

Leveraging the Power of Peer Collaboration and Principal Support: An Innovative Approach to Tier 1 Behavioral Intervention Strategies in the Classroom

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Failure to implement Tier 1 behavioral intervention strategies in the classroom leads to inappropriate special education and disciplinary referrals for Black students resulting in a loss of instructional opportunities. This project took place in an urban K-8 school with a culturally and linguistically diverse student population. In consultation with the principal, three professional development sessions (featuring videos of actual classroom practice) explicitly taught (a) classroom routines, (b) opportunities to respond, and (c) behavior specific praise. Between sessions teachers were encouraged to visit other classrooms and observe the strategy targeted in the prior session. These peer observations proved highly effective as they became the subject of discussion in the subsequent training session. At the beginning of each session, teachers shared ideas and reflected on their own practices.

Pre- and post-tests revealed that participants not only learned the strategies but incorporated them in their classrooms. This study underscores the importance of principals observing for Tier 1 strategies so that they can tailor professional development accordingly. In addition, this study reveals the power of peer collaboration among teachers for strengthening what they have learned. Finally, the study showed that explicitly teaching one strategy at a time across sessions with opportunities to collaborate between sessions was crucial to its success.

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Preface

I would like to acknowledge the generations of my ancestors whose shoulders I stand on today. Their perseverance and persistence continue to motivate me to push myself to honor their sacrifices. To my family, thank you for the phone calls, text messages, crying sessions, and reminders of who I am and whose I am. You helped carry me through many challenges and losses with love, dignity, and laughter.

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Broader Problem Area

Failure to implement Tier 1 and Tier 2 behavioral interventions in the classroom is a national issue (Bethune, 2017; Kerr & Nelson, 2010; Sterrett et al., 2020). Moreover, this failure leads to disproportionate office disciplinary referrals for Black students and an overrepresentation of Black students in special education programming (Raines et al., 2015). This issue persists because classroom teachers do not know how to identify and implement Tier 1 and Tier 2 behavioral interventions that would allow students to remain in the classroom to access instruction (Bethune, 2017; Kerr & Nelson, 2010; Lane et al., 2020). Conversely, “by decreasing problem behaviors and improving the atmosphere or climate in a school, educators can increase instructional time and ultimately improve students’ academic performance – a goal of all educators” (Lane et al., 2020).

1.2 Organizational Systems

The school district’s data shows that Black students are being referred for disciplinary action due to behaviors at disproportionate rates when compared to their White peers. In a recent report, it was found that during the 2019–2020 school year, Black students made up 79% of the total number of students that were suspended, though they were only 52% of the total student population. Skiba et al. (2008) posit that factors contributing to disproportionality include “test

bias, poverty, special education processes, inequity in general education, issues of behavior management, and cultural mismatch/cultural reproduction” (p. 264). The result reinforces the risk that Black students would disproportionately be referred for behavioral infractions.

1.3 Stakeholders

The key stakeholders are the end users of the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS): School Counselors, School Social Workers, Classroom Teachers, Academic Coaches, School Psychologists, Paraprofessionals, Building Principals, Parents/Guardians, and Students.

Group 1: School Counselors and School Social Workers

The role of the school counselor and social worker is the same as it pertains to the MTSS process in schools. Both are responsible for being the lead for scheduling and guiding the process. They coordinate meetings, invite teachers or other staff, and lead the meetings. They are also responsible for the initial paperwork associated with the special education evaluation process.

Group 2: Classroom Teachers

Classroom teachers are responsible for providing academic and behavioral Tier 1 supports to all students, Tier 2 supports to students who have additional academic and/or behavioral needs, and supporting the implementation of Tier 3 supports as well.

Group 3: Academic Coaches

Academic coaches are assigned to school buildings to provide targeted support to instructional staff and building leaders in the implementation of the academic curriculum and frameworks. They often lead Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) aimed at improving

instructional practices, providing coaching feedback and support to instructional staff, and work with students around specific academic needs.

Group 4: School Principals

School principals are the instructional leaders for their buildings, provide guidance and formal and informal observations of teachers. They are also responsible for all aspects of building operations.

Group 5: Parents/Guardians

Parents/Guardians are critical members of MTSS teams, as they provide a perspective on how a student is performing outside of the school building. They often notice academic concerns and behavioral concerns that also present in the school environment.

Group 6: Students

Students are the central focus of the MTSS team. Their individual academic and behavioral needs are discussed, and plans are developed in collaboration with other stakeholders. Teachers and other staff are expected to work to implement the interventions and collect data on the goals that are set during the meeting.

1.4 Statement of Problem

Teachers' lack of familiarity with and failure to implement Tier 1 and Tier 2 evidence-based strategies for behavior leads to unnecessary office disciplinary referrals and disproportionate disciplinary referrals of Black students resulting in a loss of instructional opportunities.

1.5 Review of Supporting Knowledge

To deepen my knowledge and understanding of my problem of practice, I conducted a literature review of existing scholarship. This allowed me to explore wider aspects of my problem of practice and center my focus on the importance of improving professional practice through my program evaluation.

1.5.1 Using Multi-Tiered Evidence-Based Behavioral Strategies in the Classroom

The use of school wide tiered systems of support is widely recognized as an effective and responsive approach to improving students' educational outcomes (Lane et al., 2020). The State of Utah Office of Education's *Least Restrictive Behavioral Interventions (LRBI) Technical Assistance Manual* (Utah Office of Education, 2015) defines Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) as "a framework that integrates an evidence-based model that uses data-based problem-solving to implement academic and behavioral instruction and interventions. Academic and behavioral supports are delivered to students in varying intensities based on student need" (p. 21).

This framework has been implemented in schools across the United States to provide supports to students for both academic and behavioral needs. Bethune (2017) defines School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS/PBIS) as a "proactive system of behavior supports that is implemented using a tiered model" (p. 131). In her review of literature, Bethune (2017) further defines SWPBIS/PBIS as a "team-based approach" that is delivered "across three tiers (school-wide, small group and individual student)," and is a proactive approach to "directly teaching, practicing and reinforcing prosocial behavior" (p. 131). Van Camp et al.

(2021) place the supports in tiers based on “the intensity of support students require, uses data to inform decisions about increasing student supports, and assists school personnel in more effectively meeting students’ behavioral needs” (p. 53). One of the key elements of PBIS is the tiered structure and increasing supports and interventions based on student needs.

Tier 1 represents the lowest intensity supports, which are preventive in nature and implemented school wide (approximately 80% of student population). Tier 2 targets small groups of students through efficient interventions that are unresponsive to universal programs and practices (approximately 10-15% of the student population). Tier 3 supports are reserved for students with intensive needs for highly individualized interventions that require significant resources (approximately 5-7% of the student population) (Lane et al., 2020; Reinke et al., 2013; Sterrett et al., 2020). According to Sugai et al. (2010), the tiered intervention model has three overarching constructs that are key to their implementation fidelity and sustainability that lead to long term changes in student outcomes and school climate: systems, practices, and data. These constructs were explored by defining Tier 1 and Tier 2 supports and classroom interventions, the efficacy of a preventive focus, evidence-based strategies, and examples.

1.5.2 Reasons Why a Preventative Focus Works

Instead of waiting for problems to occur, then responding with a series of increasingly harsh consequences, schools are developing tiered models of support that subscribe to a proactive instructional approach to academic, behavioral, and social performance (Lane et al., 2006). According to the LRBI (Utah Office of Education, 2015), educators make three assumptions when implementing effective classroom management and school wide PBIS: (a) a focus on prevention

encourages appropriate behavior and helps schools and school staff avoid patterns of punishment and reaction to behavioral problems, (b) supports are readily available to identify and address the needs of students who are at risk of developing behavioral and/or academic problems, and (c) effective classroom and school systems develop and maintain policies and practices that deliver high levels of support to students with chronic behavioral and/or academic problems (p. 27).

