective model.

2.3 Effective PBIS Models

An effective PBIS model aims to create improved systems and procedures to positively change staff and student behaviors while drawing on social, emotional, and behavioral learning principles (Bradshaw et al., 2012). When implemented with fidelity and ongoing training and coaching, PBIS programs have been linked to improvements in student behavior (Bradshaw, Koth, Bevens, et al., 2008). The preventative model works to reduce new problematic behaviors and decrease the intensity of current behaviors. Through this model, students are formally taught social skills, experience intentional positive interactions with adult role models, and are reinforced for positive behaviors (Dunlop, 2013).

2.3.1 A State-Level Model

A state-wide model of PBIS was developed by Rob Horner, George Sugai, and others at the University of Oregon and adopted by the Bureau of Special Education/Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN). This model articulates the main components of successful implementation as: (a) Leadership Commitment, (b) Resource Deployment, (c) Collaboration, (d) Ongoing Staff Development, and (e) Data-based decision-making.

2.3.1.1 Leadership Commitment

The PBIS team, or Leadership Team, is usually comprised of three to eight members, including administration, regular education, special education, guidance counselors, special/elective teachers, parents, and students, the latter depending on the grade level of the building. This team is responsible for developing the School-Wide PBIS action plan, monitoring the behavior data, meeting regularly, maintaining communication with the rest of the building staff, and evaluating the progress based on the data (George & Martinez, 2007; Lewis & Sugai, 1999).

2.3.1.2 Resource Deployment

While implementing PBIS can be done without purchasing a program or training, securing funding for the resource, including time, is a necessary component of implementation, according to this model. This model, however, specifically allots time for the Leadership Team to meet at least monthly, allowing for a building coach, if appropriate, to spend time in classrooms to coach teachers and to refocus resources on promotion and prevention instead of just intervention.

Funding might also need to be allotted to reward students, depending on the decisions made by the Leadership Team.

In two separate scenarios, project costs were estimated through research based on Horner et al.'s (2012) work on implementation of district wide PBIS programs. One scenario presented a budget for a mid-sized district with 15 schools in the Tier I implementation phase. This district outsourced their training and created Leadership Teams across the district, with one team made of two trainers and three coaches for every five to seven schools. Costs averaged \$4,633 per school per year.

In the other scenario, a budget was presented for the same school district with an expansion to include an additional 30 school teams utilizing district staff as trainers. In this scenario, the anticipated average cost per school per year was only \$3,000 for a total of 45 school teams (Horner et al., 2012).

2.3.1.3 Collaboration

Referred to as shared leadership, administrator and staff support is cited as a critical component of successful PBIS implementation and sustainability, with considerable importance being placed on the presence of administration on the PBIS Team (Cheney et al., 2004; Putnam et al., 2009; Richter et al., 2012). Successful implementation has been linked to programs with effective leadership teams that are representative of the school and are highly respected by their colleagues and peers (Putnam et al., 2009). In addition, Newcomer and Barrett (2009) also suggest that in order to create buy-in with staff, stakeholders must see the need for the change, the value of the proposed changes, have access to the skills needed to implement the changes, and be rewarded for their efforts.

Research warns that staff members should not see PBIS implementation as another initiative, but as a larger umbrella under which previously implemented initiatives fall (Putnam et al., 2009). High rates of staff turnover and poor communication are cited as reasons that PBIS implementation is not as successful in some buildings (Boden et al., 2020; George et al., 2018;)

2.3.1.4 Ongoing Staff Development

This Pennsylvania state PBIS model suggests that in order for implementation to be successful, one major component is a program coach who spends one or two days in each building per month in order to assist the team with program implementation and fidelity. This coach also helps with the data collection and dissemination.

As George and Martinez (2007) warn, it is vital that team members are trained and that additional trainings, or “booster” trainings, are available as the school’s needs change over time. Newcomer and Barrett (2009) recommend determining what skills are needed to improve student behavior and performance and then identify the staff’s skill level in order to identify gaps. Three levels of professional development should be considered for effective PBIS implementation: overview of PBIS, organized training around each of the three tiers of PBIS, and ongoing, readily available assistance for the school team (Lewis et al., 2016). This model recommends that team members are trained at least three to five days on each tier of intervention over the course of the full implementation.

2.3.1.5 Data-Based Decision Making

Data can be used for a variety of purposes and is most often used to drive decisions. In an effective PBIS model, data consists of office referrals, suspension rates, and classroom discipline

logs (Bradshaw et al., 2010; George & Martinez, 2007; Lewis & Sugai, 1999). Through the collection and analysis of this data, students receive support based on individual need through a tiered support system (Sugai & Horner, 2002).

Based on the data collected and teacher referrals, students are identified who need more targeted support to address specific behavioral issues. In order to meet the needs of these students, OSEP (2019) recommends increased instruction and practice with self-regulation and social skills, increased adult supervision, increased opportunity for positive reinforcement, and increased access to academic supports. Oftentimes, Tier II interventions and supports are provided to students in small groups and Tier III interventions are provided on an individual basis (R. H. Horner et al., 2010).

In many schools, 1 to 5 percent of students do not respond to Tier I and II supports and interventions. Therefore, Tier III strategies must be implemented for these students, who oftentimes demonstrate highly disruptive, dangerous behaviors that create barriers to their own learning (OSEP, 2019). In Tier III, the goal is to reduce the intensity of the cases that are unlikely to respond to Tier I and II interventions. These will most likely be individual interventions and supports, rather than a small group such as at a Tier II level (OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, 2015).

2.3.2 A National Model

A national PBIS model from the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) (2015) recommends the following components for successful implementation of Positive Behavior Intervention and Support systems: (a) data-based decision making, (b) team-based coordination,

(c) fidelity and integrity of implementation, (d) continuum of evidence-based interventions, (e) continuous progress monitoring, and (f) regular universal screening (OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, 2015).

2.3.2.1 Data-Based Decision Making

Similar to the state PBIS model, as well as universal models to quality instruction, the use of data to drive decisions has been a driving force in education for years. This national model also prioritizes data-based decisions that are culturally and contextually relevant. Practices and systems should be adapted to the context of the local culture while influences of group and individual perspectives and bias should be considered (OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, 2015).

2.3.2.2 Team-Based Coordination

The OSEP PBIS model also recognizes that a Leadership Team is essential to successful implementation. This model differs from the state model in that it recommends breaking the Leadership Team into two smaller teams: The Core Team and The Peripheral Team. The Core Team mirrors the same responsibilities as the state model's Leadership Team and is involved in the critical daily operations of the implementation and operations. The Peripheral Team meets less frequently and is responsible for developing and organizing activities. While still an essential part of the Leadership Team, The Peripheral team works on an as-needed basis in conjunction with The Core Team.

2.3.2.3 Fidelity and Integrity of Implementation

This model (Center on PBIS, 2019) suggests that schools should start with Tier I, or universal implementation. Once fidelity is reached at this tier, further implementation has a greater success rate. At Tier I, school teams develop three to five clearly defined, and positively stated, rules or expectations. These rules must then be taught to the students, and the leadership team should develop a school-wide system for acknowledging students who follow these rules. This model suggests that success at Tier I has been achieved when 80 percent of students can explain what the rules are when asked.

Once Tier I supports have been implemented at a building-wide level, Tier II targeted interventions should be implemented next, followed by individual interventions at Tier III. By using resources within the school system such as school counselors, psychologists, or mental health specialists, school teams can identify students who do not respond to universal supports and might benefit from additional targeted supports. These school teams, as well as the staff who would be providing the interventions, need to be trained on intervention supports at this level as well as Tier III.

2.3.2.4 Regular Universal Screening, Continuous Progress Monitoring and Continuum of Evidence-based Interventions

The last three components of the national model replicate the essential components of the overarching MTSS model by including universal screening, ongoing and continuous progress monitoring, and evidence-based interventions. This includes a core curriculum for all students, modification of this curriculum for those students needing additional or targeted support, and an intensive curriculum for those students needing individual support.

While this process is closely tied to the data-based component found in both models, these three elements are identified as separate essential components of a successful implementation in the national OSEP model.

2.3.3 A Model for Evaluation

Both the state and national models suggest similar components essential for successful implementation of a PBIS program. The use of data to inform decisions was mentioned in both and addressed in greater depth at the national level. Data-based decision making is also referenced as an essential component of the MTSS model. Also included in the overarching MTSS model is universal screening for all students, ongoing progress monitoring, and evidenced-based interventions.

The necessity for a leadership team is cited as a necessary component for both models as well. This team is essential for the development of the behavior matrix, PBIS materials, and communication to the staff, as well as creating and sustaining staff and student buy-in throughout the implementation. This team must have respect and rapport within the organization as well as the organizational capacity to make changes within the system. Within this same context, the administration must be in support of the implementation and be willing to deploy resources and allocate the funds, resources, and staff members needed to be successful.

Both models also address ongoing staff development as an essential component. Having staff members trained on the procedures and protocols of the PBIS system provides consistency school-wide for the students as well as the staff. Whether the school chooses to use an external

trainer or current district employees, it is important that the leadership team is kept up to date on implementation guidelines and that the staff is trained on evidence-based interventions.

For the purpose of this inquiry, the state model will be used for evaluation purposes. Therefore, the building of inquiry's existing PBIS program will be evaluated for leadership commitment, resource deployment, collaboration, staff development, and data-based decisions.

3.0 Methodology

This chapter describes the methodology for this inquiry. It includes the district demographic data, the school demographic data, descriptions of the participants in the sample of the inquiry, the design of the inquiry, and the methods used in data collection and analysis. In order to share the purpose of the study and to establish transparency of process, a letter was sent to the district's superintendent with a description of the methodology described below (Appendix A).

A mixed methods design was used with the following sources of data: a review of archival district data, including pre-existing data from a building survey and school demographic data, one survey, four focus groups, and five interviews (with three non-focus group participants). The purpose of the survey, focus groups, and interviews is to gain perspective on the original intent of PBIS implementation plan as well as the current implementation and to compare those components to PBIS best practices that include leadership commitment, resource deployment, collaboration, ongoing staff development, and data-based decision making.

3.1 Archived Data Review

3.1.1 District Demographic Data

As of August 2020, the district of inquiry had an enrollment of 3,162 students in two elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. According to the United States

Census Bureau (2019), the population of the city in which the district of inquiry resides is 19,009 as of July 2019, which is a 3.7 percent decrease over the past 10 years. Community racial and ethnic demographics are described through the census data as 60.4 percent White, 33.5 percent Black, 4.8 percent two or more races, and 2.5 percent Hispanic or Latino¹. The median household income of the community is \$29,312 compared to the county median income of \$58,383 and the state median income of \$59,445. The community has a 3.9 percent unemployment rate, likely contributing to 32.9 percent of residents living below the poverty level, compared to 12.2 percent at the state level. The district has a highly transient population, resulting in many families living in public housing. Of the 11,235 houses in the community, only 8,923 are occupied, 48.3 percent of those being rental properties. According to the district superintendent, around 45 percent of students will either start the school year late or leave during the school year.

According to the Pennsylvania Department of Education (2018) for the 2018-2019 school year, 57.2 percent of the student population were identified by their parents upon enrollment as minority students, either Black or multiracial, while 40.8 percent identified as White. In addition, 27 percent of the student population are special education students, and 12 percent of students receive mental health or counseling services, whether it is school guidance counselor social groups, outpatient/ school-based counseling, or more intensive counseling. The SAP referral report was not available for the 2019-2020 school year, therefore the percent of students receiving mental health or counseling services was based off of current rosters for the services provided at the building level.

¹ Hispanic or Latino percentage may be included in other race categories.

3.1.2 School Demographic Data

The building in this inquiry was a K-5 building led by one principal and two assistant principals. Although 100 percent of students received free breakfast and lunch, 81.6 percent of students were classified as economically disadvantaged. As of August 2020, the building was comprised of 668 students, of whom 53.2 percent were Black, 31.5 percent were White, 14 percent were multiracial, 1.2 percent were Hispanic, and 0.1 percent were Asian. Of these students, 24.9 percent were eligible for special education services according to the Pennsylvania Department of Education's PA Future Ready Index (2018).

This building was originally divided into two schools: A K-2 primary school and a 3-5 intermediate school. These schools, while housed in the same building, operated independently of each other under separate principal leadership. Staff from three other elementary buildings merged into this newly constructed building in the winter of 2014. After functioning as two schools for two and a half years, they were merged to form one elementary school for the 2016-2017 school year with one head principal and one assistant principal. Two years later, in preparation for the 2018-2019 school year, an additional assistant principal was added due to increased disruptive behaviors.

Table 1 shows a four-year comparison of documentation write-ups and office discipline referrals (ODRs) as well as the monthly average for each school year. A documentation write-up informs the office of an incident in a classroom, but the classroom teacher does not expect the administration to issue consequences. This form of write-up helps to track minor behaviors. An office discipline referral (ODR) is a more serious infraction for which the teachers write students up and expect the administration to follow up.

Table 1. Student Write-Ups Over Four School Years

	16/17 School Year (Sept.-May)	17/18 School Year (Sept.-May)	18/19 School Year (Sept.-May)	19/20 School Year (Sept.-mid-March)
Documentation Only	525	1308	1070	692
Office Discipline Referrals (ODR)	408	900	710	552
Average ODRs per month	45.3	100.0	78.9	84.5

The PBIS program was fully implemented during the 2016-2017 school year while staff were still being trained. The teachers were fully trained and acclimated to the program going into the 2017-2018 school year. The 2019-2020 school year was ended early on March 13, 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic; therefore, the data was averaged over 6.5 months instead of nine as in other years.

The original K-2 primary school was almost completely made up of teachers who have always taught elementary students, if not their current grade level, with the exception of a few new teachers. One-third of the original 3-5 intermediate school teachers were previously middle school teachers and were moved to a different grade when funding was reduced and staff positions at the middle school were eliminated. Of these 20 intermediate teachers, only 14 have been in the building since the original implementation of the PBIS program. The distribution of the teaching staff can be found in Table 2: Teacher Distribution in Building of Inquiry. For this inquiry, the focus was on the intermediate grades 3-5 of the building since the higher rates of office referrals and suspensions were occurring at these grade levels (Table 3: Office Referrals and Out of School Suspensions by Grade Level). Suspensions were counted by the number of times a suspension was

entered into the system, not by the number of days a student was suspended. For example, if a student was suspended for three days, it was only counted as one suspension for the purpose of this study.

Table 2. Teacher Distribution in Building of Inquiry

Description	Number of Staff
Kindergarten	6
Grade 1	6
Grade 2	6
Grade 3	5
Grade 4	6
Grade 5	6
Special Education K-5	4
Specials/Itinerant K-5	5

At the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year, the administrative team surveyed all the teachers in the building in an effort to assess the PBIS program after an extended school closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This survey was sent to all classroom teachers through a Google Form using teachers' district email addresses and done on school time. The purpose of the survey was to assess the current PBIS programming at the building of inquiry. Since this survey was done months ago, new data was needed to identify areas in need of improvement for the PBIS program currently in place.

