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Teacher Assessments of Positive Behavior Support in School

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COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

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Terrie Davis Phillips

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2014

Abstract

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BS, University of Houston, 1999

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Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

Students are often removed from classrooms due to behavioral concerns, which has led to an increase in student drop-out rates. Positive behavior support (PBS), a proactive approach to student discipline, was implemented at a local school in order to address the influx of students being sent to the office. Constructivism was the framework for this mixed method study on teachers' assessments of the current behavior support approach in their school and teachers' perceptions of school-wide PBS training and implementation. Data from the Effective Behavior Support (EBS) Survey were used in a descriptive statistical analysis of 162 teachers' assessments of behavior support. Interview data, including transcripts from 15 semi-structured teacher interviews, were analyzed using open coding and thematic analysis. The EBS survey results indicated that teachers desired more assistance with PBS through strategies, recommendations, and district support. Interview data indicated a need for a staff development project to assist instructors with understanding the systematic process of PBS through the use of the Response to Intervention model and to gain access to district support staff as behaviors increased in the classroom. The resulting project was a 3-day teacher training to address this need. This study has the potential to evoke positive social change through developing best practices across districts and providing staff with the tools for positive behavior support in the learning community to decrease the dropout rate.

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Dedication

This doctoral study is dedicated to my Lord and Savior because it is through him that I am able to research the best practices to educate and instill in students to be life-long achievers and productive citizens. I also dedicate this study to my husband, Joseph Phillips; my two children, JaSean and Lilliann; my parents, Henry and Rev. Shirley Davis; and my brother, Sean Davis. This walk instilled in me faith and endurance. My family has supported and prayed for me throughout this journey, and I would not have made it without their love.

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I would like to thank Dr. Don Jones, Dr. Cynthia High, Dr. Michelle Brown, Dr. Pamela Harrison and all faculty of Walden University who supported me throughout this process. Thank you for your expertise and guidance in helping me with a study project that will hopefully facilitate a positive change for educators.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

Section 1: The Problem

Introduction

Many researchers have revealed that an orderly school environment is necessary for student learning and that discipline is a problem in most schools (Marzano, 2003). According to Freeman (2012), when discipline became a problem, suspensions were used by local education agencies as a consequence for behavior that violated the student code of conduct. A typical removal was between 1 and 10 days, which had drawn criticism because during the removal from class, students were not participating in learning with their peers (Crone, Hawken, & Horner, 2010). According to Sugai and Horner (2008), removing students from school negatively impacts their achievement.

The Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, established by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) of the U.S. Department of Education, was created to give schools the assistance for identifying, adapting, and sustaining effective school-wide disciplinary practices (Scott, White, & Algozzine, 2009). In the first decade of the 21st century, the national movement toward school-wide positive behavior support gave tools to educators to proactively support the behavior concerns of students. In this study, I examined the perspective of teachers who participated in positive behavior support (PBS) staff development at a local Texas school in order to determine the perceived impact of the PBS training and implementation. I employed a mixed method design through surveys and personal interviews of instructors who participated in the staff development and a descriptive analysis of effective behavior support survey data from teachers.

Definition of the Problem

I conducted this study to investigate the perceptions of instructors on PBS implementation at three large high schools in the suburban area on the outskirts of a major city in the southern United States. In this school, instructors required more techniques for classroom management as student behavior changed due to the changing demographics of the school population. The previous technique used to manage behavior was referral of the student who was misbehaving to the office, which often led to the student being removed to an alternative setting or sent home (e.g., Freeman, 2012).

The administrators' response to noncompliance with the student code of conduct was the student's removal from the classroom. This action led to the student who committed the offense being placed in a self-contained classroom called *in-school suspension* (ISS) for the duration of the day. Assignments were brought to the student, but the student remained in one location as a consequence for his or her actions. Another type of removal was when the student was sent home for the remainder of the day or a series of 3 days. This was called *out-of-school suspension* (OSS). Administrators also had the option to place the student in a district alternative education placement (DAEP). The DAEP was the disciplinary placement for students within the local educational agency (LEA). It was an alternative school away from the other schools which the LEA used for students with major disciplinary concerns such as fighting, drug use, or weapon possession.

Placing students in ISS and OSS was the practice for addressing discipline issues (Freeman, 2012). According to Freeman (2012), a study by the Council of State

Governments which sparked national media attention reported that more than half of the students in the state of Texas were placed in exclusionary programs to address discipline. According to the research by Texas Appleseed, suspensions were ineffective (Freeman, 2012). Students who frequented the exclusionary discipline method were more likely to be held back, drop out of school, or become involved with the juvenile justice system. The study led to the question as to whether Texas was heavily relying on the exclusionary method for discipline (Freeman, 2012).