Lane et al. (2020) highlight that another challenge is helping teachers move from reactive to proactive classroom management and discipline systems. This requires not only a change in method, but also a shift in thinking (p. 4). That shift is away from typical systems of consequence and punishment after the behavior occurs to one of active engagement in providing supports and opportunities to learn, understand, and demonstrate appropriate prosocial behaviors in the classroom and school community. In their review of literature, Lane et al. (2020) also found that “by designing and implementing a solid base program, it is possible to prevent problems from occurring, thereby reducing the proportion of students who require secondary and tertiary levels of prevention (Feil et al., 2002; Walker et al., 2014)” (pp. 60–61). Kerr and Nelson (2010) agreed that these universal interventions are critical and that without them, one can expect “confusion, lost instructional time, and a chaotic classroom climate characterized by student and staff frustration” (p. 197). The section that follows highlights some of the fundamental characteristics of these prevention strategies and their supporting literature.

1.5.3 What are Tier 1 Supports and Classroom Interventions?

Tier 1 supports are universal supports provided to all students that serve as the base from which you build on school-wide expectations of behavior, including for students who require more

intensive supports (Bruhn & McDaniel, 2021; Kerr & Nelson, 2010; Sterrett et al., 2020; Sugai et al., 2010; Van Camp et al., 2021). Tier 1 interventions offer a preventive focus to address behavioral challenges in the classroom as opposed to a reactive focus. All students benefit academically and socially when their classroom and school environments are positive, preventive, and responsive (Guerra & Williams, 2003; Horner et al., 2010; Zins et al., 2004). The LRBI (Utah Office of Education, 2015) also highlights that supportive school discipline is a systematic constellation of programs and practices that promote positive behaviors while preventing negative or risky behaviors (p. 1). Key to the preventive nature of school-wide programs is understanding that a primary prevention plan builds a connection between academic and behavioral performance that is facilitated by constructing a school wide plan that includes procedures for teaching expectations in the behavioral, social, and academic domains in an integrated fashion, unifying the features of school wide and classroom settings (Lane et al., 2020, p. 61). It is incumbent upon the school-based staff, specifically the classroom teacher, to teach the expected behaviors and reinforce them in an intentional manner across school environments, especially the classroom.

The reviewed research literature on Tier 1 universal strategies for teacher use in the classroom is summarized in Table 1 with a description of the strategy, an example of the strategy, and the references consulted. This table is not an exhaustive list but offers an overview of the examples discussed in the literature.

Table 1. Universal Strategies for Teacher Use in the Classroom

Strategy	Description	Examples	References
The classroom is physically designed to meet the needs of all students.	Furniture is arranged to allow for movement; instructional materials are accessible and clearly labeled; supportive instructional materials are posted; minimize distractions	Small group worktables; materials at student-accessible level; all students in line of sight; independent work areas	Kerr & Nelson (2010); Simonsen et al. (2015); Utah Office of Education, (2015)
Classroom routines are developed, taught and predictable.	Routines are established and explicitly taught for classroom activities; steps are outlined and practiced frequently	Routines for arrival, dismissal, lunch, homework, missed work, etc.; warm-up activity; independent activity; group activity	Bruhn & McDaniel (2021); Reinke et al. (2013); Simonsen et al. (2015); Utah Office of Education, (2015); Van Camp et al. (2021)
Three to five positive classroom expectations are posted, defined, and explicitly taught.	Each expectation is clearly defined and explicitly taught; students understand the rationale; students can practice and receive feedback	Poster with expectations clearly written (e.g., Be Safe. Be Ready. Be Responsible); define each expectation (e.g., being ready means having the materials you need for class); teach expectations (e.g., use role-play or lessons)	Reinke et al. (2013); Simonsen et al. (2015); Utah Office of Education (2015)
Prompts and active supervision practices are used proactively.	A process for monitoring the classroom where the teacher is moving around in the classroom, monitoring students, and interacting with them frequently	Teacher walks around classroom, observes students, checks in as they are working; scans the classroom to monitor other students	Simonsen et al. (2015); Utah Office of Education (2015)
Opportunities to respond are varied and are provided at high rates.	Teacher uses multiple methods to elicit student responses: call and respond, questioning strategies, response cards	Student names are written on popsicle sticks and chosen at random; read aloud together; show answers on dry erase boards	Simonsen et al. (2015); Utah Office of Education (2015)

Table 1 (continued)

<p>Specific praise and other strategies are used to acknowledge behavior.</p>	<p>Teacher uses verbal statement to name the specific behavior observed that is positive and reinforcing; use of token economy</p>	<p>I like how you are sitting quietly. Way to make a connection! You used the questioning strategy we learned. You've earned a ticket to use in the classroom store!</p>	<p>Reinke et al. (2013); Simonsen et al. (2015); Utah Office of Education (2015); Van Camp et al. (2021)</p>
<p>Reminders are consistently given before a behavior might occur.</p>	<p>Teacher prompts students prior to the behavior that describes what is expected</p>	<p>Reminder to access materials prior to beginning warm-up; Use of visual prompts (checklists; rubrics, picture cues)</p>	<p>Simonsen et al. (2015); Utah Office of Education, (2015); Van Camp et al. (2021)</p>
<p>The responses to misbehavior in the classroom are appropriate and systematic.</p>	<p>Teacher states misbehavior, tells student what is expected; uses calm voice; brief; respectful</p>	<p>Please raise your hand before yelling out the answer. Use an inside voice, please. Morning work is on your desk. Please begin your work.</p>	<p>Simonsen et al. (2015); Utah Office of Education (2015); Van Camp et al. (2021)</p>
<p>Data systems are used to collect information about classroom behavior.</p>	<p>Systematic strategy to collect data during to document student behaviors in the classroom: counting behaviors, timing, sampling, ABC (Antecedent/Behavior/Consequence)</p>	<p>Use a counter or smart phone app. Record duration of behavior using clock or timer Data tracker/app to count number of times behavior occurs within a given time period (30 sec) Record observations of what happens before, during, and after a behavior occurs (i.e., antecedent, behavior, consequence)</p>	<p>Bruhn & McDaniel (2021); Simonsen et al. (2015); Utah Office of Education (2015); Van Camp et al. (2021)</p>

1.5.4 What are Low Intensity Teacher Delivered Strategies to Manage Behavior?

Lane et al. (2020) reviewed seven teacher-led strategies that can be used in the classroom as either a universal or intensive support for a specific student. Each strategy is simple enough to be implemented immediately in the classroom setting. Each of these strategies is grounded in applied behavior analysis (ABA) principles, suggesting that if implemented with fidelity, they would lead to the desired change in student behavior (p. 146).

The reviewed research literature on low intensity teacher delivered strategies for use in the classroom is summarized in Table 2 with a description of the strategy, an example of the strategy, and the references consulted. This table is not an exhaustive list but offers an overview of the examples discussed in the literature.