Table 3. Office Referrals and Suspensions by Grade Level

	Level 3 Office Referrals (ODRs)					Out of School Suspensions (OSSs)				
	2015/ 2016	2016/ 2017	2017/ 2018	2018/ 2019	2019/ 2020	2015/ 2016	2016/ 2017	2017/ 2018	2018/ 2019*	2019/ 2020
Kindergarten	4	17	39	23	49	13	13	10	N/A	3
Grade 1	15	8	208	127	216	8	8	22	N/A	5
Grade 2	47	46	193	291	298	12	38	18	N/A	6
Grade 3	91	60	122	78	63	34	51	45	N/A	23
Grade 4	70	44	246	94	138	26	43	51	N/A	28
Grade 5	111	53	92	97	82	44	45	47	N/A	30

*Suspension data was not available for the 2018-2019 school year due to a change in Student Information Systems; however, discipline data was still available through the ROAR referral system for office referrals.

3.2 Survey

3.2.1 Survey Participants

In order to get teachers' opinions of the current implementation and viability of the PBIS program in place, the researcher created a teacher survey based on the exemplary PBIS models discussed in the literature review. The survey was designed and distributed to gather this information from the teachers in the building of inquiry who have managed grades 3-5 classrooms on a daily basis. This population was selected because the number of infractions in the 3-5 grade span have continued to occur at an alarming rate despite positive interventions and supports being in place.

3.2.2 Survey Design

The Center on PBIS (2019) offers a Team Member Rating Form, a survey that allows schools to examine the fidelity of a Tier 1 implementation. This survey, modified from the Florida's Positive Behavior Support Project's Schoolwide Benchmarks of Quality Team Member Rating Form (2010), asked participants if each identified component of a model PBIS program was "In Place and Successful," "In Place but Needs Improvement," or is "Not in Place." For the purpose of this evaluation inquiry, the survey was modified to examine the fidelity of the PBIS program implementation at the building of inquiry against the state model. Therefore, the building of inquiry's PBIS program was evaluated for leadership commitment, resource deployment,

collaboration, staff development, and data-based decision making. Questions regarding “Effective procedures for dealing with discipline” were omitted because the components listed did not appropriately evaluate the components addressed in this study.

The survey was also modified to include teacher demographic information. This information was important in order to analyze the data based on the number of years of experience overall as well as in the current grade level, and if participants taught regular education or special education. Including the frequency of responses for each of these categories will further allow the researcher to make recommendations to strengthen the program.

3.2.3 Data Collection

All 3-5 intermediate teachers of Regular Education (17), Special Education (3), and Specials/Itinerant (5) subjects received the survey through Google Forms. These 25 teachers were invited by the researcher via district email to participate in the survey. The teachers were able to utilize district devices during school time in order to access and complete the survey. The researcher used Google Forms due to participants’ familiarity with the product and the ability to use a district Google account to ensure compatibility with participants. This platform also converted the data into an Excel spreadsheet for analysis. In addition, the Google-based survey format produced descriptive graphs automatically. Paper surveys were not distributed, as paper surveys do not yield a significantly higher response rate than electronic surveys (Knezek & Christensen, 2002).

A cover letter, which included the survey link, was sent to invite the teachers to participate in the survey (Appendix B). An operational definition of Positive Behavior Interventions and

Supports will be included, along with an explanation of how the survey will be used to complete a formative program evaluation. This letter also explained the researcher's role as the principal investigator, the anonymity of the results, the intended use, and the voluntary nature of the survey. The survey (Appendix C) was offered for a period of one week. Although a plan was in place that if 75 percent of the teachers did not respond within the one-week timeframe, the link would be sent out again each week for two more weeks in order to obtain at least a 75 percent response rate, or 19 teachers, by the end of a three-week period, this plan was not needed since the threshold was met by the end of the first week. While a 100 percent response rate would have been ideal, 75 percent was deemed acceptable due to additional responsibilities and stressors placed on teachers who are working in remote or hybrid conditions.

If staff members were not in school due to COVID-19, they were able to access the survey during working hours from home using their district devices. If the school was open, teachers were able to use their student-free time to complete the survey. This situation was not applicable during the time period when the survey was open since the building remained open.

3.2.4 Data Analysis

The survey was designed to generate quantitative data for analysis. Responses were analyzed by comparing the overall responses for each component of the model PBIS program. Percentages for individual question responses were reported for each component as well. The purpose of this method was to analyze the data based on the number of years of experience overall and in particular grade levels and whether participants teach regular education or special education. This method also allowed the researcher to determine the number of teachers in each of the

demographic groups who feel the components are in place and successful, in place but need improvement, or are not in place. The researcher utilized the descriptive graphs produced through Google Forms as well as the data stored in a Google Sheet to analyze the responses by individual question and overall. This data was then used to revise the focus group questions, if needed, for the qualitative part of this mixed methods study. No revision of focus group questions was needed based on the data from the survey results.

3.3 Focus Groups

3.3.1 Focus Group Participants

Focus groups are useful with problem definition and when the research goal is to elicit and understand general attitudes about a specific service or product, such as the PBIS implementation, in this inquiry (Wilson, 2014).

The researcher facilitated four focus groups in order to gather more detailed grade-level perspectives. These focus groups were organized by grade level with two to five teachers in each, depending on participant response. The goal of the focus groups was to explore teachers' perspectives on the PBIS system and its effectiveness in the place of inquiry. One focus group was to be held each week over a period of four weeks. Each group was comprised of third grade, fourth grade, or fifth grade teachers and administrators. The third-grade focus group included the most senior teacher present at the time of initial implementation while the fifth-grade focus group included the newest teacher to the building in grades three through five. Special Education teachers

were assigned to a focus group based on the grade level they worked with the most. The fourth focus group was designed to include one administrator who had been present for the implementation, one administrator who joined the building a few years after implementation, and one administrator who was new to the PBIS programming at the building. The third administrator did not respond to the invitation to participate in the study. The administrators were not included in the grade level groups to avoid any teachers potentially feeling uncomfortable with administration present and therefore might alter their responses.

3.3.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

The focus groups took the form of semi-structured interviews with questions formulated from the survey responses. The interviews were voluntary and held during the participants' student-free time and on school time for the administrators. The teachers and administrators received a copy of the questions in advance in order to better prepare their answers and to be more efficient with time.

3.3.3 Data Collection

The researcher sent an invitation to participate in the focus groups to each grade level teachers and to administrators. The letter (Appendix D) included with the email explained the purpose of the focus groups, the intended use of participants' responses, and the anonymity of responses.

The researcher presented each focus group with data from the survey conducted at the beginning of the school year (Appendix H) as well as the data collected from the study survey modified from the Florida's Positive Behavior Support Project's Schoolwide Benchmarks of Quality Team Member Rating Form (Appendix E). The participants were then asked a series of questions based on the survey data as well as their own perspectives on the PBIS program. The teachers were asked to use Padlet in order to answer the questions anonymously. Padlet is an online discussion forum that allows participants to post their ideas on an electronic "bulletin board." This method of data collection was used to collect the participants' individual perspectives anonymously in case they did not feel comfortable sharing their thoughts in a public discussion space.

Once the participants were finished with the Padlet, the group discussed the responses in order to identify areas of the PBIS program needing improvement as well as their overall perspectives on the program. The questions were asked in the form of a semi-structured interview to allow the participants to share individual feedback and their personal opinions while still remaining focused on the research topic.

As Wilson (2014) explained, structured interviews are generally used to gather information on specific issues but most often ask participants to select a response from a set of fixed responses. Unstructured interviews offer a conversation with the participant where there is a general topic, but without any predetermined questions. Semi-structured interviews allow researchers to gather systemic information about a topic while still allowing for new topics to emerge. Semi-structured interviews are helpful when there is some knowledge about the topic of discussion but further information is needed.

Audio recording was used to document the participants' responses and was transcribed using the Microsoft dictation tool after all focus groups were completed. Permission to be recorded was embedded in the invitation sent to the participants. In addition to the audio recordings, the Padlet responses were analyzed for common themes.

Since the building was open for in- person instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic, the focus groups were conducted in person, and all social distancing guidelines were followed in accordance with the Centers for Disease Control and Pennsylvania Department of Health mandates.

3.3.4 Data Analysis

Separate focus groups for each grade level enabled comparative analysis of similar themes and ideas about the effectiveness of the PBIS program. Following suggestions made by Merriam (2009), the researcher analyzed the data simultaneously while collecting data. The researcher coded focus group transcripts deductively, using the components of best practice to predetermine codes, while also inductively coding ideas and topics that emerged from the discussions. The researcher transcribed each focus group discussion before conducting the next one in order to code each groups' response for emerging themes. This allowed the researcher to determine coding language for the remaining focus groups. Beginning with the first focus group, the data was coded based on themes of leadership commitment, resource deployment, collaboration, staff development, and data-based decisions. Open coding was also used to identify new themes that did not fit into the predetermined categories.

3.4 Individual Interviews

After conducting the focus groups and analyzing the transcripts, the researcher conducted five individual interviews using a semi-structured protocol in order to gather other perspectives in addition to those provided by classroom teachers. Participants included the PBIS committee (3), the building principal (1), and the coordinator of the PBIS implementation from the Watson Institute (1). The staff members were members of the original planning group for the PBIS program implementation. The original committee members and the principal have been part of the school and the program implementation for over five years and were able to provide historical information as well as perspectives on how the program has changed over those years. The participants received a copy of the questions in advance in order to better prepare their answers and to be more efficient with time.

3.4.1 Data Collection

The researcher sent an invitation via district email to the original teachers who served as committee members, the principal, and the Watson Institute coordinator of the PBIS implementation. The participants also received a letter explaining the process of the interviews, the intended use, and the anonymity of their responses (Appendix F). The individual interviews (Appendix G) occurred during the teachers' student-free time and during the school day for the principal and PBIS implementation coordinator. After requesting permission to audio record the interviews, the researcher transcribed the interviews using the Microsoft dictation tool.

Since the building was open for in-person instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic, three interviews were conducted in person, and all social distancing guidelines were followed in accordance with the CDC and Pennsylvania Department of Health mandates. The remaining two interviews were conducted using Zoom Video Conferencing to adhere to building policy that did not allow visitors into the building during the time of data collection.

3.4.2 Data Analysis

The analysis method for the one-on-one interviews was similar to that used for the focus groups. In addition to recording the interviews, the researcher took notes during the interviews and utilized the recordings afterward as needed for reference.

The methods of data collection and analysis for the interviews had some similarities to the focus groups. Once again, the researcher analyzed each interview before conducting the next interview. This technique allowed for a comparative analysis of the multiple interviews.

In contrast to the coding strategy used for the focus groups, the interview transcripts were analyzed using open coding because the questions were written to gather historical information about the implementation process and, therefore, predetermined codes were not as applicable to this type of questioning. The codes were based on the qualitative data itself since the responses could vary from one interview to the next. The codes used in the transcript of the first interview were then applied to the second interview where applicable while adding any new themes that arose (Merriam, 2009). The codes were then grouped into categories based on the ideas that emerged, and the researcher summarized and compared the historical information provided.

4.0 Results

This mixed methods research design included a survey, four focus groups, and five individual interviews in order to evaluate the current SWPBIS program at the building of inquiry. This methodology resulted in data for evaluation in the areas of leadership commitment, resource deployment, collaboration, staff development, and data-based decisions with the intent of making recommendations to improve the program. These best practices are based on a state-wide model of PBIS that was developed by Rob Horner, George Sugai, and others at the University of Oregon and adopted by the Bureau of Special Education/Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN).

This study included a survey modified from the Florida Positive Behavior Intervention and Support Project's Schoolwide Benchmarks of Quality Team Member Rating Form (2010). The Center on PBIS (2019) published this survey as a model implementation tool. The statewide project shares resources that showcase best practices for PBIS implementation.

The survey was modified to gather grade three through five teachers' opinions of the current implementation and viability of the PBIS program in place. The survey was sent to 25 teachers, and 20 responded. This grade span was chosen because office referrals and suspensions occur at a higher rate in those grades than in kindergarten through second grade.

Next, focus groups were convened for each of the grade levels previously mentioned as well as for a group of current and past building administrators. The focus group participants used an online platform, Padlet, to anonymously record the answers to the focus group questions; they were then called together to discuss the group responses. Regular and special education teachers

were grouped by grade level while the administrators were restricted to their own focus group in order to ensure the teachers felt comfortable speaking freely.

Finally, semi-structured interviews were conducted with those individuals involved in the initial implementation of the PBIS programming at the building of inquiry. These participants included original members of the PBIS committee, the building principal, and the coordinator from the outside agency that supported the school through the implementation. These members were asked to participate in order to provide historical information that the classroom teachers would not be able to provide.

4.1 Surveys

The survey was completed by 20 of the 25 teachers invited to participate, and those 20 respondents answered all of the questions in the survey. The first part of the survey requested demographic information from the participants, including the grade level they teach (Table 4: Teacher Participants by Category), how many years of overall teaching experience they have (Table 5: Teaching Experience), how many years of experience they have in the current grade level (Table 6: Teaching Experience at Current Grade Level), and the number of years they have taught at the building of inquiry (which had only been standing for six years at the time of the survey). This information was critical for understanding the participants' classroom experience as a whole as well as with the particular age group they were teaching at the time of the study. While classroom management may come intuitively to some teachers, others become better at classroom management as they gain more years of experience and master more techniques (Bosch, 2006).

While Table 5 shows that 75 percent of the participants have been teaching for more than 10 years, Table 6 shows that only 30 percent of the teachers have only been teaching in their current grade level for more than 10 years.

Table 4. Teacher Participants by Category

Teacher Category	Number	Percentage
Third Grade	4	20%
Fourth Grade	4	20%
Fifth Grade	6	30%
Special Education	3	15%
Specials/ Itinerant	3	15%

Table 5. Teaching Experience

Number of Years	Number of Teachers	Percentage
1-3 years	2	10%
4-6 years	3	15%
7-10 years	0	0%
11-15 years	8	40%
16-20 years	3	15%
20 or more years	4	20%

Table 6. Teaching Experience at Current Grade Level

Number of Years	Number of Teachers	Percentage
1-3 years	4	20%
4-6 years	6	30%
7-10 years	4	20%
11-15 years	2	10%
16-20 years	2	10%
20 or more years	2	10%

4.1.1 Participant Demographics

Of the 20 teachers who responded, four were third grade teachers, four were fourth grade teachers, six were fifth grade teachers, three were special education teachers in grades three through five, and three were specials/itinerant teachers. The breakdown of grade levels, including special education and specials/itinerant teachers, is shown in Table 4: Teacher Participants by Category.

The grade level teachers split the day evenly with each group of students. Each grade level is broken up into teams of two teachers. One teacher is responsible for Math and Science, while the other teacher is responsible for Reading, Grammar, and Social Studies. The teacher teaches one group in the morning and then switches for the afternoon. One third grade teacher has the same students all day and is considered self-contained. It is important to note that 70 percent of respondents are classroom teachers, while the remaining teachers are specials/itinerant teachers who do not instruct the students for more than 40 minutes at a time. During a normal school year, specials were scheduled for 40 minutes, but during the COVID-19 pandemic in the 2020-2021 school year, class periods were limited to 27 minutes due to a shortened day. This shortened day allowed teachers to accommodate the online learners in the afternoon. The length of time the teachers spend with the students is an important factor since teachers' tolerance of student behaviors may vary based on whether they have them for the full day, half day, or for a period, such as specials.

The information from these two demographic questions was combined using the sort and filter tools in Microsoft Excel to further analyze each teacher's experience (Figure 3: Comparison of Overall Teaching Experience to Experience at Current Grade Level). While more than 75

percent of those who responded to the survey have been teaching for over 10 years, only 30 percent of those teachers have been teaching the same grade level for that long. The two teachers with the most overall teaching experience and the most experience teaching the same grade level are either special education teachers or specials/itinerant teachers.

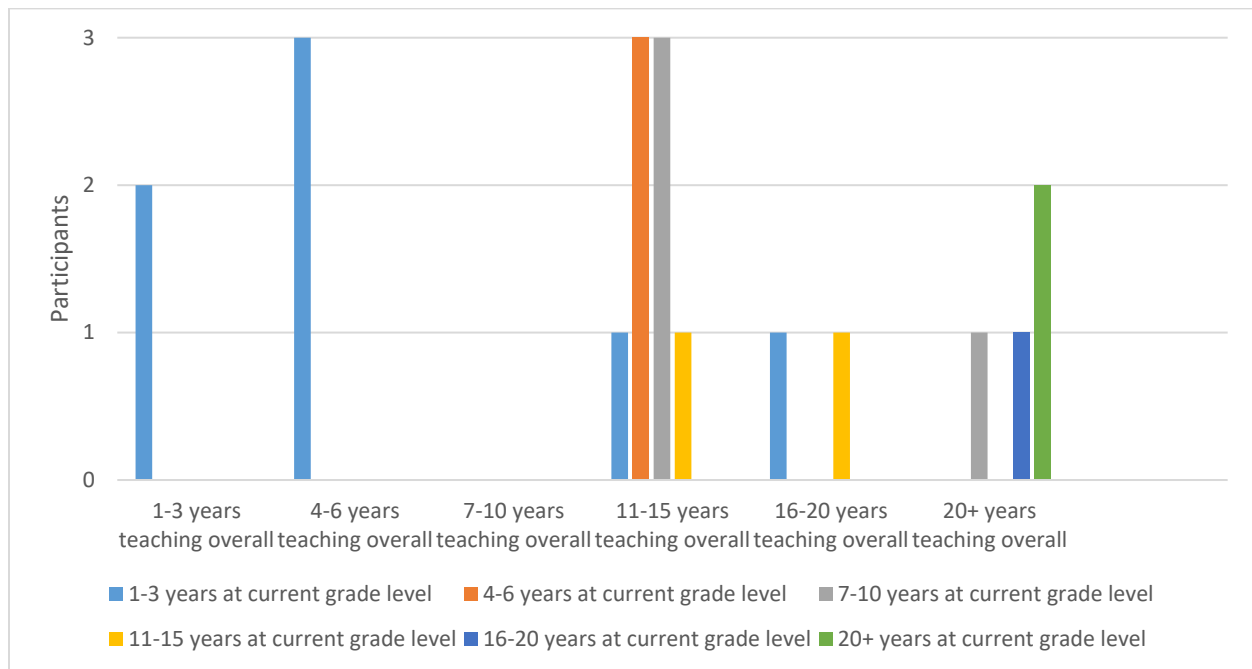


Figure 3. Comparison of Overall Teaching Experience to Experience at Current Grade Level

4.1.2 Survey Responses

The survey, modified from the Florida’s Positive Behavior Support Project’s Schoolwide Benchmarks of Quality Team Member Rating Form (2010), asked participants if each identified component of a model PBIS program is “In Place and Successful,” “In Place but Needs Improvement,” or is “Not in Place.” The survey was modified to omit questions regarding “effective procedures for dealing with discipline” because the components listed do not evaluate the components addressed in this study. Questions regarding the PBIS Team were also omitted to

acknowledge that the teachers not part of this team would not have knowledge of the components listed in that section.

The survey was modified to include teacher demographic information. This information is important in order to analyze the data based on participants' years of experience overall as well as number of years in the current grade level. This information also helps in identifying participants who teach regular education versus special education, as teaching assignment may impact results.

The survey was divided into eight sections: Faculty Commitment, Data Entry and Analysis Plan, Expectations and Rules, Reward/ Recognition Program, Lesson Plans for Teaching Expectations/Rules, Implementation Plan, Classroom Systems, and Evaluation. These sections were grouped and evaluated according to the best practices outlined in the state model: leadership commitment, resource deployment, collaboration, staff development, and data-based decision making. The survey did not provide an opportunity for participants to add additional comments as focus groups and interviews would provide participant commentary. Appendix J shows the summary of all the responses.

4.1.2.1 Leadership Commitment

In the survey, three benchmark statements related to the commitment of building leadership:

- Faculty feedback is obtained throughout the year
- Faculty are aware of behavior problems school-wide through regular data sharing
- Procedures exist for tracking classroom behavior problems

The results are summarized in Table 7: Leadership Commitment Benchmark Statement Results.

The first statement requested that participants rate the fidelity with which staff feedback was requested throughout the year. Seventy-five percent, or 15 respondents, conveyed that this component was in place and successful. Only 20 percent, or four respondents, said it still needs improvement, while one respondent, or 5 percent, stated it was not in place at all.

The next statement asked the participants to rate their perception of staff awareness of behavioral problems school-wide as a result of regular sharing of data. Fifty-five percent, or 11 respondents, agreed that this benchmark was in place and successful; 40 percent, or eight respondents, said it was in place but needed improvement, and the remaining 5 percent, or one respondent, said that it was not in place at all.

The third benchmark statement asked participants about the implementation of a tracking system for behavior problems in the classroom. All participants stated that there are procedures in place for tracking behavior problems in the classrooms, but 35 percent stated that those procedures need to be improved.

Table 7. Leadership Commitment Benchmark Statement Results

	In Place and Successful		In Place but Needs Improvement		Not in Place	
	Number of Respondents	Percentage	Number of Respondents	Percentage	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Faculty feedback is obtained throughout the year	15	75%	4	20%	1	5%
Faculty are aware of behavior problems school-wide through regular data sharing	11	55%	8	40%	1	5%

Procedures exist for tracking classroom behavior problems	13	65%	7	35%	0	0%
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4.1.2.2 Resource Deployment

Eighteen benchmark statements asked the participants about the fidelity of resource deployment, specifically in the areas of the student and staff reward system, the presence of behavioral expectations for staff and students, behavioral curriculum, and referral process.

Seven of the benchmark statements (Table 8: Resource Deployment and Reward Systems Benchmark Statement Results) asked the participants about the reward system incorporated into the PBIS programming:

- A system of rewards implemented consistently
- A variety of methods are used to reward students
- Rewards are linked to expectations/rules
- Rewards are varied to maintain student interest
- The system includes incentives for staff/faculty
- Staff uses reward system appropriately
- Schedule for rewards/incentives for the year is planned

When asked if the rewards were implemented consistently, all 20 respondents agreed that such consistency was in place; however, one respondent said it needed improvement. All respondents agreed that a variety of methods are used to reward students and that the methods are successful. The same results were given regarding whether the rewards were linked to

expectations. Again, all respondents agreed when asked if the rewards are varied to maintain interest, but 20 percent, or four respondents, stated that this area could be improved. Forty percent, or eight respondents, stated that the system does include incentives for staff; however, 30 percent, or six respondents, stated that incentives need to be improved. The remaining 60 percent, or 12 respondents, stated that this component was not in place at all. When participants were asked about their perception of whether the staff uses the reward system appropriately, 75 percent, or 15 respondents, stated that this component is in place and successful while the other 25 percent, or 5 respondents, stated that it is in place but needs improvement. All of the respondents agreed that there was a schedule in place for incentives or rewards being planned for the year; however, 20 percent, or four respondents, stated that improvement is needed.

Table 8. Resource Deployment and Reward Systems Benchmark Statement Results

	In Place and Successful		In Place but Needs Improvement		Not in Place	
	Number of Respondents	Percentage	Number of Respondents	Percentage	Number of Respondents	Percentage
A system of rewards implemented consistently	19	95%	1	5%	0	0%
A variety of methods are used to reward students	20	100%	0	0%	0	0%
Rewards are linked to expectations/rules	20	100%	0	0%	0	0%
Rewards are varied to maintain student interest	16	80%	4	20%	0	0%

The system includes incentives for staff/faculty	2	10%	6	30%	12	60%
Staff uses reward system appropriately	15	75%	5	25%	0	0%
Schedule for rewards/incentives for the year is planned	16	80%	4	20%	0	0%

Five statements related to the instructional delivery of lessons for teaching the expectations and rules (Table 9: Resource Deployment and Behavioral Curriculum Benchmark Statement Results):

- The school has a behavioral curriculum that includes expectations and rules
- Lessons include examples and non-examples
- Lessons for teaching student expectations/rules/rewards of the PBIS System are scheduled and delivered
- Lessons use a variety of teaching strategies
- Strategies to share key features of the PBIS program with families are implemented

The first two questions had the same responses. One hundred percent of the respondents agreed that the school has a behavioral curriculum that includes expectations and rules as well as examples and non-examples. Only 5 percent, or one respondent, stated that improvement is needed in these areas. Similarly, all respondents agreed that lessons for teaching student expectations were in place, but 20 percent, or four respondents, stated that improvement was needed. All of the respondents also agreed that the lessons provided include a variety of teaching strategies, but 10 percent, or two respondents, stated that improvement is needed in this area. Respondents stated

that there are strategies in place that share key features of the PBIS program with families, but 55 percent, or 11 respondents, stated that this component needs improvement.

Table 9. Resource Deployment and Behavioral Curriculum Benchmark Statement Results

	In Place and Successful		In Place but Needs Improvement		Not in Place	
	Number of Respondents	Percentage	Number of Respondents	Percentage	Number of Respondents	Percentage
The school has a behavioral curriculum that includes expectations and rules	19	95%	1	5%	0	0%
Lessons include examples and non-examples	19	95%	1	5%	0	0%
Lessons for teaching student expectations/rules/rewards of the PBIS System are scheduled and delivered	16	80%	4	20%	0	0%
Lessons use a variety of teaching strategies	18	90%	2	10%	0	0%
Strategies to share key features of the PBIS program with families are implemented	9	45%	11	55%	0	0%

The next five statements focused on the expectations and rules for the staff and students (Table 10: Resource Deployment and Behavioral Expectations Benchmark Statement Results).

These benchmark statements asked participants to rate their perceptions of implementation in regard to the following:

- three to five positively stated school wide expectations posted around the school
- expectations applied to both staff and students
- expectations were developed for specific locations throughout the school
- staff can identify expectations and rules
- students can identify expectations and rules

All respondents agreed that the expectations were posted around the school and that those expectations were developed for specific locations throughout the school. Only 20 percent, or four participants, did not agree that the expectations applied to both the staff and students, although they agreed it was in place but needed improvement.

The last two statements focused on whether or not the staff and students could identify the PBIS expectations. While 100 percent of the respondents stated that the staff could identify the expectations, only 85 percent, or 17 respondents, stated that the student implementation was successful in the same fashion. The other 15 percent, or three respondents, stated that the student side of the component was in place but needed improvement.

Table 10. Resource Deployment and Behavioral Expectations Benchmark Statement Results

	In Place and Successful		In Place but Needs Improvement		Not in Place	
	Number of Respondents	Percentage	Number of Respondents	Percentage	Number of Respondents	Percentage
3-5 positively stated school-wide expectations are posted around the school	20	100%	0	0%	0	0%
Expectations apply to both students and staff	16	80%	4	20%	0	0%
Rules were developed and posted for specific locations throughout the school	20	100%	0	0%	0	0%
Staff can identify expectations and rules	20	100%	0	0%	0	0%
Students can identify expectations and rules	17	85%	3	15%	0	0%

When asked to rate the fidelity of implementation of the referral process (Table 11: Resource Deployment and Referral Process Benchmark Statement Results), specifically regarding whether the staff uses the referral process (including which behaviors are office managed versus teacher managed) and forms appropriately, all respondents agreed that this component is in place, but 50 percent, or 10 respondents, stated that it needs improvement.

Table 11. Resource Deployment and Referral Process Benchmark Statement Results

	In Place and Successful		In Place but Needs Improvement		Not in Place	
	Number of Respondents	Percentage	Number of Respondents	Percentage	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Staff uses referral process (including which behaviors are office managed vs. teacher managed) and forms appropriately	10	50%	10	50%	0	0%

4.1.2.3 Collaboration

Five benchmark statements related to collaboration during the implementation process (Table 12: Collaboration Benchmark Statement Results). Seventy percent, or 14 respondents, stated that the faculty was involved in establishing and reviewing the behavioral goals, although 25 percent, or five respondents, suggested it still needed improvement. One respondent, or the remaining 5 percent, stated that it was not in place at all. All 20 respondents agreed that the staff was involved in the development of the expectations and rules; only one person, or 5 percent, thought it still needed improvement. Seventy-five percent, or 15 respondents, agreed that the

faculty are successfully involved in the development and delivery of the behavioral curriculum, while 25 percent, or five respondents, said there is room for improvement in this area.

Only 45 percent, or nine respondents, agreed that students were involved in identifying incentives, and 25 percent, or 5 respondents, stated that this benchmark could be improved. The remaining 55 percent, or 11 respondents, stated it was not in place at all.

Forty-five percent, or nine respondents stated that activities involving families or the community were developed or implemented successfully, while another 45 percent said that it needed improvement. The remaining 10 percent, or two respondents, stated that this benchmark was not implemented at all.

Table 12. Collaboration Benchmark Statement Results

	In Place and Successful		In Place but Needs Improvement		Not in Place	
	Number of Respondents	Percentage	Number of Respondents	Percentage	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Faculty are involved in establishing and reviewing goals	14	70%	5	25%	1	5%
Staff was involved in the development of expectations and rules	19	95%	1	5%	0	0%
Faculty and staff are involved in the development and delivery of the behavioral curriculum	15	75%	5	25%	0	0%
Students are involved in identifying/developing incentives	4	20%	5	25%	11	55%
Activities for involving families/community are developed and implemented	9	45%	9	45%	2	10%

4.1.2.4 Staff Development

There were 14 benchmark statements in this section of the survey. The first five statements are related to staff and student training (Table 13: Staff Development and Training Benchmark Statement Results).

When the respondents were asked about their perception of a curriculum being in place to teach the components of the discipline system to the staff, 85 percent, or 17 respondents, stated it was in place; however, 20 percent, or four of those participants, stated that this benchmark needed to be improved. The remaining 15 percent, or three participants, stated that this benchmark was not in place at all.

The next two benchmark statements in this section asked the participants about the orientation of incoming staff and students. Of the 85 percent, or 17 respondents, who said that orientation was in place for the incoming staff, 45 percent, or six respondents, stated that it needed improvement. The remaining 15 percent, or three respondents, stated that it was not in place at all. Of the 65 percent, or 13 respondents, who stated that orientation for incoming students was in place, 45 percent, or nine respondents, stated that it needed improvement. The remaining 35 percent, or seven respondents, stated that this benchmark was not in place at all.

When asked about the fidelity of booster sessions for students, 45 percent, or nine respondents said they were in place and successful, while 20 percent, or four respondents, stated they were in place but needed improvement. Thirty-five percent, or seven participants, responded that booster sessions were not in place at all. In regard to staff booster sessions, half of those who responded to the survey agreed they were in place; however, half of that group stated that

improvement was needed. The remaining 50 percent, or 10 respondents, stated that booster sessions for staff were not in place at all.