Table 2. Low Intensity Teacher Delivered Strategies for Use in the Classroom

Strategy	Description	Examples	References
Behavior-specific praise	Explicit feedback for performance on a task; shapes a student’s behavior by reinforcing it	Teacher provides sincere and accurate feedback on student work and behavior	Lane et al. (2020); Freeman et al. (2019); Utah Office of Education (2015); Van Camp et al. (2021)
Pre-correction	A brief reminder of how to behave; anticipate times when behavior is most likely to occur	Review expectations prior to start of instruction; remind students of line-up process for dismissal; restate how to turn in classwork	Lane et al. (2020); Utah Office of Education (2015); Van Camp et al. (2021)
Active supervision	The teacher circulates, scanning the area, monitoring student behavior, and interacting with students	Can be used in the classroom, hallway, cafeteria, or other large spaces to monitor and pre-correct student behavior	Lane et al. (2020); Utah Office of Education (2015)
Opportunities to respond	Teacher initiates a high number of questions/prompts within a certain amount of time, with varied student response options	Students can use a non-verbal signal (e.g., thumbs up or down), app, or other tech tool; small whiteboards; response cards; students can respond individually, in a small group, or whole group	Lane et al. (2020); Utah Office of Education (2015)
Instructional choice	Teachers provide opportunities for students to choose from two or more options, is allowed to independently select the options, and is provided with the selected option	Choices may include working independently or in a small group; which of three assignments to start first; mode of presentation (e.g., poster, Power Point, essay)	Lane et al. (2020); Utah Office of Education (2015)

Table 2 (continued)

Instructional feedback	Teachers inform students about their performance with feedback that is immediate, specific, and focused on the lesson topic	Teacher provides feedback while students practice a new math strategy; multiple opportunities to engage with new concepts; student-teacher conference	Lane et al. (2020) Utah Office of Education (2015)
High probability requests	Teacher makes a request that the student is likely to complete prior to requesting a harder one	Teacher presents student with a math worksheet that begins with basic subtraction, then moves to double-digit subtraction, and then double-digit with borrowing	Lane et al. (2020) Utah Office of Education (2015)

1.5.5 What are Tier 2 Supports and Classroom Interventions?

Tier 2 positive behavior supports and interventions are preventive, targeted to address the individual needs of a student (i.e., social, emotional, and behavioral) beyond those of Tier 1 supports and with efficiency (Bruhn & McDaniel, 2021). Approximately 10–15% of the student population would require Tier 2 supports. Lane et al. (2020) discuss the importance of collecting data to determine the integrity, validity, and student response to the intervention.

Importantly, school personnel should provide Tier 2 supports and interventions only when a student is non-responsive to the Tier 1 and low intensity supports highlighted above (Van Camp et al., 2021). Tier 2 interventions are targeted and delivered to students in small groups. The identification of students for Tier 2 supports “rest on the assumption that Tier 1 supports are in place with adequate levels of fidelity” (Van Camp et al., 2021, p. 54). Tier 2 supports and interventions are more individualized and may be delivered outside of the classroom, therefore the classroom teacher is often not the primary implementer. Tier 2 strategies are not effective unless the Tier 1 and low-intensity strategies mentioned above are implemented with fidelity.

1.5.6 Conclusions

Using multi-tiered evidence-based behavioral strategies in the classroom can improve outcomes for students. Lane et al. (2020) posit that the use of school wide tiered systems of support is widely recognized as an effective and responsive approach to improving students’ educational outcomes. Foundational to the implementation of each tier are systems, practices, and data (Sugai

et al., 2010). *Systems* are the structures of the organization, logistical supports, and resources that support the implementation of interventions with fidelity. *Practices* are the evidence-based supports that produce desired outcomes. *Data* are the various measures or outcomes, fidelity, and social validity used to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the interventions and guide decision making (Bruhn & McDaniel, 2021). Taken together, they create the framework within which students receive a continuum of evidence-based practices. It is essential for classroom teachers to provide appropriate supports and interventions starting at the least intensive level with universal supports (because they are preventive in nature and are effective for approximately 80% of the student population) prior to moving on to low intensity supports or Tier 2 supports.

2.0 Theory of Improvement

Teachers' lack of familiarity with and failure to implement Tier 1 and Tier 2 evidence-based strategies for behavior lead to increased office referrals, disproportionate referrals of Black students and loss of instructional opportunities.

In my problem of practice, I am trying to resolve the issues around supporting students with behavioral needs in the general education classroom setting. My theory was that if I work with teachers and provide direct, targeted, and consistent professional development around understanding, identifying, and implementing Tier 1 behavioral supports and strategies for use in the general education classroom, they would increase their use of those strategies and decrease the number of students that are referred to the office for behavior concerns. All too often, children with behaviors of concern are removed from the classroom, taking them away from academic instruction. Additionally, removing them from the classroom takes the power away from teachers and puts it squarely at the feet of building administration. I theorized that if teachers were given the tools to better understand and manage behaviors through evidence-based strategies, they would be more likely to support students with behaviors of concern in the general education classroom, less likely to refer those students to the office for those behaviors of concern, and increase instructional opportunities.

I would know the change is an improvement when teachers' knowledge of Tier 1 intervention strategies for behaviors of concern increases as demonstrated by comparing pre- and post-assessment data. I believe that ongoing professional development is key to providing opportunities to learn and improve professional practice in the classroom as it pertains to

supporting students with more significant behavioral needs that go beyond basic classroom practices.

2.1 Driver Diagram

I reflected on my problem of practice through professional experience, empathy interviews, semi-structured interviews, and a review of supporting literature. Perry et al. (2020) define the driver diagram as a graphical means to display potential drivers for improvement across a system, working towards a specific aim. My aim was, by the end of the 2022-2023 school year, 90% of teachers participating in professional learning would demonstrate a 30% increase in knowledge of Tier 1 evidence-based behavioral intervention strategies in the classroom as measured by pre- and post-teacher surveys.

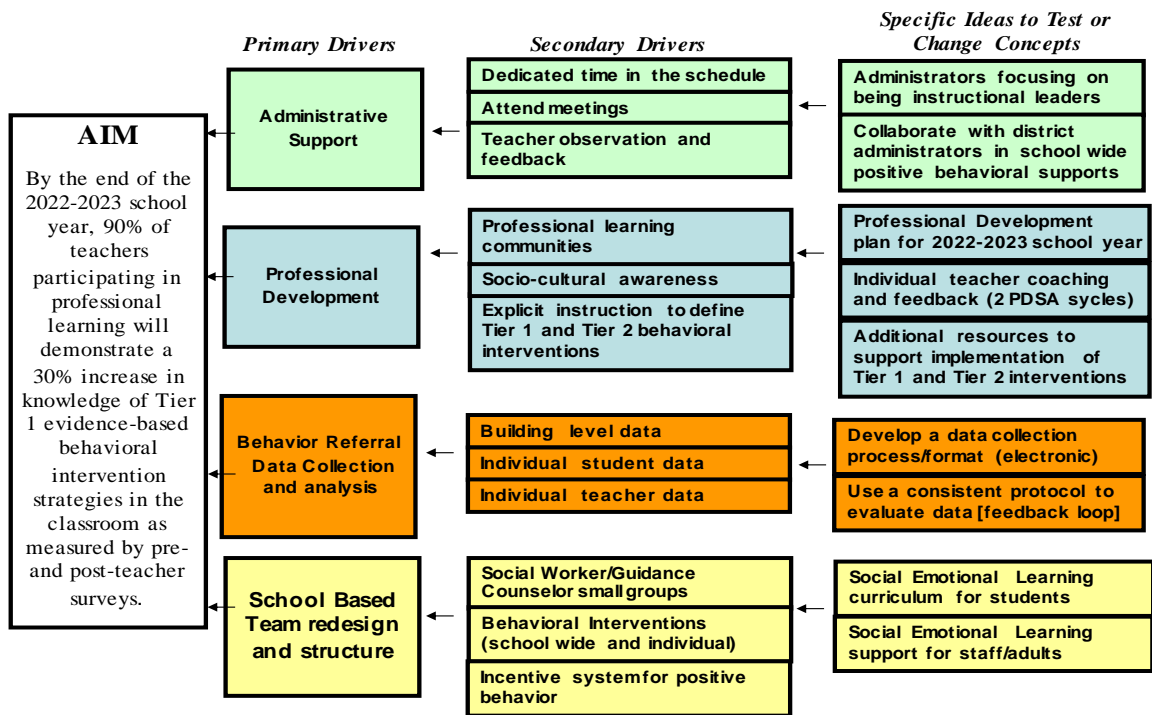


Figure 1. Driver Diagram

2.1.1 Primary and Secondary Drivers

My primary systems drivers were administrative support, professional development, behavior referral data collection and analysis, and school-based team redesign and structure. Administrative support was a good starting place to address the concerns with the number of office discipline referrals. Administrators can support teachers through a variety of means and their involvement in this process would certainly improve professional practice. Professional development is another key driver primarily because it is the means through which we can provide direct targeted support to teachers around new initiatives and opportunities for growth. Behavior

referral data collection and analysis is another area where I believe we can impact the system. Often times we collect data and keep it in databases, but we do not use it to inform our practices. I believe that by changing the way we not only collect data but also analyze that data and use it to address some issues within the system more readily would certainly improve outcomes for students. School based team redesign and structure is another driver that I have identified. Often the structure of MTSS teams in school buildings is disjointed, inconsistent across schools and ineffective. These drivers are key areas to leverage collectively to achieve my overall aim.