Table 13. Staff Development and Training Benchmark Statement Results

	In Place and Successful		In Place but Needs Improvement		Not in Place	
	Number of Respondents	Percentage	Number of Respondents	Percentage	Number of Respondents	Percentage
A curriculum to teach the components of the discipline system to all staff is used	13	65%	4	20%	3	15%
Orientation for incoming staff is developed and implemented	8	40%	9	45%	3	15%
Orientation for incoming students is developed and implemented	4	20%	9	45%	7	35%
Booster sessions for students are planned, scheduled, and delivered	9	45%	4	20%	7	35%
Booster sessions for staff are planned, scheduled, and delivered	5	25%	5	25%	10	50%

The next six statements focused on how the School Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports are utilized at the classroom level (Table 14: Staff Development and Classroom Intervention Benchmark Statement Results). The first statement asked participants to rate their perception of whether classroom rules were defined for each of the school-wide expectations and if these rules were posted in each classroom. One hundred percent of the respondents agreed that this component was in place and successfully implemented. Although 60 percent, or 12 participants, stated that staff training on how to teach the students the school-wide expectations was in place, 25 percent, or five respondents, stated that the training needed to be improved, while 15 percent, or three respondents, said it was not in place at all.

When participants were asked if their perception was that expected behavior routines are taught in the classrooms, 100 percent agreed this component was in place, but 15 percent, or three respondents, said it needed improvement. All participants agreed that teachers use immediate and specific praise, but 30 percent, or six respondents, said this benchmark needed improvement. On a similar note, more frequent acknowledgement of rules being followed than not followed was reported to be in place and successful by 65 percent, or 13 respondents. Thirty-five percent, or seven respondents, agreed that this component was in place but needed improvement, while 5 percent, or one respondent, stated it was not in place at all. All respondents agreed that classrooms have a range of interventions for problem behaviors that are documented; however, 40 percent, or eight of those participants stated that this component needs to be improved.

Table 14. Staff Development and Classroom Intervention Benchmark Statement Results

	In Place and Successful		In Place but Needs Improvement		Not in Place	
	Number of Respondents	Percentage	Number of Respondents	Percentage	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Classroom rules are defined for each of the school-wide expectations and are posted in classrooms	20	100%	0	0%	0	0%
Staff training on how to teach expectations/ rules/rewards are scheduled and delivered	12	60%	5	25%	3	15%
Expected behavior routines are taught in classrooms	17	85%	3	15%	0	0%
Classroom teachers use immediate and specific praise	14	70%	6	30%	0	0%
Acknowledgement of rules being followed correctly occurs more frequently than acknowledgement of inappropriate behaviors	13	65%	6	30%	1	5%
Classrooms have a range of consequences/ interventions for problem behaviors that are documented	12	60%	8	40%	0	0%

4.1.2.5 Data-Based Decision Making

The next six statements asked the participants about the use of data in the SWPBIS programming at the building of inquiry (Table 15: Data-Based Decision-Making Benchmark Statement Results). Eighty percent, or 16 respondents, stated that there is a data system in place to collect and analyze office referral data. Of those 16 participants, 15 percent said that it was in place but needs improvement, and 5 percent said that it was not in place at all.

When asked if the data was analyzed by the PBIS team at least once a month, half of the respondents agreed that this benchmark was in place and successful, while 35 percent, or seven respondents, said it needs improvement. Three teachers responded that this benchmark was not in place at all.

The next data statement asked the participants for their perception of whether the data was shared with the faculty each month. Only 20 percent, or four respondents, said this benchmark was in place and successful, while 50 percent, or 10 respondents, agreed it was in place but needed improvement. The remaining 30 percent, or six respondents, said it was not in place at all. Of particular note is that during the COVID-19 pandemic, the building of inquiry did not have whole building staff meetings due to state-mandated size limitations placed on indoor gatherings for at least part of the 2020-2021 school year.

The next two statements in this category asked participants about surveying the staff and students about the PBIS program for feedback. Ninety percent, or 18 respondents, agreed that staff surveys about the PBIS program were in place and successful. Five percent, or one participant, responded that it was in place but needed improvement, and 5 percent stated that it was not in place at all. Only 30 percent, or six of the respondents, stated that students were surveyed about the

PBIS program for feedback in a successful manner, while 30 percent stated that this benchmark was in place but needed improvement, and the remaining 40 percent, or eight respondents, stated that it was not in place at all.

The last question of the survey asked respondents to rate whether outcomes such as behavior problems, attendance, and morale were documented and used to evaluate the PBIS plan. Seventy percent of the respondents stated that this component was in place and successful while the other 30 percent stated it was in place but needed improvement.

Table 15. Data-Based Decision-Making Benchmark Statement Results

	In Place and Successful		In Place but Needs Improvement		Not in Place	
	Number of Respondents	Percentage	Number of Respondents	Percentage	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Data system used to collect and analyze office referral data	16	80%	3	15%	1	5%
Data analyzed by team at least monthly	10	50%	7	35%	3	15%
Data shared with team and faculty monthly	10	50%	6	30%	4	20%
Staff are surveyed about PBIS	18	90%	1	5%	1	5%
Students are surveyed about PBIS	6	30%	6	30%	8	40%
Outcomes (behavior problems, attendance, morale) are documented and used to evaluate PBIS plan	14	70%	6	30%	0	0%

4.2 Focus Groups

The focus groups (Table 16: Focus Group Participants) were divided by grade level, including the special education teachers. A separate focus group was held with administrators. Each focus group participant was asked to anonymously complete the online discussion board, Padlet, and then they were brought together to discuss the group's responses. An email was sent to each group separately and included all teachers from the selected grade levels, special education teachers, and administration staff. Of the five third grade teachers who were invited, four agreed to participate, including one special education teacher who primarily works with third grade students. No reason was given from the remaining third grade teacher who declined to participate. Out of six fourth grade teachers, three teachers agreed to participate, including one special education teacher. Two teachers did not respond, and one teacher could not commit due to family obligations. Five of the six fifth grade teachers agreed to participate in the focus groups; the remaining teacher was quarantined due to the COVID-19 pandemic at the time of recruitment. Of the three administrators invited to participate, two agreed. The third administrator did not respond.

Table 16. Focus Group Participants

Grade Level	Number of Participants
3	5
4	4
5	5
Administrators	2

4.2.1 Participant Demographics

The third-grade focus group included four regular education teachers and one special education teacher. This group also included the most veteran teacher of grades 3 through 5, who has been teaching for more than 20 years. In addition, two of the participants have been teaching for less than five years, and the remaining two have been teaching between 11 and 20 years. One teacher has experience teaching at the alternative education building in the district of inquiry. This building is an alternate education setting for students who exhibit behavioral issues and have not had success in a regular classroom setting.

The fourth-grade focus group included a total of four teachers: three regular education teachers and one special education teacher. Two of the teachers in this group, including one of the newest additions to the staff, have less than five years teaching experience, while one has between 11 and 15 years and the last one has over 20 years. This group also includes one teacher who originally taught at the middle school level but was moved to the elementary level when funding was reduced and positions were eliminated.

The fifth-grade focus group included a total of five regular education teachers. Four of these five teachers have been teachers for over 10 years, while the remaining teacher has been teaching for less than five years and transferred into the district of inquiry from a charter school.

The administrative focus group included two veteran administrators. One of the two administrators was involved in the original implementation of the PBIS programming at the building of inquiry and has been in the district of inquiry for over 25 years. He taught at the high school and was previously an assistant principal at the middle school building. The other administrator has been in the district for as many years in many roles, including special education

supervisor. He was new to the building of inquiry three years into the implementation. These administrators have a combined total of over 50 years of experience with the same population of students as those enrolled at the building of inquiry. They each have extensive knowledge of the cultural backgrounds and the diverse issues the students experience in the community. This knowledge creates an awareness and understanding of some of the behavioral issues they encounter as administrators in the district of inquiry.

4.2.2 What Are the Strengths of the Current PBIS Program?

This question was designed to gain insight from the staff on what aspects of the program were successful from their perspectives. All four focus groups mentioned that the rewards were one of the greatest strengths of the PBIS program. While all four focus groups' Padlet responses included the rewards, during the discussion portion the fourth-grade focus group specifically mentioned that the positive attention the students received as a result of winning was just as important to the students as the actual reward. The fifth-grade focus group also mentioned the presence of posts to social media when a student wins the drawings. In addition, many of the participants added that the students also enjoy cheering on their friends and classmates, whether it is over the announcements or through Facebook posts. For example, one teacher stated:

The biggest strength, not just the reward, but just getting that positive attention whenever they, whoever is giving the reward, walk through the door and gives the reward and the students all want that.

Another teacher added:

They feel special.

A third teacher elaborated further on the reward distribution [when the prize cart comes around]:

I think they like that class is stopped for them. Like, hey, you won something.

On two of the four Padlet discussions, the school-wide aspect and consistency of the program was mentioned. This topic did not come up during the in-person focus group with the fourth-grade teachers, but the administration and fifth-grade focus groups did similarly mention that when students moved from one classroom to another, the rules were not necessarily the same between the teachers. This observation is especially important to note for the students in grades three through five because the teachers work in two different classrooms each day; one teacher specializes in ELA and social studies while the other teaches math and science.

One administrator described the rationale for a school-wide approach:

Teachers were from all over the district; we actually had some former ninth grade teachers all the way down to kindergarten, and their mode of what was acceptable behavior in an elementary classroom was all over the place.

4.2.3 What Are the Weaknesses of the Current PBIS Program?

While all four of the focus groups stated that the rewards program was one of the greatest strengths, all of the groups (except for the administration group) stated that the rewards and the opportunities to earn those rewards were among the greatest weaknesses. The in-person discussion centered on the ideas that the students do not like the choices being offered as rewards, more opportunities should be available to earn the rewards rather than just once a week, and students should be included in the discussions of what rewards are offered. The administration group also

noted that students should be involved in the process. On a similar note, one teacher mentioned that some of the rewards that are offered to the younger students in the lower grade levels may not be as appealing to the older students and vice versa.

The fourth-grade and administration focus groups mentioned that the behaviors for each student are different and that the PBIS program does not take into account family background and the students' home lives. During the discussion group, participants mentioned that this missing information might be helpful in getting the student, and possibly the family, services they might need.

The third-grade focus group specifically mentioned the referral system when entering an office referral for a student. One teacher mentioned that the referral system was not teacher-friendly, citing that the options listed as infractions sometimes do not accurately describe an incident. The group further added that they sometimes choose a level three infraction in the referral system even when what actually occurred is only listed as a level two. They explained that they chose to do this so the referral can be written as an office referral instead of just documentation.

4.2.4 What Are Your Recommendations for Improving the Program?

The focus groups had recommendations for improving the PBIS program at the building of inquiry. Two of the highly recommended improvements included making changes to the referral system and adjusting the reward system, including the frequency of rewards. The third-grade focus group made these comments on the Padlet in regard to the referral system as well as discussion during the in-person group. They suggested that changes should be made to the

infractions that were listed for the levels of infractions that were considered documentation-only versus an office referral.

One third grade teacher elaborated on the Padlet:

I believe the ROAR system has to be more in depth for level 3 offenses. There isn't much to pick from in regards to offense levels when students need some form of consequence.

In conjunction with the referral system, the third-grade group also focused on the data that was generated. This group specifically stated that they would like to see the number of write-ups for each level of offense, patterns within the offenses, repeat offenders, and consequences reported each month. This topic was mentioned during the in-person discussion for another focus group question as well, indicating that it might contribute to a higher level of teacher satisfaction with the programming.

All four focus groups agreed that more rewards, including ROAR tickets, need to be given out more frequently. Some participants suggested that all staff carry extra tickets with them to praise students in the hallways. Then, for example, if administrators walk into a class and see positive behavior, they would have tickets to hand out. One participant in the third-grade group suggested that the number of allotted tickets be increased in order to hand out tickets to students outside their homerooms. Currently, teachers are given 10 tickets a week to distribute.

One fifth grade teacher gave an example:

It wasn't just your homeroom teacher who could say something. "Oh, you're standing quietly in the hallway, here's a ROAR ticket." It's not just one person; it's the entire culture of the school really ramping it up, like every teacher all the time saying something. And I think because of COVID, it doesn't help all the time.

Another suggestion was to include parents in the development and deployment of the program so they can reinforce it at home. The recommendation was to provide the parents with an overview of the program as well.

4.2.5 How Does the PBIS Program Affect Student Behavior?

This question was asked in three distinct parts. The first part asked each participant whether the PBIS program decreased, increased, or did not have an effect on student discipline problems. All the focus group participants responded that the PBIS program had decreased student discipline problems from their perspective. The second part asked if the PBIS program improved, worsened, or did not affect students' attitudes towards school. All except three of the participants responded that the PBIS program had improved students' attitudes towards school. The remaining three were neutral. The last part of this question asked participants if the PBIS program helped to improve students' respectfulness towards others. All participants unanimously agreed that it had helped to improve students' respectfulness towards others.

4.2.6 How Satisfied Do You Think That Teachers Are With the PBIS Program?

This question was intended to gauge the focus group participants' perceptions of the remainder of the staff and their satisfaction with the behavioral guidelines and expectations set forth by the PBIS program as well as the administration's support of the PBIS program. All of the participants who responded on the Padlet stated that they were satisfied with both the behavioral guidelines and the administration's support of the PBIS program. One person in the third-grade

group wrote that they were somewhat satisfied, and another person in the fifth-grade group did not answer the question.

One fifth grade teacher discussed teacher satisfaction with the program during the in-person discussion:

I mean, we are the ones who kind of created it. You know what I mean, we gave our initial- what we wanted to happen in the classroom, bathroom, and the hallway, and we went together as a group so if we weren't happy, it would be us that would have to change it.

4.2.7 How Was the PBIS Program First Implemented in the School?

When the focus groups were asked about the implementation of the PBIS program, seven of the 16 teachers stated that they did not remember or were not at the building of inquiry at the time of implementation. Teachers or administrators in all four focus groups stated that a team of teachers met to develop the overall plan as well as posters that were passed out with the behavior expectations. Three of the four focus groups mentioned the presence of an outside agency. The third-grade group, the only group not to mention the outside agency, is also the only group that did not have a member of the original PBIS committee in the group. The fifth-grade group was the only group to mention the student assembly as part of the implementation process.

4.2.8 How is the PBIS Program Currently Being Implemented in This School?

The staff in all four focus groups reiterated the common elements to the PBIS mentioned in the other questions: ROAR tickets, posters, monthly lessons, and the referral system. Three of the four groups added the daily communication of the expectations during the morning announcements.

When asked what has hindered or facilitated the implementation of the PBIS programming, two of the focus groups mentioned that COVID-19 protocols of social distancing have created barriers for some of the rewards that students have enjoyed in the past. One teacher mentioned:

Currently, I feel this new model of school and social distancing is hindering our ROAR system because some of the rewards are being taken away from them such as lunch with friends, lunch with a teacher, etc.

Another hindrance mentioned was the consistency of the implementation and usage of the programming. One teacher discussed the consistency of implementation between teachers:

There have been times that a student has been chosen for Student of the Week who I do not necessarily believe should have won. They may have gotten a ROAR ticket for something good they did one day, or from another teacher, and they win ROAR but they were not a good student all week.

4.3 Individual Interviews

Five semi-structured individual interviews were conducted after the focus groups were completed. All five people who were invited to participate in the study agreed, and these five met with the researcher individually. These five people were chosen due to the nature of their involvement with the planning and implementation of the original program in 2015. They had expertise in areas of the original design and implementation that staff members who were not involved with the initial planning process would not have. The same six questions were asked to each participant according to the predetermined interview protocol. These questions were chosen in order to provide context for the building of inquiry from the original planning committee and gather their perspectives on how the program and overall school climate has changed since implementation.

4.3.1 Participant Demographics

Five individual interviews were held using a semi-structured protocol to gather perspectives different than those of the classroom teachers involved in the focus groups and survey. Three of the teachers interviewed were members of the original PBIS implementation committee. Two of those teachers are still on the committee, and one is at a different building. The building principal who was head of the intermediate grades 3-5 at the time of the implementation and the coordinator from the Watson Institute were also interviewed. These five people were selected for interviews in order to provide historical information for the implementation of the PBIS programming. The five participants chosen were:

Participant 1: Coordinator from Watson Institute, outside funding source

Participant 2: Building Principal, integral part of original implementation

Participant 3: PBIS Committee Member, School Psychologist

Participant 4: PBIS Committee Member, part of original planning team

Participant 5: PBIS Committee Member, part of original planning team

4.3.2 I know that this school decided to adopt the SWPBS model five years ago. What led up to that decision?

Four of the five participants commented that there was not a consistent behavior model between classrooms. The coordinator from the Watson Institute was the only person who did not mention this since she would not have had knowledge of the classroom models prior to her involvement at the building of inquiry. As one participant mentioned, students could spend part of their day with one teacher and the other part of their day with another teacher and not have the same behavior expectations to follow. Another contributing factor, mentioned by another participant, was that teachers came from various other buildings in the district when this building of inquiry was originally built.

One of the original committee members stated:

The whole idea behind it was to kind of get everyone on the same page. Everyone kind of had their own behavior stuff going on in their classroom... but I think overall they wanted everyone to kind of have a uniform behavior plan.

On a larger scale, two of the participants interviewed mentioned the community where the students resided. One person mentioned that the original PBIS implementation was funded

through a grant specifically because there was a need identified in the community regarding behaviors in education and how it impacts dropout rates long term within the county. On a related note, some of the factors mentioned related to the decision to implement a SWPBIS system were in regard to the environmental issues the students struggle with in the community and the trauma they bring to school. The PBIS system was identified as a way to gather data in order to begin to address bigger needs beyond individual students.

4.3.3 How was the SWPBS model initially implemented at your school?

This question was intended to gather important historical information from varied perspectives in order to compile a more complete picture of the original PBIS planning and implementation process. The coordinator from the Watson Institute was able to provide background information on her initial involvement with the building and district of inquiry. The implementation was initiated through a grant through the county's Department of Human Services based on the low socioeconomic status of the families, the mental health needs of the community, the attendance of the students in the neighborhood school, the number of students who have one or more incarcerated parents, and the number of students who have one or more parents receiving government assistance. This funding allowed the building principal to approach the Watson Institute to develop a PBIS committee, train the staff, and implement the three levels of PBIS.

The committee, along with the staff, collected data and determined acceptable behaviors and unacceptable behaviors at the elementary level in the various areas of the building.

The coordinator from the Watson Institute began by explaining the data collection:

...What data we tried to gather was very fragmented at best in regards to the process which we really tried to push in regards to organizing the referral process into level one, level two kind of referral. Lost time of instruction was what we were trying to really reflect and it just seemed like it was just very not a very fluid process...

The building principal continued:

From there, we created a template of what the rules were and a theme for the following year. In addition to that, we were taking data to support how many bad behaviors there really were so we could work on making sure that their goals address those behaviors.

4.3.4 Have the training and other resources changed since SWPBS was initially implemented? If so, please describe how.

One major change mentioned was the merging of the two separately operating entities into one K-5 school. The building originally operated as a K-2 primary school and a 3-5 intermediate school. As one participant pointed out, the two schools were aligned in some areas but operated independently in others.

Three of the participants mentioned that the Watson Institute is no longer involved, although the coordinator from the Watson Institute stated that she has offered booster sessions for ongoing staff development. There was no discussion about financial compensation for the staff development sessions.

4.3.5 Now that the school has implemented SWPBS for a period of over five years, how has the school climate changed?

Four of the five participants reported that the PBIS has had a positive impact on the school climate, noting, for example, that the students know what is expected of them and can recite the rules because of consistent language from year to year (with the exception of the transient student population). It should be noted that the fifth participant did not report a negative impact. One participant stated that the students are calmer because they know what is expected of them in the various locations of the building.

In regard to the teachers' behaviors and attitudes towards the PBIS programming, three of the interview participants noted that there was resistance at the beginning of the implementation process; one participant specifically described resistance in terms of not understanding why they should reward behaviors that the students should be expected to exhibit. This resistance has changed over the years, and most teachers use the rules in their classrooms. Two of the participants stated that the teachers seemed to be more focused on positive behaviors now over negative behaviors, a change from past years.

4.3.6 If you could change one thing about the current SWPBS program, what would it be?

Responses for these questions were unrelated. One participant responded that data needs to play a bigger role in decision making, and there should be a stronger commitment to meeting to review the data. This respondent also compared using data to inform decisions to cafeteria- style dining:

Every district is very different. The population is very different. Needs can be very different. Behaviors are very different. You do want to kind of curtail it and individualize it to the needs of the school. PBIS doesn't really work well in a cafeteria style – pick and choose what you want. For it to be with fluidity you really need to kind of be like, OK, here's the universal stuff, here's the yellow level stuff, here's the red level stuff but backing that with data because all of that is just kind of picking and choosing and guessing. It's not based on data, or at least accurate data.

Another participant stated that while the PBIS system is working well at the universal level, the students who are at the Tier 2 and 3 levels need more supports:

What do we do for those at-risk kids or those more intensive kids who maybe don't respond to, maybe, you know, the general tickets? I think we have pieces of it; I think it could be a little bit more coherent.

Two participants stated that new perspectives would be their recommended change. One of these two suggested changing the role of the parents, although this respondent recognized the challenges that the transient population would present. Lastly, the other participant's recommended change was to change the members of the committee to gain fresh perspectives and new ideas.

4.3.7 If you were to speak with a colleague from another school district thinking about implementing SWPBS, what would you tell him or her?

For this question, an emerging theme from four of the participants is to begin with the teachers. One participant said that having the teachers play a major role in the development of the

programming is integral to a successful implementation in order to gain teacher buy-in. Another participant said that trying to shift the mindset of the teachers should be the first step:

I think switching the mindset needs to be one of the first discussions. Some teachers are going to adopt it right out of the gate; others are going to struggle with that idea, so I think having that conversation of, you know, this isn't necessarily about giving Johnny, who's throwing a desk, a ticket to make him stop throwing a desk. But using it as a tool to manage behavior to facilitate. Maybe we are not going to completely fix Johnny, but maybe we can move him in a better direction and maybe we can kind of implement some other things beyond just the tickets that you are going to give out in your classroom.

Other participants continued with the same concept of teacher buy-in while stating that the proper team needs to be in place with administration's support and that there needs to be shared commitment throughout the building staff.

4.3.8 What additional thoughts or concerns about the PBIS program do you have?

Two of the participants shared concerns regarding high staff turnover resulting in the need to continuously train incoming staff, while those who leave, depending on their roles, may need to pass along information to new staff. Along with the transfer of information, the participants also shared concern for the buy-in of new staff to the building and creating a sense of community again:

I think the concern is just that with the staff turnover, to make sure to continuously train people, you know, making sure that people adopt it. And just making sure that as people leave the building, that those responsibilities or that knowledge is passed on. Sometimes,

those kinds of things get lost and it's not going to be successful without support from all levels.

4.4 Interpretation of Results

Based on the findings from all three data sources the participants' responses aligned with common areas of need for the building of inquiry's current PBIS programming: student involvement in the implementation of the programming and selection of rewards, parent and community involvement, the office referral system, professional development, and communication of behavioral data. Recommendations for improvements in these areas are addressed in the next chapter.

5.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter contains a summary of the key findings relevant to the problem of practice, including interpretation of the findings and recommendations for program improvement for the site of inquiry as well as other buildings developing and implementing a PBIS program.

5.1 Summary of Key Findings

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the current PBIS programming at the building of inquiry in order to make recommendations to address the gaps in learning created by the high number of office referrals and subsequent suspensions, specifically in grades three through five. This researcher utilized the staff's knowledge of the original planning and design of the PBIS implementation as well as their interpretations of the current implementation in order to determine strengths and areas of need. The current implementation was evaluated against the state PBIS model; staff was asked to respond to questions in the areas of leadership commitment, resource deployment, collaboration, staff development, and data-based decisions. The data was collected through a survey, four focus groups, and five individual interviews.

5.1.1 Survey

The survey was composed of 47 items, including four demographic questions. Demographic information included the grade level participants teach, how long they have been

teaching overall, how long they have been teaching at the building of inquiry, and how long they have been teaching at the current grade level. The remaining 43 statements required the participants to rate the components of the current PBIS programming as “In Place and Successful,” “In Place but Needs Improvement,” or “Not in Place.” Of the 25 teachers the survey was sent out to, 20 responded and agreed to participate.

The demographic information showed that few of the teachers who responded have been in the same grade level for an extended amount of time. While more than 75 percent of those who responded to the survey have been teaching for over 10 years, only 30 percent of those teachers have been teaching the same grade level for more than 10 years. There are a few possible reasons for this movement between grade levels. Teachers can put in a voluntary transfer that would allow them to move to a position that was vacated due to a retirement or resignation. This means that the teacher chose to switch grade levels and possibly buildings for one reason or another. Teachers can also bid on a newly created position that is available because of an influx of enrollment or a new development in the curriculum. Teachers can be also involuntarily displaced. This can happen when their positions are eliminated, usually due to budgetary cuts. When this happens, those teachers bid on available positions based on seniority.

In grades three through five, one-third of the staff at the time of this research were previously middle school teachers involuntarily displaced due to budget cuts in preparation for the 2011-2012 school year. When teachers transition between grade levels, it may take time to adjust their expectations of students’ behaviors in a new grade level. Middle school teachers moving to elementary grades may have higher expectations for student behavior than teachers with elementary school experience because they are used to teaching older students. Therefore, they

may not have the same tolerance for typical elementary school behaviors as elementary teachers who have been teaching the same grade level for a longer period of time.

The remainder of the survey asked participants for specific feedback related to the implementation of PBIS program. One conclusion that can be drawn regarding resource deployment is that the participants felt that even though the expectations applied to both staff and students, the SWPBIS did not adequately address incentives for staff. Sixty percent of the participants stated that incentives for staff were not in place, while 30 percent stated they were in place but needed improvement. In contrast, between 95 and 100 percent of responses showed that resources were in place and successful for student rewards and incentives. The staff currently receives award certificates for perfect attendance, PSSA performance, and volunteering for family events. These certificates are typically given out during staff meetings but had to be announced over the intercom during the COVID-19 pandemic since whole building staff meetings were not being held. Awards were then delivered individually to teachers' classrooms.

Respondents also consistently indicated that the PBIS programming is not adequately shared with the families. Fifty-five percent, or 11 participants, stated that strategies to share key features of the PBIS program with families are not in place. Fifty-five percent of participants responded that activities involving families and the community are either in place but need improvement or not in place at all.

Participant feedback also indicated that involving the students more in the planning and design of the PBIS programming was another area for future consideration. Eighty percent of respondents stated that orientation for incoming students is either in place and needs improvement or not in place at all. Seventy percent of participants stated that feedback about the PBIS program

is not gathered from the students. Forty percent stated this is not in place at all, while 30 percent stated it is in place but needs improvement.

Seventy-five percent stated that ongoing professional development for staff is not planned or scheduled throughout the year. Fifty percent stated these booster sessions are not in place at all, and the remaining 25 percent stated they are in place but need improvement. Since an equal number of teachers agree and disagree about the referral process being used appropriately, it is an area to be considered for improvement.

To summarize, the teacher responses in the survey resulted in the following recommendations for prioritizing changes:

- Involve families and the community in the PBIS programming
- Involve students in the planning and design, including new student orientation and surveying students throughout the school year for feedback
- Provide professional development for staff throughout the school year

5.1.2 Focus Groups

The focus groups were broken down by grade level as well as one focus group of administrators. Teachers in grades three through five, including special education teachers, were invited to participate in the focus group. In third grade, four of the five teachers agreed to participate, and one special education was included in this group since she works mostly with these students. In fourth grade, three of the six teachers agreed to participate, and one special education teacher was then included in this group. In fifth grade, five of the six teachers agreed to participate,

and no special education teachers were included in this group. Of the three administrators invited to participate, only two agreed to be included in the study.

The teachers and administrators who agreed to participate were sent a link to a Padlet, which is an online platform similar to a bulletin board where participants could anonymously post their responses to the predetermined focus group questions. Once each grade level completed their Padlet responses, the group was brought together to discuss the online responses in-person.

Focus group comments aligned with the responses from the survey that stated the awards were a successful component of the PBIS program, while the focus groups allowed the participants to expand on how the rewards could be more successful. During the focus group discussions, the presence of rewards was mentioned as a positive aspect of the program, as well as the attention that students received when they earned the reward. However, the staff argued that the rewards were not offered frequently enough, that the rewards were not very appealing to the students, and that more students should be recognized. Similar to the survey data, the focus groups also mentioned the possibility of including the students in deciding what rewards are offered.

The focus group participants also mentioned that the referral system needed to be revised in a few ways. For example, the infractions that are considered level two infractions are sometimes perceived by the classroom teacher as a more serious behavior violation that they would like to write up as an office referral instead of just for documentation purposes. The teachers in the focus groups stated they sometimes choose a level three infraction in order to escalate the write-up into an office referral due to the intensity of the behavior. Addressing this within the referral system itself might reduce data being skewed from inappropriately labeled levels of infractions. This is a high priority for future change since reporting data based on the office referrals and patterns of behavior was also an important concept mentioned in both the focus groups and survey.

To summarize, the teacher comments in the focus groups resulted in the following recommendations being made:

- Make the rewards more appealing to students by offering a better variety of choices
- Revise the referral system to address the ambiguity of infractions. More information is needed in order to make specific recommendations of change to the referral system.
- At regular staff meetings, report monthly behavior data by number of office referrals and frequency of behaviors

5.1.3 Interviews

The final step of data collection was holding individual interviews with participants who had background knowledge of the original implementation as well as the historical knowledge of how the implementation has changed over the years. These five participants included three of the original PBIS committee members, the building principal, and the coordinator from the Watson Institute. These individuals were interviewed separately using the same questions and interview protocols.

In addition to contributing information about the funding of the original PBIS implementation, the coordinator from the outside agency also provided information about the community where the students live. She explained that the original PBIS implementation was funded through a county Department of Human Services grant that addressed dropout rates and their impact in the county where the site of inquiry is located. On a related note, some of the

participants shared that environmental issues informed the decision to implement a PBIS program, specifically, community issues that impact and even create trauma for student. The PBIS system was identified as a way, through collecting data, to begin to address needs beyond individual students. The grant that funded the implementation was designed to address the low socioeconomic status of the families, the mental health needs of the community, the attendance of the students in the neighborhood school, the number of students who have one or more parents incarcerated, and the number of students who have one or more parents receiving government assistance.