The secondary drivers that I have identified in the context of administrative support are specific to supporting teachers in giving them dedicated time and supporting them by attending MTSS meetings. For professional development, I believe utilizing professional learning communities and explicit instruction to define Tier 1 evidence-based behavioral interventions are critical secondary drivers to support my aim. A key aspect of addressing data collection and analysis was to review that data at the individual building, individual student, and individual teacher level. Without being able to see the myriad intricacies of individual building, individual student, and individual teacher data, we would not be able to interrupt the system that is disproportionately impacting Black children in schools, taking them out of the classroom and further and further away from instruction. In approaching school-based team redesign and structure, I believe it is critical to consider using our existing staff in different ways. Social workers and guidance counselors can run small groups with students to address behaviors of concern, school-based teams can develop positive school wide behavior support systems for both the school teams and individual students as needed and provide reasonable and meaningful incentives for positive behavior in the school community and environment.

2.1.2 Change Ideas

The specific change ideas that I explored include developing a professional development plan for the 2022–2023 school year with ongoing support for Tier 1 evidence-based behavioral interventions for use in the general education classroom. Improving data collection and analysis using consistent protocols to evaluate that data and creating a feedback loop is another change concept that I explored. Last, considering the inclusion of a social emotional learning curriculum for students and staff may also be another change concept that could impact school climate and culture.

The most important aspect of my aim was to determine if the change worked. One of the driver measures that helped me see if the changes impacted the driver areas was the pre- and post-teacher surveys for each professional development session. My plan was to provide ongoing professional development to a group of K-5 teachers during the 2022–2023 school year.

2.1.3 Balance Measures

Potential balance measures included ensuring that students are not being inadvertently harmed by teachers finding other ways of negatively addressing behaviors of concern in their classrooms. Just because a teacher stops sending students to the office does not mean that they are not finding other ways to still exclude them from the classroom and impacting the amount of time the students have access to instruction.

In conclusion, to address teachers' lack of familiarity with and failure to implement Tier 1 and Tier 2 evidence-based strategies for behavior that leads to increased office referrals,

disproportionate referrals of Black students, and loss of instructional opportunities can only be addressed by focusing on my aim. My aim was that, by the end of the 2022–2023 school year, 90% of teachers participating in professional learning would demonstrate a 30% increase in knowledge of Tier 1 evidence-based behavioral intervention strategies in the classroom as measured by pre- and post-teacher surveys.

2.2 Methods

2.2.1 Research Questions

Research questions are an essential component for planning and evaluating the process.

This program analysis sought to answer the following questions:

1. How do the pre-test and post-test group responses compare?
2. To what extent do participants engage in self-reflection activities?
3. To what extent do K-12 educators gain knowledge of
 - a. classroom routines?
 - b. opportunities to respond?
 - c. behavior specific praise?

2.2.2 Participants

The participants for this program evaluation were 20 elementary school teachers from the same K-5 building in a large urban public school district, representing each of the grade levels and

all content areas. This building was selected because of its stable leadership, demographic representation of minoritized students, and the availability of consistent behavioral data. The various staff members, including general education teachers, special education teachers, school counselor, building administration and paraprofessionals all represent most of my stakeholder group. They were all involved in the MTSS Team process to varying degrees. Each of their roles was critical to the determination and implementation of Tier 1 and Tier 2 behavioral interventions.

2.2.3 Inquiry Intervention

The intervention included three professional development sessions during the 2022–2023 school year. Each session occurred during dedicated professional learning time allotted to teachers weekly. The session topics are described in further detail in the following sections and summarized in Table 3, Professional Development Sessions: Effective Strategies for Teacher Use in the Classroom.

The professional development sessions focused on the critical and practical importance of classroom routines, opportunities to respond and behavior specific praise. The sessions began with a pre-test to establish a baseline of knowledge and understanding. The sessions continued with a Power Point presentation that incorporated videos, activities, reflection, and post-session follow up. Each session concluded with a post-test that required participants to draw on information learned during the professional development session and offered optional open-ended questions for additional feedback and reflection.

Table 3. Professional Development Sessions: Effective Strategies for Teacher Use in the Classroom

Session	Session Objectives	Activities	Challenge	Follow-Up
Classroom Routines <i>April 2023</i>	<p>Understand the benefits and qualities of effective classroom procedures.</p> <p>Understand the importance of directly teaching and regularly reviewing classroom procedures.</p> <p>Complete a self-assessment of your classroom procedures and identify opportunities for development.</p>	<p>Video: Watch this Teacher in Action</p> <p>Activity: Procedure Writing – Thinking Out Loud</p>	Classroom procedures must be directly taught.	<p>Consider common routines within your Grade Level Team.</p> <p>Leadership team will look for evidence of routines during walkthroughs and informal observations.</p>
Opportunities to Respond <i>April 2023</i>	<p>Assess current practices.</p> <p>Identify additional strategies to provide multiple opportunities to respond.</p> <p>Embed questioning strategies into lesson planning.</p>	<p>Video: Watch this Teacher in Action – Part 1: Count how many opportunities to respond the teacher provides.</p> <p>Video: Watch this Teacher in Action – Part 2: Identify which strategies the teacher utilized.</p> <p>Activity: Around the Room</p> <p>Activity: Personal Reflection</p>	<p>Identify opportunities within your lesson plans to increase opportunities for students to respond.</p> <p>Identify opportunities to replace single student responding through hand-raising with multiple students responding.</p>	<p>Incorporate opportunities to respond in your lesson planning.</p> <p>Leadership team will look for evidence of opportunities to respond (OTR) during walkthroughs and informal observations.</p>

Table 3 (continued)

<p>Behavior Specific Praise <i>May 2023</i></p>	<p>Understand the importance and impact of both contingent and non-contingent attention on student behavior and classroom climate.</p> <p>Use preferred adult behaviors to build relationships and positive classroom climate and effectively interact with students when talking about behavior.</p> <p>Demonstrate specific positive feedback that describes expected behavior and uses rationales.</p>	<p>Think – Pair – Share to explore adult attention and preferred behaviors.</p> <p>Grab a Partner – Positive Feedback</p>	<p>Choose a consistent 5–10-minute time period each day during the next two weeks to practice giving effective positive feedback.</p> <p>Notice any changes in student behavior?</p> <p>How did it feel?</p> <p>Prepare to report back.</p>	<p>Check in with your colleagues.</p> <p>Provide behavior specific praise to your students.</p> <p>Note any positive changes.</p>
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2.2.3.1 Session 1: Classroom Routines

Session 1 began with a pre-test presented as both a QR code embedded in the presentation and a link that could be shared via chat or email. The pre-test was developed in Qualtrics using an anonymous link that did not track participant information and protected aggregated participant responses. The pre-test asked participants to consider five questions and provided multiple choice response options.

The learning objectives were to (a) understand the benefits and qualities of effective classroom procedures, (b) understand the importance of directly teaching and regularly reviewing classroom procedures, and (c) complete a self-assessment of your classroom procedures and identify opportunities for development.

The Power Point presentation further defined procedures and routines providing participants with a clearer understanding. It also explored why teachers should focus on classroom procedures and routines. Based on the literature review, the following is a list of benefits that define classroom routines as a best practice:

- Increase instructional time by preventing problem behavior.
- Free teachers from correcting misbehavior.
- Improve classroom climate.
- Create shared ownership of the classroom.
- Develop self-discipline.

These were included to provide participants with an outline as they move from procedure to routine in their professional practice. The “Quick Check” allowed participants to connect their knowledge to the presentation so far.

The 9-minute video titled “Procedures and Routines Training Video” was developed by Missouri Schoolwide Positive Behavior Support and included classroom implementation examples and interviews with teachers. Classroom routines are developed for specific tasks and are taught and predictable. Following the video, participants engaged in Activity 1: List of Classroom Procedures that asked them to think through the many activities of their day, read through the lists of possible classroom procedures included on the *Lists of Classroom Procedures* handout, and discern which they have already applied and which they need to develop.

Prior to the next activity, participants were provided with a definition of specific classroom procedures, giving them an opportunity to reflect on their own procedures and their importance. Activity 2: Procedure Writing – Thinking Out Loud asked participants to review their *Lists of Classroom Procedures* handout and select one they identified as needing to be developed. They were then asked to “Think Out Loud” as they discussed the steps to this procedure. They were reminded that the procedure should be observable, measurable, positively stated, understandable, and always applicable.

The presentation concluded with a reflection on the learning objectives and important aspects of directly teaching classroom procedures. Participants were also provided with a “Follow-Up” reminder to support their professional practice with classroom routines prior to the next session. It also indicated that the Leadership Team would look for evidence of routines during walkthroughs and informal observations. Session 1 concluded with a QR code to the Session 1 Post-Test.

The Session 1 post-test was presented as both a QR code embedded in the presentation and a link that was shared via chat or email. The post-test was developed in Qualtrics using an anonymous link that did not track participant information and protected aggregated participant

responses. The post-test asked participants to consider five questions and provided multiple choice response options. Additionally, the post-test included three open-ended questions for participants to consider:

1. What do you think may be challenging about implementing these procedures?
2. What additional help would you need to implement these procedures?
3. Please share any additional thoughts or comments.

2.2.3.2 Session 2: Opportunities to Respond

Session 2 began with a pre-test presented as both a QR code embedded in the presentation and a link that could be shared via chat or email. The pre-test was developed in Qualtrics using an anonymous link that did not track participant information and protected aggregated participant responses. The pre-test asked participants to consider five questions and provided multiple choice response options.

The learning objectives were to (a) assess current practices, (b) identify additional strategies to provide multiple opportunities to respond, and (c) embed questioning strategies into lesson planning. The Power Point presentation described what Opportunities to Respond are including five reasons why teachers should use them in their classrooms.

Activity 1 gave participants an opportunity to “Watch this Teacher in Action” by watching a video titled: Increasing Opportunities to Respond and counting how many opportunities to respond the teacher provided to students. The video was 1 minute in length and included over 14 opportunities to respond in myriad ways. The presentation continued with descriptions and examples of various verbal and non-verbal response strategies including individual questioning, choral responding, white boards, and response cards.

Activity 2 gave participants an opportunity to “Watch this Teacher in Action” by watching a video titled: *Increasing Opportunities to Respond* and asked them to identify which strategies the teacher utilized, how often she used them, and what they noticed about student engagement. The presentation continued with guidelines for response rates. Activity 3 asked participants to demonstrate one non-verbal response strategy simultaneously and consider one new strategy to try in their classroom.

The presentation concluded with a reflection on the learning objectives and important aspects of opportunities to respond. The final activity gave participants “Something to Think About” using the handout *Review of Opportunities to Respond*. Participants were also provided with a “Follow-Up” reminder to support their professional practice with incorporating opportunities to respond prior to the next session. It also indicated that the Leadership Team would look for evidence during walkthroughs and informal observations. Session 2 concluded with a QR code to the Session 2 post-test.

The Session 2 post-test was presented as both a QR code embedded in the presentation and a link that was shared via chat or email. The post-test was developed in Qualtrics using an anonymous link that did not track participant information and protected aggregated participant responses. The post-test asked participants to consider the five questions and provided multiple choice response options. Additionally, the post-test included three open-ended questions for participants to consider:

1. What do you think may be challenging about implementing these procedures?
2. What additional help/support would you need to implement these procedures?
3. Please share any additional thoughts or comments.

2.2.3.3 Session 3: Behavior Specific Praise

Session 3 began with a pre-test presented as both a QR code embedded in the presentation and a link that was shared via chat or email. The pre-test was developed in Qualtrics using an anonymous link that did not track participant information and protected aggregated participant responses. The pre-test asked participants to consider five questions and provided multiple choice response options.

The learning objectives were to (a) understand the importance and impact of both contingent and non-contingent attention on student behavior and classroom climate, (b) use preferred adult behaviors to build relationships and positive classroom climate and effectively interact with student when talking about behavior, and (c) demonstrate specific positive feedback that describes expected behavior and uses rationales.

The Power Point presentation described what Behavior Specific Praise is including four reasons why teachers should use it in their classrooms. It included viewing an initial video and completing Activity 1: Encouraging Expected Behavior which allowed participants to engage in Thinking Routines via a Think-Pair-Share activity.

Non-contingent and contingent adult attention were described in subsequent slides. The presentation also explored seven preferred adult behaviors that impact student affect, compliance and learning, and the impact of low rates of teacher attention and the importance of using encouragement.

The handout included a teacher self-assessment tool and example menu of classroom reinforcers for reference. Activity: Adult Attention & Preferred Behaviors engaged participants in a Think-Pair-Share reflecting on preferred behaviors they appreciate someone using with them,

discussing how they give attention to students and, considering their current practices, what they can improve or add to their repertoire.

The presentation continued with a description and examples of Specific Positive Feedback, the importance of its effectiveness, and guidance for providing effective positive feedback. It also explored considerations for the use of specific positive feedback to increase the likelihood of its effectiveness. The next Activity: Positive Feedback asked participants to grab a partner and take turns providing positive feedback.

The presentation concluded with a reflection on the learning objectives and important aspects of specific positive feedback. The final activity gave participants “Something to Think About” to identify and implement specific positive feedback in their classrooms. Participants were challenged to choose a consistent 5–10 minute time during their next class period and practice giving effective positive feedback. Participants were also provided with a “Follow-Up” reminder to support their professional practice by collaborating with their colleagues, providing specific praise to their students, and noting any positive changes. Session 3 concluded with a QR code to the Session 3 post-test.

The Session 3 post-test was presented as both a QR code embedded in the presentation and a link that was shared via chat or email. The post-test was developed in Qualtrics using an anonymous link that did not track participant information and protected aggregated participant responses. The post-test asked participants to consider the five questions and provided multiple choice response options. Additionally, the post-test included three open-ended questions for participants to consider:

1. What do you think may be challenging about implementing these procedures?
2. What additional help/support would you need to implement these procedures?

3. Please share any additional thoughts or comments.

2.2.4 Data Analysis

I analyzed the group survey data utilizing the features of Qualtrics for each pre-test, each post-test, each open-ended question, and to compare pre-test and post-test responses.

Using Qualtrics, I analyzed the group responses from the Pre-Test survey for Session 1:

1. I logged into Qualtrics and close the survey so that it cannot accept any additional responses at the conclusion of the professional development session. This preserved the data gathered within the Qualtrics system.
2. I used the Data and Analysis tab feature of Qualtrics to analyze group survey data. I selected all survey responses for my data table by clicking Column chooser and review the response results for each question.
3. I built a report by adding items for statistical analysis within the report feature of Qualtrics. The Qualtrics software automatically calculated the minimum, maximum, mean, median, standard deviation, variance, and total number of responses. I determined grouped frequency distribution, measures of central tendency (mean), measures of variability (range), and standard deviation.
4. I reviewed the reports and write up the results for the pre-test survey, noting any trends or interesting patterns in the data. I can vary the visualization of data based on the type of question and response.