At the school level, the rationale for implementing the PBIS program included creating a school-wide program that was consistent for all students regardless of which classroom they were in or which teacher they had at the time. This goal stemmed from a wide array of expectations that were not consistent from one teacher to the next. This situation was especially troublesome when considering grade level teachers split the day evenly with each group of students. Each grade level is broken up into teams of two teachers. One teacher is responsible for Math and Science, while the other teacher is responsible for Reading, Grammar, and Social Studies. The teacher teaches one group in the morning and then switches for the afternoon, potentially creating inconsistent messages about appropriate (and inappropriate) student behavior.

One concern mentioned during the individual interviews was addressing the needs of the more at-risk students who receive more level three write-ups and do not respond well to the more universal level of rewards. This situation reinforces the need to address the environmental issues in the community and the trauma students bring to school with them as well as the importance of relying on accurate data to inform decisions for appropriate interventions. Therefore, ensuring

that behaviors are accurately documented through the referral system is the beginning step to address the more intense behaviors.

In addition to providing background information on the planning process, these participants also offered suggestions for improvement to the current programming based on their experiences either on the committee at the building of inquiry or with developing implementation programs at other schools. Those recommendations included:

- Commit to providing time for the PBIS team to review the office referral data on a monthly basis in order to report information to teachers quarterly. This information would include the number of referrals, the types of infractions, the frequency of behaviors, and patterns of behaviors.
- Involve parents with the PBIS programming in order for them to be able to reinforce the rules at home.
- Routinely provide ongoing professional development sessions with the staff. This service was offered through the Watson Institute.

5.2 Recommendations for Future Consideration at the Building of Inquiry

After considering the key findings from the survey, focus groups, and individual interviews, this researcher carefully considered the perspectives from the key stakeholders in this research study and proposes the following recommendations: involving students in the selection of rewards, surveying students for feedback, providing orientation for new students on the PBIS programming to address the transient population, involving the families and community in the

current and future PBIS programming, improving the referral system based on teacher recommendations, and reporting data out to teachers during booster sessions for staff.

The feedback from the survey, focus groups, and interviews all suggested that involving students in the planning and execution of the PBIS implementation was necessary. Results from both the survey and focus groups stated that the reward options for students were not always appealing and that asking students for their input on rewards may increase the excitement.

Currently, reward options include small token prizes such as bouncy balls, LED rings, mechanical pencils, pencil cases, and headbands, for example. In addition, there are snack items such as candy or chips, as well as free passes such as a free homework pass, free dress-down day, free hat day, extra gym or STEM class, extra recess, or eat lunch with a friend. During the 2020-2021 school year, some of the reward options, such as eat lunch with a friend, extra STEM, or extra gym class, were eliminated due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Initially, the reward items are purchased through building funds but are supplemented through the use of staff fundraisers. For example, the staff can wear jeans on paydays for a 20-dollar donation per semester. There are also other dress-down day fundraisers throughout the school year to raise money for the PBIS program.

Involving students more in the selection of rewards could be done through the use of a Google Form since all students have access to devices in the classrooms. The PBIS team can create a survey for teachers to post in their Google Classroom to gather feedback on various aspects of the program, including the rewards.

The district and building of inquiry have a highly transient population, making it a challenge for new students to learn the behavioral expectations in their classrooms, as well as throughout the school building. The guidance counselors could keep a log of incoming students and hold a PBIS orientation every grading period to ensure that new students are aware of the

school-wide rules as well as the reward opportunities. Such a strategy might help them to understand what the announcements mean every morning when the students are reminded of the acronym ROAR and what each letter means for the various areas of the building. In addition, a welcome brochure could be created for parents with the information about the PBIS program so they are also informed when they enroll in the building. This brochure could also include other aspects of the building as well as ways they can be involved with the PBIS programming at home.

Improving the referral system was mentioned in the survey as well as the focus groups. The referral system began as a paper write-up system in 2015 when the PBIS programming was still in its initial phases of implementation. The referral system was converted to an electronic system in 2018 using Google Forms. During the original planning, the PBIS committee met to identify which infractions were level one infractions, level two infractions, and level three infractions. The coordinator from the Watson Institute related the level of infractions to the amount of instruction lost due to the behavior. These categories were changed in minor ways over the years, but there have not been any major revisions to the list or classification of infractions. During the COVID-19 pandemic, not wearing a mask was added to the list of level one infractions to accommodate the necessary changes during the 2020-2021 school year. While the recommendation is to make modifications to the referral system, the data collected in this study was not specific to the referral system; therefore, more information is needed in order to make specific recommendations for change to the referral system based on teachers' feedback. From the changes made to the referral system, the data shared with the staff would then be more accurate and useful since the infractions would be less ambiguous. It could then include more detailed information with specific infractions and patterns of behavior. With more accurate and specific data, more appropriate interventions could be applied to students and more appropriate

professional development could be planned for staff. This information could then be shared out during booster sessions with the staff. These sessions would not only allow the data to be shared but any changes needed for the overall programming can be disseminated at that time as well.

5.3 Further Implications

Although it was developed at the state-level by Rob Horner, George Sugai, and others at the University of Oregon and adopted by the Bureau of Special Education/ (PaTTAN), the model used for comparison in this research study is also recognized at the national level (*PaTTAN*, n.d.). This model articulates the main components of successful PBIS as leadership commitment, resource deployment, collaboration, ongoing staff development, and data-based decision-making.

A strong commitment from the building administration confirms the value and worth of the programming when valuable time and resources are used to implement a School-Wide Positive Behavior Intervention and Support program. Ensuring that the committee has time dedicated to plan and review the data is essential to a successful implementation.

Utilizing resources efficiently and effectively is also important. Funding for the programming at the building of inquiry was allocated through a grant, and the rewards were purchased through donations collected from the staff on dress-down days that served as fundraisers. In addition, study participants consistently supported using the students as resources for feedback and should be considered when developing PBIS programming at a new site.

Research also suggests that providing staff development on a continuous basis supports a successful PBIS program to ensure that the staff is fully aware of any changes that are made to the

program. This is also an excellent time to share data with the staff on the behaviors, interventions, and supports that are in place as well as to collect valuable feedback from staff.

This researcher is excited and eager to share the findings with those who have the opportunity to utilize it to directly benefit students. The intention is to not only share the findings and recommendations with the staff who were involved with the study but also the administration of the other elementary building considering implementing a similar program. While this information can prove useful to other buildings in the district of inquiry, it also applies to other school districts in the Commonwealth interested in implementing a new PBIS program or revising an existing PBIS program.

Appendix A Letter to Superintendent

Dear Dr. Holtzman:

My name is Jamie Lusebrink, and I am one of the Assistant Principals at [REDACTED] Elementary School. I am a doctoral student at the University of Pittsburgh, and I am currently working to evaluate the current PBIS program in order to make recommendations for improvements based on my research. I would like to conduct my evaluation by conducting surveys, focus groups, and interviews with various teaching and administrative personnel involved in the PBIS implementation at [REDACTED] Elementary School.

I would like to provide you with a brief overview of my research, including plans for data collection and analysis. I will be working with teachers in grades 3-5, including special education and itinerant teachers, as well as a few administrators involved in PBIS implementation. All participants will receive an email explaining the process, an invitation to participate, and an explanation of the intended use and anonymity of the results.

I will be utilizing a web-based survey through Google Forms with 46 questions asking participants to rate various components of a PBIS model. The participants will need to sign into their Google accounts to access the survey, but email addresses will be excluded from data analysis. This sign-in is only being utilized to ensure that there is only one response per district email address.

I will also be conducting three focus groups, with questions based on the results from the survey, during morning meeting time at the building. These 20-minute focus groups will be formed by grade level, with special education teachers being assigned to their primary grade level. These focus groups will be recorded with permission from the participants and analyzed through transcription and coding processes.

Lastly, I will be conducting five one-on-one interviews with the original PBIS committee, the building principal, and the implementation coordinator from the Watson Institute. These 20-minute interviews will also be conducted during morning meeting time at the building with questions formulated from the results of the focus groups. These interviews will also be recorded with participant permission.

All results will be kept confidential and any identifying responses will be eliminated from the data reports. Any district identifiers will be removed from the data as well. Additionally, there will be a secondary option to participate via Zoom if our instructional model changes due to COVID-19.

Thank you again for your continued support. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns about my inquiry plan.

Sincerely,



Jamie Lusebrink

Appendix B Email to Staff in Building of Inquiry - Survey

Dear Teachers,

My name is Jamie Lusebrink, and I am one of the Assistant Principals here at [REDACTED] Elementary School. I am a doctoral student at the University of Pittsburgh, and I am working to evaluate the current PBIS program in order to make recommendations for improvements based on my research. I am writing to invite you to participate in a short survey in order to gain a better perspective of the current PBIS program.

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports is a programmatic way of creating school-wide supports for student with behavior infractions. 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 staff in grades three, four, and five, as well as Special Education and Specials/ Itinerant teachers. Your participation will help us to continue to build a positive learning environment for all. Your perspective can provide valuable information regarding the effectiveness of PBIS practices based on what you see in the school.

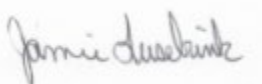
Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. There is no direct benefit to you for study participation. You may withdraw from the study at any time. All results will be kept confidential; your name will not be included on any documents. You will, however, be asked to sign in to your Google Account to begin the survey. This is only to ensure reliability of the responses by limiting the survey to one response per email address and will not be disclosed during review and analysis of results.

The survey should take approximately 15 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: <https://forms.gle/e24oRm9gHzUhkubw7>

If you have any questions or concerns about the survey, please feel free to contact me directly at jlusebrink@mckasd.net. Thank you in advance for your help. Your participation is greatly appreciated. Please respond to this email if you are willing to participate in the focus group and be recorded.

Thank you so much, and have a wonderful day!

Jamie Lusebrink



Appendix C PBIS Implementation Survey

1. Grade Level Taught *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Third
- ☐ Fourth
- ☐ Fifth
- ☐ Special Education
- ☐ Specials/ Itinerant

2. Years of teaching experience *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ 1-3 years
- ☐ 4-6 years
- ☐ 7-10 years
- ☐ 11-15 years
- ☐ 16-20 years
- ☐ More than 20 years

3. Years of teaching in current Grade Level *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ 1-3 years
- ☐ 4-6 years
- ☐ 7-10 years
- ☐ 11-15 years
- ☐ 16-20 years
- ☐ More than 20 years

4. Years of experience at (If at the building from the opening, choose 5-6 years) *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ 1-2 years
- ☐ 3-4 years
- ☐ 5-6 years

Faculty Commitment

Please rate each component of the PBIS implementation as In Place and Successful, In Place but Needs Improvement, or Not in Place

5. Faculty are aware of behavior problems school-wide through regular data sharing *
- Mark only one oval.*
- ☐ In Place and Successful
 - ☐ In Place but Needs Improvement
 - ☐ Not in Place
6. Faculty is involved in establishing and reviewing goals *
- Mark only one oval.*
- ☐ In Place and Successful
 - ☐ In Place but Needs Improvement
 - ☐ Not in Place
7. Faculty feedback is obtained throughout the year *
- Mark only one oval.*
- ☐ In Place and Successful
 - ☐ In Place but Needs Improvement
 - ☐ Not in Place

Data Entry and Analysis Plan

Please rate each component of the PBIS implementation as In Place and Successful, In Place but Needs Improvement, or Not in Place

8. Data system used to collect and analyze Office Referral data *
- Mark only one oval.*
- ☐ In Place and Successful
 - ☐ In Place but Needs Improvement
 - ☐ Not in Place
9. Data analyzed by team at least monthly *
- Mark only one oval.*
- ☐ In Place and Successful
 - ☐ In Place but Needs Improvement
 - ☐ Not in Place
10. Data shared with team and faculty monthly *
- Mark only one oval.*
- ☐ In Place and Successful
 - ☐ In Place but Needs Improvement
 - ☐ Not in Place

Expectations and Rules Developed

Please rate each component of the PBIS implementation as In Place and Successful, In Place but Needs Improvement, or Not in Place

11. 3-5 positively stated school-wide expectations are posted around the school *
- Mark only one oval.*
- ☐ In Place and Successful
 - ☐ In Place but Needs Improvement
 - ☐ Not in Place
12. Expectations apply to both students and staff *
- Mark only one oval.*
- ☐ In Place and Successful
 - ☐ In Place but Needs Improvement
 - ☐ Not in Place
13. Rules were developed and posted for specific locations throughout the school *
- Mark only one oval.*
- ☐ In Place and Successful
 - ☐ In Place but Needs Improvement
 - ☐ Not in Place
14. Staff was involved in the development of expectations and rules *
- Mark only one oval.*
- ☐ In Place and Successful
 - ☐ In Place but Needs Improvement
 - ☐ Not in Place

Reward/ Recognition Program Established

Please rate each component of the PBIS implementation as In Place and Successful, In Place but Needs Improvement, or Not in Place

15. A system of rewards implemented consistently *
- Mark only one oval.*
- ☐ In Place and Successful
 - ☐ In Place but Needs Improvement
 - ☐ Not in Place

16. A variety of methods are used to reward students *
- Mark only one oval.*
- ☐ In Place and Successful
 - ☐ In Place but Needs Improvement
 - ☐ Not in Place
17. Rewards are linked to expectations/rules *
- Mark only one oval.*
- ☐ In Place and Successful
 - ☐ In Place but Needs Improvement
 - ☐ Not in Place
18. Rewards are varied to maintain student interest *
- Mark only one oval.*
- ☐ In Place and Successful
 - ☐ In Place but Needs Improvement
 - ☐ Not in Place
19. Students are involved in identifying/developing incentives *
- Mark only one oval.*
- ☐ In Place and Successful
 - ☐ In Place but Needs Improvement
 - ☐ Not in Place
20. The system includes incentives for staff/faculty *
- Mark only one oval.*
- ☐ In Place and Successful
 - ☐ In Place but Needs Improvement
 - ☐ Not in Place

Lesson Plans for Teaching Expectations/Rules

Please rate each component of the PBIS implementation as In Place and Successful, In Place but Needs Improvement, or Not in Place

21. A behavioral curriculum includes expectations and rules *
- Mark only one oval.*
- ☐ In Place and Successful
 - ☐ In Place but Needs Improvement
 - ☐ Not in Place

22. Lessons include examples and non-examples *
- Mark only one oval.*
- ☐ In Place and Successful
 - ☐ In Place but Needs Improvement
 - ☐ Not in Place
23. Lessons use a variety of teaching strategies *
- Mark only one oval.*
- ☐ In Place and Successful
 - ☐ In Place but Needs Improvement
 - ☐ Not in Place
24. Faculty and staff are involved in the development and delivery of behavioral curriculum *
- Mark only one oval.*
- ☐ In Place and Successful
 - ☐ In Place but Needs Improvement
 - ☐ Not in Place
25. Strategies to share key features of the PBIS program with families are implemented *
- Mark only one oval.*
- ☐ In Place and Successful
 - ☐ In Place but Needs Improvement
 - ☐ Not in Place

Implementation Plan

Please rate each component of the PBIS implementation as In Place and Successful, In Place but Needs Improvement, or Not in Place