Using Qualtrics, I analyzed the group responses from the Post-Test survey for Session 1:

1. I logged into Qualtrics and close the survey so that it cannot accept any additional responses at the conclusion of the professional development session. This preserved the data gathered within the Qualtrics system.
2. I used the Data and Analysis tab feature of Qualtrics to analyze group survey data. I selected all survey responses for my data table by clicking Column chooser and review the response results for each question.
3. I built a report by adding items for statistical analysis within the report feature of Qualtrics. The Qualtrics software automatically calculated the minimum, maximum, mean, median, standard deviation, variance, and total number of responses. I determined grouped frequency distribution, measures of central tendency (mean), measures of variability (range), and standard deviation.
4. I reviewed the reports and wrote up the results for the pre-test survey, noting any trends or interesting patterns in the data. I varied the visualization of data based on the type of question and response.

Using Qualtrics, I analyzed the open-ended question responses for Post-Test Session 1:

1. I used the Text IQ feature to analyze each open-ended response. I selected the data for the first open-ended question by selecting each question I want to analyze and selecting “Upload data.”
2. I used the editing mode to tag text entry responses with topics for analysis. Qualtrics software provided topic recommendations for review, including the total number and overall percentage of responses in each identified category. I also used the Lemmatization feature to account for derivatives of words and the Spell Check feature to ensure that all responses were tagged correctly for analysis.

3. I looked for patterns in the open-ended responses and wrote up my results. I completed the Text IQ analysis for each open-ended question.

Using Qualtrics, I compared the survey results of the Pre-Test and Post-Test for Session 1:

1. I logged into Qualtrics and selected the Report tab. I selected the results of the Pre-Test Survey and the Post-Test Survey for comparison.
2. Data analysis consisted of comparing pre-test and post-test scores across participants by examining content question responses to demonstrate what participants have learned during the workshops. This was accomplished by evaluating changes within the group responses. Identifying what the high and low scores are for each set of group responses.
3. I used Qualtrics to conduct a multivariate analysis comparing the pre-test responses to the post-test responses to determine if the professional development session increased teachers' knowledge of behavioral intervention strategies.
4. I conducted an item analysis to determine which questions yielded the most incorrect answers which allowed me to identify previously taught information that needed to be reviewed with the participants.

I repeated the previous steps for the pre-test, post-test, and open-ended group survey responses for Session 2 and Session 3. I wrote up my results and discussed any patterns or trends I identified in the data sets.

3.0 Results

This program evaluation set out to answer the following questions:

1. How do the pre-test and post-test group responses compare?
2. To what extent do participants engage in self-reflection activities?
3. To what extent do K-12 educators gain knowledge of
 - a. classroom routines?
 - b. opportunities to respond?
 - c. behavior specific praise?

Before turning to the findings, here is an overview of the participants' responses. Table 4 shows participants' responses for each session's pre-test and post-test. Note the differences in the total number of responses between the pre-test and post-test.

Table 4. Participant Responses

	Pre-Test Responses	Post-Test Responses
Session 1 – Classroom Routines	22	13
Session 2 – Opportunities to Respond	21	16
Session 3 – Behavior Specific Praise	18	20

The differences in pre-test and post-test responses can be explained by a variety of factors, including staff absences, other building obligations and staff arrival/departure times. Additionally, the pre-test was only available at the beginning of each session via a QR code, while the post-test

remained open for at least one week after the professional learning session. In addition to using the QR code at the end of the session, teachers were also provided a direct link to the post-test survey as a follow up to each session.

3.1 Research Question 1

Research Question 1 asks: How do the pre-test and post-test group responses compare?

Table 5 outlines the pre-test and post-test comparisons for Session 1.

Table 5. Session 1 - Classroom Routines

Question 1: Classroom routines are...		
Response	Pre-Test Count	Post-Test Count
suggestions for how to do things in the classroom.	1	0
patterns for accomplishing classroom tasks.	19	13
guides for students to imitate.	2	0
Mean	2.05	2.0

Question 2: Which of the following are the most important when developing a classroom routine?		
Response	Pre-Test Count	Post-Test Count
Post routines in a prominent location.	6	5
Teach them directly.	19	11
Refer to them regularly.	14	8
Provide pre-corrects before students are expected to use a routine.	3	7
Acknowledge students when they follow them.	13	8
Mean	N/A	N/A

Question 3: Which of these is an example of a good classroom routine?		
Response	Pre-Test Count	Post-Test Count
Raising your hand to ask for help	13	7
Turning in completed work	7	2
Going to the bathroom	0	3
Completing classwork following the lesson	2	1
Mean	7.59	7.85

Table 5 (continued)

Question 4: Which of these is an example of reteaching a classroom routine?		
Response	Pre-Test Count	Post-Test Count
As you line up, keep your hands at your side, eyes forward and stand on your number.	11	6
Remember to gather all materials back in the middle of the table and check your area before lining up.	9	6
Place your completed work in the bin.	2	1
Mean	2.36	2.38
Question 5: By the time students reach high school, they should not need to practice classroom routines.		
Response	Pre-Test Count	Post-Test Count
True	0	0
False	22	13
Mean	2.0	2.0
Question 6: Students do not need to be praised as they continue to demonstrate use of classroom routines during the second semester.		
Response	Pre-Test Count	Post-Test Count
True	0	0
False	22	13
Mean	2.0	2.0

The Session 1 pre-test and post-test responses were remarkably similar for Questions 1, 4, 5, and 6. Question 2 was a multi-response question with 5 different options allowing respondents to consider multiple options. The response pattern between the pre-test and post-test suggests that respondents considered more options during the post-test than they did during the pre-test. For example, “Teach them directly” had fewer response counts in the post-test while “Provide pre-

corrects before students are expected to use a routine” had an increase in response counts in the post-test. Question 3 had some variability in response between the pre-test and post-test, most notably the examples of good classroom routines being: raising your hand and turning in completed work.

Table 6 outlines the pre-test and post-test comparisons for Session 2.

Table 6. Session 2 – Opportunities to Respond

Question 1: Opportunities to respond are...			
Response	Pre-Test Count	Post-Test Count	
limited in scope.	0	0	
varied and frequent.	13	6	
the best way to keep students engaged.	8	9	
Mean	2.38	2.6	

Question 2: One of the benefits of using opportunities to respond in your classroom is...			
Response	Pre-Test Count	Post-Test Count	
maintaining reading and math skills.	0	1	
providing intermittent feedback to the teacher on student learning.	11	7	
increasing on-task behavior and decreased disruptions.	10	8	
Mean	2.48	2.44	

Question 3: Choral responding is...			
Response	Pre-Test Count	Post-Test Count	
when students sing in unison.	3	2	
can be unclear and difficult to manage.	6	0	
a way to teach new skills.	12	14	
Mean	2.43	2.75	

Table 6 (continued)

Question 4: Non-verbal response strategies...		
Response	Pre-Test Count	Post-Test Count
are more beneficial than verbal response strategies.	2	1
allow all students to actively respond.	16	12
use more than one strategy at a time.	3	3
Mean	2.05	2.13
Question 5: Teacher talk should be no more than...		
Response	Pre-Test Count	Post-Test Count
20-30% of the time.	15	6
30-40% of the time.	5	3
40-50% of the time.	1	7
Mean	1.33	2.06

The Session 2 pre-test and post-test responses were very similar for Questions 1, 2, 3, and 4. Question 5 addressed teacher talk, and respondents responded across all three options, increasing the number of responses for 40–50% of the time on the post-test.

Table 7 outlines the pre-test and post-test comparisons for Session 3.