26. A curriculum to teach the components of the discipline system to all staff is used *
- Mark only one oval.*
- ☐ In Place and Successful
 - ☐ In Place but Needs Improvement
 - ☐ Not in Place
27. Staff training on how to teach expectations/rules/rewards are scheduled and delivered *
- Mark only one oval.*
- ☐ In Place and Successful
 - ☐ In Place but Needs Improvement
 - ☐ Not in Place

28. Lessons for teaching students expectations/rules/rewards are scheduled and delivered *
- Mark only one oval.*
- ☐ In Place and Successful
 - ☐ In Place but Needs Improvement
 - ☐ Not in Place
29. Booster sessions for students are planned, scheduled, and delivered *
- Mark only one oval.*
- ☐ In Place and Successful
 - ☐ In Place but Needs Improvement
 - ☐ Not in Place
30. Booster sessions for staff are planned, scheduled, and delivered *
- Mark only one oval.*
- ☐ In Place and Successful
 - ☐ In Place but Needs Improvement
 - ☐ Not in Place
31. Schedule for rewards/incentives for the year is planned *
- Mark only one oval.*
- ☐ In Place and Successful
 - ☐ In Place but Needs Improvement
 - ☐ Not in Place
32. Orientation for incoming staff is developed and implemented *
- Mark only one oval.*
- ☐ In Place and Successful
 - ☐ In Place but Needs Improvement
 - ☐ Not in Place
33. Orientation for incoming students is developed and implemented *
- Mark only one oval.*
- ☐ In Place and Successful
 - ☐ In Place but Needs Improvement
 - ☐ Not in Place
34. Activities for involving families/community are developed and implemented *
- Mark only one oval.*
- ☐ In Place and Successful
 - ☐ In Place but Needs Improvement
 - ☐ Not in Place

Classroom Systems

Please rate each component of the PBIS implementation as In Place and Successful, In Place but Needs Improvement, or Not in Place

35. Classroom rules are defined for each of the school-wide expectations and are posted in classrooms * *Mark only one oval.*
- ☐ In Place and Successful
 - ☐ In Place but Needs Improvement
 - ☐ Not in Place
36. Expected behavior routines are taught in classrooms *
- Mark only one oval.*
- ☐ In Place and Successful
 - ☐ In Place but Needs Improvement
 - ☐ Not in Place
37. Classroom teachers use immediate and specific praise *
- Mark only one oval.*
- ☐ In Place and Successful
 - ☐ In Place but Needs Improvement
 - ☐ Not in Place
38. Acknowledgement of rules being followed correctly occurs more frequently than acknowledgement of inappropriate behaviors * *Mark only one oval.*
- ☐ In Place and Successful
 - ☐ In Place but Needs Improvement
 - ☐ Not in Place
39. Procedures exist for tracking classroom behavior problems *
- Mark only one oval.*
- ☐ In Place and Successful
 - ☐ In Place but Needs Improvement
 - ☐ Not in Place
40. Classrooms have a range of consequences/interventions for problem behaviors that are documented and consistently delivered * *Mark only one oval.*
- ☐ In Place and Successful
 - ☐ In Place but Needs Improvement
 - ☐ Not in Place

Evaluation

Please rate each component of the PBIS implementation as In Place and Successful, In Place but Needs Improvement, or Not in Place

41. Students are surveyed about PBIS *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ In Place and Successful
- ☐ In Place but Needs Improvement
- ☐ Not in Place

42. Staff are surveyed about PBIS *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ In Place and Successful
- ☐ In Place but Needs Improvement
- ☐ Not in Place

43. Staff can identify expectations and rules *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ In Place and Successful
- ☐ In Place but Needs Improvement
- ☐ Not in Place

44. Students can identify expectations and rules *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ In Place and Successful
- ☐ In Place but Needs Improvement
- ☐ Not in Place

45. Staff uses referral process (including which behaviors are office managed vs. teacher managed) and forms appropriately * *Mark*

only one oval.

- ☐ In Place and Successful
- ☐ In Place but Needs Improvement
- ☐ Not in Place

46. Staff uses reward system appropriately *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ In Place and Successful
- ☐ In Place but Needs Improvement
- ☐ Not in Place

47. Outcomes (behavior problems, attendance, morale) are documented and used to evaluate PBIS plan * *Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ In Place and Successful
- ☐ In Place but Needs Improvement
- ☐ Not in Place

This content is neither created nor endorsed by Google.

Google Forms

Appendix D Email to Staff – Focus Groups

Dear Teachers,

My name is Jamie Lusebrink, and I am one of the Assistant Principals here at [REDACTED] Elementary School. I am a doctoral student at the University of Pittsburgh, and I am currently working to evaluate the current PBIS program in order to make recommendations for improvements based on my research. I am writing to invite you to participate in a focus group in order to gain a better perspective of the current PBIS program.

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports is a programmatic way of creating school-wide supports for students with behavior infractions. 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 series of focus groups will be conducted to assess the building PBIS implementation. The data gathered from the focus group will help us to continue to build a positive learning environment for all.

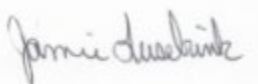
This focus group is entirely voluntary. It will help to identify positive and negative aspects of the PBIS program and inform future changes. For this 20-minute focus group, I appreciate any insights you can provide.

The focus groups will be scheduled during your morning meeting time and at a convenient time and date for all participants. You can end your participation at any time or choose to skip any questions. All your responses are confidential, and data will be kept private. I will not publish any quotes that might put anyone's employment at risk. Transcripts will use pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality.

By consenting to participate in the focus group, you are giving your permission to be recorded during the group. There is no direct benefit to you for study participation. You may withdraw from the study at any time. Data will be collected and retained for continued use unless you request that data be destroyed. Data will be stored securely by a) using a secure server for written documents (Google Drive) and b) a locked office at the [REDACTED] Elementary for data, documents, and artifacts that cannot be stored on-line.

If you have any questions or concerns about the focus groups or the research, please feel free to contact me directly at jlusebrink@mckasd.net. Thank you in advance for your help; your participation is greatly appreciated. Please respond to this email if you are willing to participate in the focus group and be recorded.

Sincerely,



Jamie Lusebrink

Appendix E Focus Group Questions

Regular Education and Special Education Teachers in Grades 3-5 and Specials/Itinerant Teachers

1. What are the strengths of the current PBIS program?
2. What are the weaknesses of the current PBIS program?
3. What are your recommendations for improving the program?
4. How does the PBIS program affect student behavior?
 - a) Has the PBIS program decreased, increased, or not had an effect on student discipline problems?
 - b) Has the PBIS program improved, worsened, or not affected students' attitudes towards school?
 - c) Has the PBIS program helped to improve students' respectfulness towards others?
5. How satisfied do you think that teachers are with the PBIS program?
 - a) Are teachers satisfied, dissatisfied, or neither with the behavior expectations and guidelines set forth by the PBIS program?
 - b) Are teachers satisfied, dissatisfied, or neither with the administration's support of the PBIS program?
6. How was the PBIS program first implemented in this school?
 - a) Did teachers have adequate training and feel prepared to implement the PBIS program?
7. How is the PBIS program currently being implemented in this school?
 - a) What preparation have you done on your own to implement the PBIS program?
 - b) What aspects of the PBIS program hinder or facilitate its implementation?
8. What additional thoughts or concerns about the PBIS program do you have?

Appendix F Email to Staff – Interviews

Dear Colleagues:

My name is Jamie Lusebrink, and I am one of the Assistant Principals here at [REDACTED] Elementary School. I am a doctoral student at the University of Pittsburgh, and I am working to evaluate the current PBIS program in order to make recommendations for improvements based on my research. I am writing to invite you to participate in an interview in order to gain a better perspective of the current PBIS program.

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports is a programmatic way of creating school-wide supports for students with behavior infractions. 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 series of individual interviews will be conducted as part of assessing the PBIS implementation for this building. Your participation in an interview will help us to continue to build a positive learning environment for all.

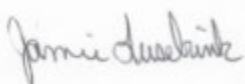
This interview is entirely voluntary. It will help to identify stakeholder perspectives of the PBIS program and inform future changes. For this 20-minute interview, I appreciate any insights you can provide.

The interviews will be scheduled during your student-free time in the morning or afternoon and at a convenient time and date for all participants. There is no direct benefit to you for study participation. You can end your participation at any time or choose to skip any questions. All responses are confidential, and data will be kept private. Data will be stored securely by a) using a secure server for written documents (Google Drive) and b) a locked office at the [REDACTED] Elementary for data, documents, and artifacts that cannot be stored on-line. I will not publish any quotes that might identify any participants or put anyone's employment at risk.

By consenting to participate in the interview, you are giving your permission to be recorded.

If you have any questions or concerns about the interviews or the research, please feel free to contact me directly at jlusebrink@mckasd.net. Thank you in advance for your help; your participation is greatly appreciated. Please respond to this email if you are willing to participate in the interview and be recorded.

Sincerely,



Jamie Lusebrink

Appendix G Interview Questions

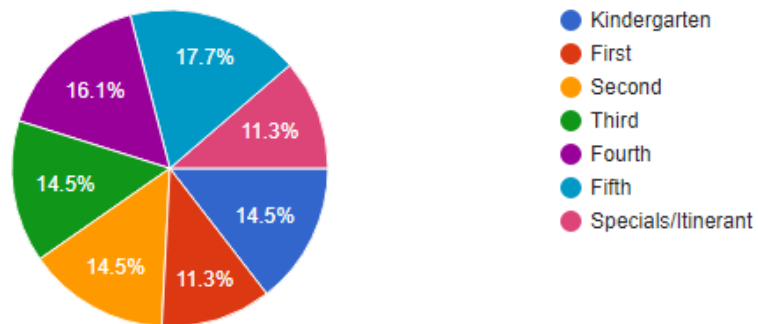
Original PBIS committee, building principal, and Coordinator from the Watson Institute

1. I know that this school decided to adopt the SWPBS model five years ago. What led up to that decision?
 - a. What was the situation prior to adoption?
 - b. What factors contributed to the decision?
 - c. How did you understand SWPBS when you first heard about it?
 - d. Who was involved in the decision to adopt the model?
2. How was the SWPBS model initially implemented at your school?
 - a. Training?
 - b. Other resources?
3. Have the training and other resources changed since SWPBS was initially implemented? If so, please describe how.
 - a. Who has been involved in the continued implementation of SWPBS?
4. Now that the school has implemented SWPBS for a period of over 5 years, how has the school climate changed?
 - a. How has student behavior changed?
 - b. How have the teachers' behaviors changed?
5. If you could change one thing about the current SWPBS program, what would it be?
6. If you were to speak with a colleague from another school district thinking about implementing SWPBS, what would you tell him or her?
7. What additional thoughts or concerns about the PBIS program do you have?

Appendix H Beginning of Year Staff Survey on PBIS Program

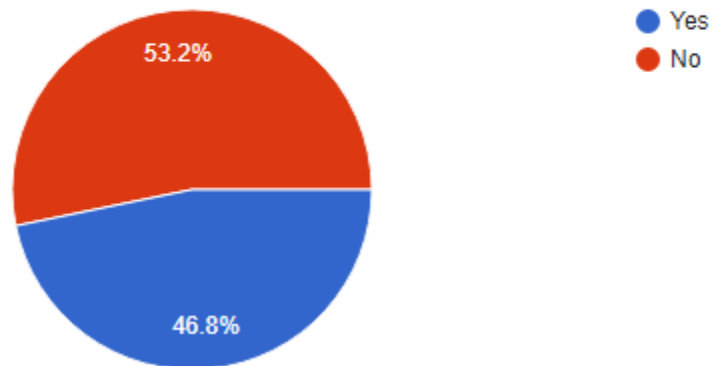
What grade level do you currently teach? If you are a special education teacher, which grade level do you work with most?

62 responses



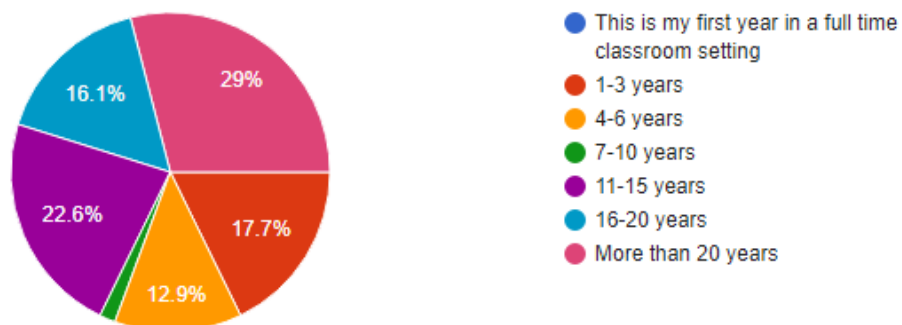
Have you always taught that grade level?

62 responses



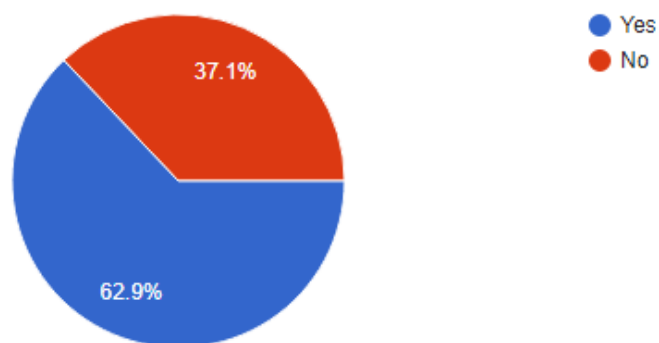
How many years have you been teaching?

62 responses



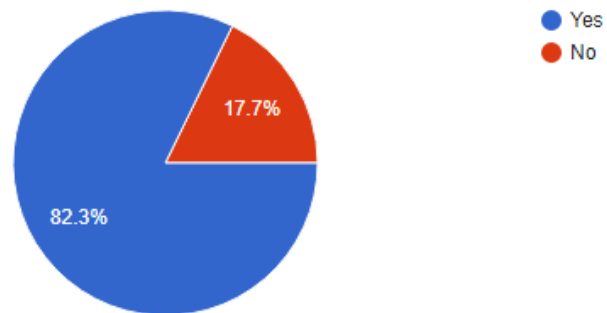
Were you here at Twin Rivers when the PBIS/ROAR program was first implemented in 2015?

62 responses



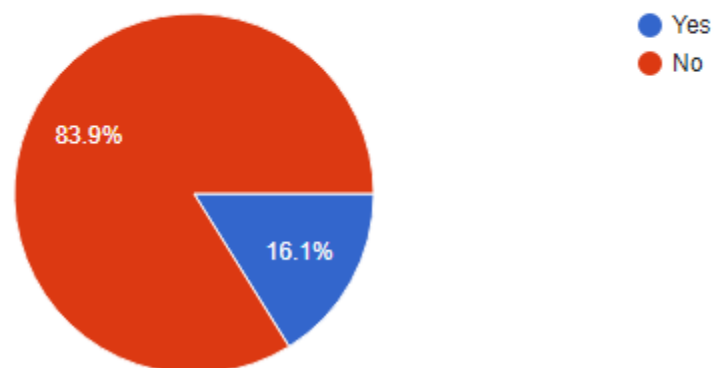
Have you ever been trained on the PBIS/ROAR program here at Twin Rivers, prior to this year's review?