Table 7. Session 3 – Behavior Specific Praise

Question 1: The term “behavior specific praise” is often used interchangeably with...			
Response	Pre-Test Count	Post-Test Count	
positive praise.	9	15	
verbal praise.	7	3	
behavior praise.	2	1	
Mean	1.61	1.26	

Question 2: How many types of adult attention are there?			
Response	Pre-Test Count	Post-Test Count	
1	0	1	
2	5	7	
3	13	11	
Mean	2.72	2.53	

Question 3: What is the recommended ratio for behavior specific praise?			
Response	Pre-Test Count	Post-Test Count	
6:1	1	0	
4:1	11	19	
3:1	6	0	
Mean	2.28	2.0	

Table 7 (continued)

Question 4: Which of the following is NOT a benefit of specific positive feedback?		
Response	Pre-Test Count	Post-Test Count
Decreases inappropriate behavior and reduces the need for correction	0	0
Decreases self-esteem and internal locus of control	14	19
Helps adults and student focus on positive social behaviors and actions	0	0
Increases the likelihood students will use the recognized behaviors and skills in the future	4	0
Mean	2.44	2.0
Question 5: Preferred adult behaviors impact student. . .		
Response	Pre-Test Count	Post-Test Count
behavior, socialization, and learning.	4	5
relationships, learning, and self-esteem.	11	12
affect, compliance, and learning.	3	2
Mean	1.94	1.84

The Session 3 pre-test and post-test responses were very similar for Questions 3, 4, and 5. The responses for Question 1 saw an increase in the correct response of “positive praise” for the post-test. The responses for Question 2 were similar, but incorrect. Most respondents selected “3” for how many types of adult attention there are. The correct answer is “2” – Contingent and Non-Contingent.

3.2 Research Question 2

Research Question 2 asks: To what extent do participants engage in self-reflection activities? Self-reflection activities were embedded in the Professional Learning Series and were a component of follow-up activities. Here are the outcomes of these activities. Every participant engaged in reflection activities during each session, and none declined to participate. At least half of the participants also chose to complete the follow up activities which included observations of a peer and reflections on those observations.

Session 1: Classroom Routines involved reflecting on classroom routines and writing out the steps to complete it. In small groups, the 22 participants also reflected aloud the myriad routines across grade levels and classrooms and identified opportunities to simplify/streamline routines for students. After this discussion, participants spent 7 minutes individually reflecting on their own classroom routines. Participants used this time to reflect on improving routines and adopting new ones. At the end of the individual worktime, three participants shared their chosen classroom routine with the entire group. They explained why they selected that routine, what challenges they had presently and if they needed additional support. Other participants commented, offered suggestions, or described their similar challenges. Several participants identified a colleague they wanted to observe as their follow up activity to support the improvement or development of routines in their own classrooms.

The follow-up activity involved completing a peer observation using the Peer Observation Evidence Collection Note Taker graphic organizer. Participants used the note taker to document their peer observation to consider what they see the students doing; what they are thinking about based on what they notice; and what they wonder about. Also, grade level teams were encouraged

to observe peers' routines that differed from their own to identify opportunities to simplify/streamline routines for students. Participants were receptive to the follow-up activity and brought their graphic organizer to the subsequent session.

Session 2: Opportunities to Respond provided participants with opportunities to respond using non-verbal response strategies; increase the number of opportunities to respond from single student to multiple student respondents; view a video and tally how many opportunities to respond did the teacher provide and compare it to their own professional practice. The follow-up activity involved selecting one verbal and non-verbal response strategy and implementing them in their classroom.

This activity yielded an interesting conversation when participants realized that they had counted only the verbal response strategies and not the non-verbal response strategies used by the teacher in the video. As one participant remarked, “I just noticed that I mostly counted when the teacher used verbal response strategies but did not count the nonverbal response strategies she was using.” This comment led to a group reflection of the benefit of using non-verbal opportunities to respond such as a symbol/hand gesture, individual white boards, or response cards.

Session 3: Behavior Specific Praise involved participants reflecting on their professional practice and the tendency to provide general praise rather than behavior specific praise. The embedded reflection activity asked participants to provide behavior specific praise to two colleagues using a note card, “All Star Card.” Figure 2 shows a sample of an All Star Card from Session 3. Two participants provided behavior specific praise to the presenter to demonstrate the skill during the professional learning session.



I love your lively personality during presentations. That's how I usually enjoy being presented to. I also appreciate your patience and wealth of knowledge when I come to you for your support.



you are an authentic and honest colleague and friend. I appreciate our conversations and connection. You are an exceptional resource for PSE support.

Figure 2. All Star Card Sample

The presenter collected the “All Star Cards” and read aloud the behavior specific praise for each participant during the closing of the session. All participants engaged in the activity and left the session with encouraging words from their peers. Figure 3 shows a collection of All Star Cards that were read aloud at the conclusion of Session 3.



Figure 3. All Star Card Read Aloud

3.3 Research Question 3

Research Question 3 asks: To what extent do K-12 educators report knowledge of (a) classroom routines, (b) opportunities to respond, and (c) behavior specific praise? Participants responded to the optional open-ended questions at the end of each professional learning session. Table 8 provides the responses received after each professional learning session.

Table 8. Professional Learning Session Responses

Session 1 – Classroom Routines	
Question	Responses
What do you think may be challenging about implementing these procedures?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing • Remembering to schedule time • Consistency (4) • The classroom demographic and cultural biases of teachers can make the delivery of these procedures seem condescending. • Behavior issues • The time that might take away from instruction • Time and consistent monitoring
What additional support would you need to implement these procedures?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None (6) • In a perfect world each classroom would have a para[professional]. In reality, a supportive administrator is all I need. • Sample classroom routines
Please share any additional thoughts or comments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I would like to refresh my dismissal routine. A lot of little things happen during the transition back to homeroom. • Well presented • Why do all of the videos shown in PDs emulate the perfect class with well-behaved students? They know they're on film. Show teachers how to manage a challenging post-Covid classroom and perhaps they'll stop quitting. • None • Enjoyed the session • Great session and excellent next step for staff (peer observation)

Table 8 (continued)

Session 2 – Opportunities to Respond	
Question	Responses
What do you think may be challenging about implementing these procedures?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I look for ways to bridge the verbal and kinesthetic strategies to the paper and pencil tasks that we are mandated to assess so kids can perform well on those independently. • Consistency (2) • Perhaps planning for and determining which tools may be needed for implementation may be challenging. • Willingness to try them • Not sure • I think these are actually doable strategies and many I currently use. • Getting students into the habit of responding accordingly • Just getting into the swing of things and trying new routines with consistency • Nothing
What additional support would you need to implement these procedures?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I appreciated the time in our sessions to think through tweaks and reboots of things we need to do. Also seeing other teachers and kids in the [classroom observation] visits was encouraging and motivating. • N/A • I would like additional opportunities to connect with colleagues about which strategies they have used and find most effective. • More discussion and follow up discussion • None (2) • Maybe some new whiteboards? • Possibly peer feedback • Asking peers how they integrate some of the strategies
Please share any additional thoughts or comments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A • None, thank you. The sessions have been informative and enjoyable. • Very interactive session • Love all of the strategies [I] saw

Table 8 (continued)

Session 3 – Behavior Specific Praise	
Question	Responses
What do you think may be challenging about implementing these procedures?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patience needed • Making sure that various students are acknowledged, and that feedback is specific and frequent • The negative behaviors, so many that it sometimes outshines the positive feedback • A challenging student may affect a person’s psyche. Praise can be hard to give in some cases. • Catching different students being positive, or the same ones all the time • Time • Towards the end of the year, teachers and students get worn down and it becomes a challenge. • None (2) • Remembering to give specific praise in the moment • Consistency
What additional support would you need to implement these procedures?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The positive encouragement we got was very supportive and motivating. • None, thanks. • Time • N/A (2) • Verbal reminders • More papers like that – quick and easy [All Star Cards] • None (2)
Please share any additional thoughts or comments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank you for a positive session. • Love positive feedback

Participants engaged in activities throughout the professional learning sessions and completed the post-test. The open-ended responses provide additional information from the perspective of the participants, demonstrates their knowledge, and became the introduction to

reflect during the following professional learning session. Using this approach, participants connected their learning between all three professional learning sessions.

3.4 Anecdotal Data

Throughout the training, anecdotal notes captured features of the training that impacted learning. This section highlights those features.