62 responses



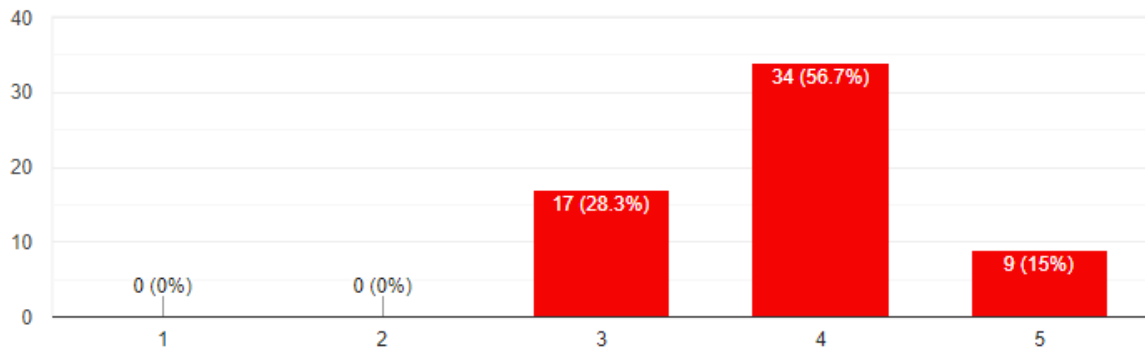
Were you ever trained on PBIS somewhere else?

62 responses



On a scale of 1-5, how successful do you think the program has been during the time you have been at Twin Rivers?

60 responses



What do you think the most successful aspect of the program is?

1. Tickets given immediately to praise behavior
2. The focus on students' positive behavior and universal school rules.
3. The reward system
4. Quick response
5. The tickets
6. Incentives
7. The students get to work together to create puzzles or group projects. Get to see their work posted up around the room. They take pride in getting the roar tickets from other teachers and love to show them off to the rest of the class!
8. The better behaved students understand what they have to do to follow program and are good models for poor displays of behavior. It is consistent and holds children accountable for their behavior.
9. The responses we get from admin, I also like that kids get behavior stars...I believe recognizing positive behavior is a great example for kids to see, peer motivation!
10. I think the most successful aspect is the excitement that the students get when they are recognized and rewarded for their good behavior.
11. All staff with consistent expectations, students are aware of the expectations, reward system, acknowledges positive behavior
12. I believe the most successful aspect of the program is the instant form of communication between teacher and administrator.
13. Provides positive reinforcement for good behavior as well as time to teach social skills lessons in the classroom.
14. The most successful part of the program is to give student guidelines for conduct in all parts of the building.
15. The golden stars are a great motivator! Also, the student of the month treats are well received too.
16. Seeing the children's excitement when they are awarded prizes and get their pictures taken.
17. Rules are very clear and message is consistent. The student raffle is good as well.
18. Setting Guidelines for the students to follow and educating them on these guidelines.
19. The students look forward to the rewards when they are doing their best.

20. my students really liked the student of the week (star, cape, crown)
21. the explanation, implementation and excitement of doing it
22. Responsibility and being accountable for their own actions
23. Rewards for students for doing well and being respectful
24. The best part is the rewards that they receive.
25. Consistency and giving positive reinforcement
26. the clear expectations of students' behavior
27. The constant reminder of the R.O.A.R rules
28. The students look forward to the rewards.
29. It is easy to fill out and use.
30. some of the prizes for students
31. the app to record behavior
32. The Reward tickets
33. the simple acronym
34. Positive approach
35. quick responses
36. Weekly awards
37. Reward system
38. fast response
39. The rewards
40. Consistency
41. the tickets
42. Discipline
43. rewards
44. Prizes
45. Idk

What do you think the least successful aspect of the program is?

1. Inconsistent enforcement of expectations with staff, kids get disappointed that their ticket doesn't get picked in the drawing
2. The Star of the Week should be from each classroom, not just one per grade level. The students are very disappointed when they are not recognized for being the Star from their classroom. We recognize and cheer for them in our classroom, but it not the same.
3. Getting it into system right away
4. Limited choices
5. n/a
6. N/A
7. NA
8. Rewards are sometimes not given out in consistent manner. For instance when a child is sent to ABC room for "Reflection", they are sometimes given candy or a prize of some sort. This is inconsistent with the program. They are going to continue the poop behavior if they know they are going to end up with a treat. They should receive more of a verbal praise for proper reflection or something similar. It might be a good idea to call it the "Reflection Room" and teach them what the word means. They could use a type of Journal when their, discuss the behavior with teacher and maybe get a stamp or sticker.
9. I think with the younger kids the wait time for a reward can be tough for them. The ROAR ticket is reinforcing immediately and they also like saying their name on the mic in the cafe, but waiting for the prize every Friday is a long time for the small ones.
10. I don't think that behavior is truly managed using the program on the bus, in the restroom, in the stairwell, in the hallway, etc. No one really monitors these locations using the ROAR system, and students are not really held accountable.

11. I would like to see the online referral form expanded a bit. Sometimes there are behaviors that are listed as referrals only that I believe require a consequence but they are not included in the other levels.
12. I believe the least successful aspect of the program is the response to the behaviors. Even when written up, some behaviors with students do not get addressed and worsen with time.
13. Not many students get selected on a weekly basis and the prizes should include "more items" for them to take since there are not many that get selected.
14. The time of the raffle on Friday. It always happens during class time and its hard to settle them down for the last 30 minutes of school.
15. I often see ROAR tickets on the floor. Many students show little responsibility for taking their ticket to the bucket.
16. The fact that the program gets ignored by the disenfranchised students. I honestly don't know how we can engage them.
17. The frequency of school wide implementation of positive reinforcement "tickets" by all classroom teachers.
18. The lesson assemblies do not always seem to give the students new information, and students seem bored.
19. If students don't care about rewards offered then they could lack motivation to earn them.
20. The students who regularly have problems are not always motivated by the rewards.
21. Not enough winners per grade level, takes too long to have extra gym, stem, etc.
22. consistency of, due to time constraints of giving rewards to students
23. I wish we had more choices in the behavior/office referral section.
24. Not always being able to follow through with the ROAR write ups
25. Keeping the rewards and recognition of awards consistent.
26. I think that there should be more winners for each grade.
27. Perhaps we need to promote more and increase rewards.
28. the response time on behaviors has been inconsistent
29. not enough school wide assemblies, etc
30. The star student for upper grades
31. consistency with consequences
32. Inconsistency with approach
33. follow through consequences
34. Not followed through enough
35. i think it's great
36. The right up.
37. Consequences
38. Consistency
39. rewards
40. Time
41. Idk
42. ?

Typical behaviors that I refer to the office and expect consequences for are:

1. Physical altercation
2. Fighting
3. Aggressive behaviors, or conflicts stemming from lunch or on the bus that have escalated into threatening to hurt or fight one another.
4. Inappropriate interaction
5. Don't use
6. fighting

7. N/A
8. Aggressive behaviors (hitting, kicking, throwing objects, etc.), verbal disrespect, leaving the classroom (This one is huge. Whether an administrator handles the issue or security, leaving the room without permission is never okay and I cannot leave the remainder of the students unattended to chase after a kid who most likely leaves the room frequently.)
9. physical aggression such as a fight or hitting multiple times, kicking, spitting- but I wouldn't typically call it if it happens only once, repeated offences of leaving the room, consistent bullying or threats of another student, throwing objects multiple times, severe property destruction the student can't remedy or clean back up themselves
10. Class disruption after multiple times of being redirected/phone calls home; stealing; fighting; endangering others; poor behavior choices that destroy property and/or can hurt that student or someone else; property destruction; bullying; disrespect/defiance; refusal to follow rules and procedures; etc.
11. Students physically hurting someone, over all disrespect to teacher or classmates, swearing, (overall mean attitudes, back talking to staff) breaking property out of anger
12. consistent classroom disruption, causes harm to teacher/staff/peers, destruction of classroom and/or materials, showing constant disregard for ROAR rules on a daily basis.
13. Anything that jeopardizes the learning environment of the classroom or when a student is showing signs of aggression towards another student.
14. leaving the classroom without permission, hitting/fighting, running around classroom/roaming around classroom, screaming out multiple times
15. Touching others with intent to harm, Threats, anything of a sexual nature and anything that could put us in a litigious situation.
16. Hitting/pushing, shouting argument where inappropriate language is used, extreme defiance during class instruction.
17. fighting, any unsafe behaviors (standing on desks, throwing furniture around, swearing at teacher or other students)
18. Leaving the classroom without permission, putting your hands on someone, sexual comments, bullying, fighting
19. fighting, extreme anger/ behavior problems (tossing desk, trying to hurt others when frustrated)
20. Behaviors that I would refer for would have to be something that could hurt others or themselves.
21. When a student would make the learning environment unsafe for themselves or others around them.
22. leaving the classroom, hurting others or self, out of control student (throwing things, etc.)
23. Physical fights, blatant inappropriate behavior towards others, Blatant disrespect of Staff
24. I refer kids when they hurt another child or are danger to their classmates or themselves
25. physical altercations, repeated defiance after several attempts to redirect behavior
26. Aggressive behavior towards another student, destruction of the classroom
27. Fighting, chronic disruption, aggressive behavior, severe bullying
28. Walking out of class and throwing objects inside the classroom.
29. Fighting, Violence toward staff, and Repeat offenses (5+)
30. injury of others - destruction of teacher's property
31. Major classroom disruptions, Disrespecting others
32. ONES THAT CANNOT BE MANAGED WITHIN THE CLASSROOM.
33. Fighting and extreme disrespect towards myself
34. fighting, severe disrespect, damage or vandalism
35. fighting and anything related to sexual nature
36. Violence, property destruction, physical harm
37. If a student is running out of the classroom
38. Severe aggression, running out of building

- 39. Anything where a student could get hurt
- 40. Inappropriate language and fighting
- 41. Aggressive behavior and Disrespect
- 42. Fist fighting with another student
- 43. fighting, aggressive behavior
- 44. leaving class, fighting
- 45. hitting and disrespect
- 46. bullying or fighting
- 47. hitting/fighting
- 48. disrespect
- 49. Aggression
- 50. Disrespect

Appendix I IRB Documentation



EXEMPT DETERMINATION

Date:	October 13, 2020
IRB:	STUDY20090046
PI:	Jamie Lusebrink
Title:	Evaluating a School-Wide Positive Behavior Intervention and Support Program for System Improvement
Funding:	None

The Institutional Review Board reviewed and determined the above referenced study meets the regulatory requirements for exempt research under 45 CFR 46.104.

Determination Documentation

Determination Date:	10/13/2020
Exempt Category:	(1) Educational settings

Determinations:	
Approved Documents:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focus Group Questions, Category: Data Collection;• Interview Questions, Category: Data Collection;• Survey Questions, Category: Data Collection;• Email to Superintendent, Category: External Site Permission Letter;• HRP-720 - WORKSHEET - Exemption_Educational Strategies_Version_0.01.docx, Category: IRB Protocol;• Letter to Staff- Focus Groups, Category: Recruitment Materials;• Letter to Staff- Interviews, Category: Recruitment Materials;• Letter to Staff- Survey, Category: Recruitment Materials;• Letter to Superintendent, Category: Recruitment Materials;• Letter to Superintendent, Category: External Site Permission Letter;

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.

Appendix J Summary of All Survey Responses by PBIS Best Practice Component

PBIS Best Practice Component	Benchmark Statement	In Place and Successful		In Place but Needs Improvement		Not in Place	
		Number of Respondents	Percent	Number of Respondents	Percent	Number of Respondents	Percent
Leadership Commitment	Faculty feedback is obtained throughout the year	15	75%	4	20%	1	5%
	Faculty are aware of behavior problems school-wide through regular data sharing	11	55%	8	40%	1	5%
	Procedures exist for tracking classroom behavior problems	13	65%	7	35%	0	0%
Resource Deployment	A system of rewards implemented consistently	19	95%	1	5%	0	0%
	A variety of methods are used to reward students	20	100%	0	0%	0	0%
	Rewards are linked to expectations/rules	20	100%	0	0%	0	0%
	Rewards are varied to maintain student interest	16	80%	4	20%	0	0%
	The system includes incentives for staff/faculty	2	10%	6	30%	12	60%
	Staff uses reward system appropriately	15	75%	5	25%	0	0%

	Schedule for rewards/incentives for the year is planned	16	80%	4	20%	0	0%
	The school has a behavioral curriculum that includes expectations and rules	19	95%	1	5%	0	0%
	Lessons include examples and non-examples	19	95%	1	5%	0	0%
	Lessons for teaching student expectations/rules/rewards of the PBIS System are scheduled and delivered	16	80%	4	20%	0	0%
	Lessons use a variety of teaching strategies	18	90%	2	10%	0	0%
	Strategies to share key features of the PBIS program with families are implemented	9	45%	11	55%	0	0%
	3-5 positively stated school-wide expectations are posted around the school	20	100%	0	0%	0	0%
	Expectations apply to both students and staff	16	80%	4	20%	0	0%
	Rules were developed and posted for specific locations throughout the school	20	100%	0	0%	0	0%
	Staff can identify expectations and rules	20	100%	0	0%	0	0%
	Students can identify expectations and rules	17	85%	3	15%	0	0%
	Staff uses referral process (including which behaviors are office managed vs. teacher managed) and forms appropriately	10	50%	10	50%	0	0%
Collaboration	Faculty are involved in establishing and reviewing goals	14	70%	5	25%	1	5%

	Staff was involved in the development of expectations and rules	19	95%	1	5%	0	0%
	Faculty and staff are involved in the development and delivery of the behavioral curriculum	15	75%	5	25%	0	0%
	Students are involved in identifying/developing incentives	4	20%	5	25%	11	55%
	Activities for involving families/community are developed and implemented	9	45%	9	45%	2	10%
Staff Development	A curriculum to teach the components of the discipline system to all staff is used	13	65%	4	20%	3	15%
	Orientation for incoming staff is developed and implemented	8	40%	9	45%	3	15%
	Orientation for incoming students is developed and implemented	4	20%	9	45%	7	35%
	Booster sessions for students are planned, scheduled, and delivered	9	45%	4	20%	7	35%
	Booster sessions for staff are planned, scheduled, and delivered	5	25%	5	25%	10	50%
	Classroom rules are defined for each of the school-wide expectations and are posted in classrooms	20	100%	0	0%	0	0%
	Staff training on how to teach expectations/rules/rewards are scheduled and delivered	12	60%	5	25%	3	15%
	Expected behavior routines are taught in classrooms	17	85%	3	15%	0	0%
	Classroom teachers use immediate and specific praise	14	70%	6	30%	0	0%

	Acknowledgement of rules being followed correctly occurs more frequently than acknowledgement of inappropriate behaviors	13	65%	6	30%	1	5%
	Classrooms have a range of consequences/interventions for problem behaviors that are documented	12	60%	8	40%	0	0%
Data- Based Decision-Making	Data system used to collect and analyze office referral data	16	80%	3	15%	1	5%
	Data analyzed by team at least monthly	10	50%	7	35%	3	15%
	Data shared with team and faculty monthly	10	50%	6	30%	4	20%
	Staff are surveyed about PBIS	18	90%	1	5%	1	5%
	Students are surveyed about PBIS	6	30%	6	30%	8	40%
	Outcomes (behavior problems, attendance, morale) are documented and used to evaluate PBIS plan	14	70%	6	30%	0	0%

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