The principal participated in each of the professional development sessions, providing a unique opportunity for observation and feedback. The presenter took anecdotal notes and met with the principal between sessions. These meetings allowed the principal to share their perspective, provide additional feedback to the presenter and ensure cohesion between and among the professional development sessions.

Using professionally produced videos of real classroom scenarios where teachers demonstrate precisely how to enact a strategy proved invaluable. For example, during Session 2, the presenter shared a 90-second video of a real-life classroom scenario during which the teacher provided students with opportunities to respond (OTR). During the session, the presenter asked teachers to count how many OTRs the teacher provided. While responding, one teacher remarked that she had counted the verbal response strategies but overlooked the non-verbal strategies that would also count. The teacher went on to state that she was amazed by how many OTRs the teacher in the video provided students in only 90 seconds. This example is especially salient because teachers are working with many culturally and linguistically diverse students with limited English

proficiency. These students may be more hesitant to respond to traditional OTRs such as raising their hand to respond verbally, calling out an answer, or other public responses.

4.0 Discussion

What do these findings tell us?

- Astute observation by the principal enabled the sessions to be tailored to the needs of the teachers.
- Peer collaboration and observation provided teachers with meaningful learning.
- Teachers need explicit instruction in Tier 1 behavioral strategies.
- The professional learning series provided teachers with an opportunity to (a) practice and reflect on a skill and (b) see the connection between the previously introduced skills.

The remainder of this chapter reviews each finding and its implications for practice.

4.1 Principal Observations

Astute observation by the principal enabled the sessions to be tailored to the needs of the teachers. I invited the principal to select the strategies they wanted to focus on for the professional development sessions. I was then able to develop the professional learning sessions to specifically target Classroom Routines, Opportunities to Respond, and Behavior Specific Praise. The principal was also keen to stress the importance of ensuring that teachers were making the connection to their professional practice through self-reflection.

The implication of these findings is that principal candidates need to learn how to observe for, teach and coach teachers in Tier 1 behavioral strategies. Unfortunately, the Danielson model of evaluation that is so widely used does not enumerate these. If a principal is not familiar with low-intensity Tier 1 behavioral strategies, then they need explicit training in these. Left untrained, principals may overlook preventive strategies altogether or recommend strategies that are too intensive. For example, in a classroom where Tier 1 behavioral strategies are absent, office referrals may increase because the classroom environment is not supportive.

4.2 Peer Collaboration

Peer collaboration and observation provides teachers with meaningful learning. The opportunity to have impromptu, informal conversations with other participants lead to follow-up observations of a colleague. For example, one teacher chose to observe a colleague based on something the colleague said during the session. To reinforce these extended learning experiences, I opened the subsequent session with an opportunity for participants to share anecdotes from their peer observations. Participants emphasized peer feedback and discussion in their open-ended responses.

The implications for professional development are clear: teachers want and need time to reflect on their learning and share that with colleagues. Unfortunately, many of our current models of professional development follow a “stand and deliver” approach with little opportunity within or outside of a session for colleagues to discuss what they are learning and how to apply it in their

classrooms. Professional development should be designed to incorporate opportunities for peer collaboration and follow-up peer observation to extend their learning and application of strategies.

Opportunities for peer observation and collaboration during the follow-up activities between sessions provided teachers with time to reflect on their practice, engage with their colleagues in discussions to improve their own practice, and added accountability between sessions. For example, during the session, the presenter asked a grade level team if they had the same routine for students to get a pencil in each of their classrooms. When the teachers began to discuss it, they realized they each had their own routine. The presenter highlighted how a grade level team consisting of four teachers could streamline their routines across classrooms to make it easier for students with limited English proficiency to decipher routines.

Teachers were encouraged to plan their peer observation during their grade level meetings, preparation periods, or other times throughout the school day. Using professional time for peer observations is a powerful tool to improve professional practice. When teachers returned to the subsequent session, the presenter provided an opportunity to share their peer observations.

4.3 Explicit Instruction

Too often we assume that teachers already engage in Tier 1, low-intensity behavioral strategies such as teaching expectations and routines, offering opportunities to respond, and providing behavior specific praise. What this program evaluation revealed is that even experienced teachers benefited from explicit instruction in Tier 1 behavioral strategies. The professional learning series included high-quality video examples, engaging activities, personal reflections,

peer collaboration, and follow-up “look-fors” through peer observations. Teachers’ lack of familiarity with and failure to implement Tier 1 and Tier 2 evidence-based strategies for behavior leads to unnecessary office disciplinary referrals and disproportionate disciplinary referrals of Black students resulting in a loss of instructional opportunities.

The implication of these findings is that teachers need explicit instruction and practice in research-based behavioral strategies for use in the classroom. Explicit instruction provides an opportunity for teachers to gain knowledge about research-based behavioral strategies and apply them. Explicit instruction includes using real life examples, as demonstrated in the videos used for the professional learning sessions. These real-life examples also serve as a form of peer observation, allowing teachers the opportunity to consider their own practices in the context of the video.

Teachers need to address the challenging behaviors of students to ensure a classroom environment where they can provide instruction. Implementing these low-level strategies reduces inappropriate special education and disciplinary referrals. As discussed in the Review of Supporting Knowledge, there are myriad reasons why a preventative focus works. Both pre-service and practicing teachers would benefit from more explicit instruction in Tier 1 behavioral strategies.

4.4 Multiple Session Training

Instead of consolidating the training into one long session, these sessions were shorter and offered as a series over a six-week period. The professional learning series provided teachers with an opportunity to (a) practice and reflect on a skill and (b) see the connection between the

previously introduced skills. The multiple sessions allowed teachers to gain a deeper understanding of the low-intensity behavioral interventions for use in the classroom.

The implications of these findings are that the typical approach to professional development does not allow teachers the opportunity to engage more deeply and reflect personally on their own practice. The shorter, focused sessions contributed to impromptu peer discussions and fostered further peer collaboration. Teachers were able to practice and reflect on the specific skills and then make a connection to previously introduced skills.

The timing of the professional learning sessions was an important factor. The sessions were held in the Spring and served as a refresher for staff allowing them to reflect on their practices at the point in the school year when disruptive behaviors begin to resurface. This allowed teachers to refresh classroom routines or to reteach previously taught routines and implement new behavioral strategies they were learning. The structure and sequencing of the professional learning sessions allowed for an iterative process using feedback from the previous sessions to incorporate into the opening of the subsequent session. Another benefit was that these sessions can extend across school years supporting a long-term approach to improving professional practice, school climate and student outcomes.

4.5 Conclusion

This program evaluation showed the importance of professional learning specifically structured to support staff in meeting the needs of students. Moreover, it revealed the challenges of bridging the research to practice gap within our education system. Lastly, it highlighted how

crucial it is to facilitate collegial experiences if we want to improve educators' professional practice.

The essential next step is to expand the professional learning series to include more of the universal strategies for teacher use in the classroom as described in Table 1 and low intensity teacher delivered strategies for use in the classroom as described in Table 2. The development of this professional learning series could serve as a framework for pre-service teacher candidates, pre-tenure teacher induction programs and ongoing teacher professional development.

This program evaluation generated some themes: innovate, disrupt, engage, and achieve. We need to be *innovative* in our delivery of professional development; *disrupt* inappropriate special education and disciplinary referrals that harm Black students; *engage* teachers and principals through meaningful collaboration; and *achieve* better outcomes for every student. This approach to professional development could be developed further and scaled up to impact even more students, both in schools and in community programs.

Engaging school leaders more deeply would provide personalized learning opportunities based on the needs of staff and students. Professional development presenters need to work collaboratively with principals to ensure that the goals and outcomes are aligned with their school's needs.

The goal of this professional learning series was to not only help one school, its staff, and its students, but to inspire others to think about innovative ways to explicitly teach these crucial, but often overlooked, behavioral strategies. Only then will we disrupt the inappropriate special education and disciplinary referrals that harm Black students.

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