Suspensions and expulsions were the main practices for addressing discipline, as well as a major topic of discussion for Texas schools. According to a 2012 study by Texas Appleseed, 15 elementary school campuses in an inner city LEA handed out more than 100 out-of-school suspensions (Hart, 2012). Schools were relying on harsh disciplinary measures that were very costly to taxpayers, leading to poor student outcomes and high dropout rates. According to Lee, Cornell, Gregory, and Fan (2011), suspension practices were driven by school demographics that explained the influence in school dropout rates. The harsh punishment facilitated the *school-to-prison pipeline*, that put a student on an irrevocable path to failure (Hart, 2012).

Texas State Senator John Whitmire, chairman of the Texas Senate Criminal Justice Committee, stated his concerns about writing tickets to children at age 6 and arresting children at age 10 for typical adolescent behaviors. According to Whitmire, the situation was *out of control* (Hart, 2012). The LEA's superintendent's response to Senator Whitmire's concerns was the implementation of "PBS, a support structure to handle a problem before it reached the point of [misbehaving]" where suspending a

student was required (Hart, 2012). This indicated a need for change in the way discipline was handled throughout the state.

The lack of educational programming to meet the needs of students and office referrals due to classroom disruptions has led to class removals in many Texas schools. Also, researchers have found that when the behavioral issues escalated and led to in-school or out-of-school suspensions, special education students fell further behind (Carter, Trainor, Cakiroglu, Swedeen, & Owens, 2010). As a result, special education students were dropping out-of-school or graduating without being adequately prepared to be contributing members of society (Carter et al., 2010).

An urban LEA in southeastern Texas had a disproportionate representation of special education students with discipline concerns according to data from the annual progress report of the state performance plan (SPP) for students with an individual education plan (IEP). The LEA implemented a *positive behavior support* (PBS) system which consisted of a series of staff development sessions and positive support as an effort to improve students' behavior and school-wide discipline. Would teachers feel that a positive behavior support system had a significant impact on teacher referrals and disciplinary consequences of students with special needs?

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) performance based monitoring analysis system (PBMAS) is a data system that reports annually on the performance of school districts and charter schools under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The PBMAS data were used to determine if the needs of minority and special education students were being met by the public education systems in Texas. The programs currently being

monitored through PBMAS under the No Child Left Behind Act were bilingual education, English as a second language, career and technical education, and special education (TEA, 2012b). The LEA had approximately 22,000 students, and about 10% of the students were in special education.

According to PBMAS (2008), 85% of the special education students being serviced in the general education setting were placed in-school suspension (TEA, 2008). However, in 2009 a change in data indicated that 78% of the special education students were placed in ISS. In one year, the LEA decreased by 7%. As the numbers decreased, it seemed that the district was moving in the right direction (TEA, 2009). Then the 2010 PBMAS, data indicated an increase to 87% of special education students placed in ISS. In 2 years, the percentage of students placed in ISS increased by 9%. In addition to the increase with ISS, 27% of the students with special needs were given out-of-school suspension (OSS) at the administrators' discretion and for mandatory offenses indicated by PBMAS data (TEA, 2010). Many administrators used discretionary placement for students with persistent behavior concerns who continued not to follow the guidelines set forth by the student code of conduct.

In an effort to treat students the same, students were placed in ISS for incidents as minor as chewing gum to incidents as major as fighting. This caused a major spike in discipline referrals as teachers denied students entry into the classroom, and they were sent to the office for violations like chewing gum, tardiness, and dress code violations. The many ISS placements for these infractions caused disciplinary classrooms to be heavily populated with students. The discretionary OSS placements increased because

the ISS classroom could not accommodate all of the disciplinary placements. Although the goal was to treat all students the same, regular education students went to ISS, which reached capacity, and special education students were sent home.

According to PBMAS, a rating of zero was the highest designation for any indicator, and three was the lowest designation. The PBMAS data in 2008 indicated a rating of two for alternative placements within the LEA, which was official notification by the TEA about concerns with the DAEP in regards to minority and special education students (TEA 2008). In efforts to reduce the number of special education students in alternative placements and lower the 2009 indicator from a level two to a level one, many students with persistent, disruptive behaviors were given ISS and OSS instead of using the DAEP. The PBMAS indicator for minority and special education students placed in a DAEP decreased to a rating of one. The LEA received a rating of two for DAEP placements since 2007 (TEA, 2007). Therefore, this shuffling of students, purposefully or not, helped the LEA to meet the goal. However, the indicator for ISS and OSS increased to a rating of two (TEA, 2011). Although one problem seemed to be corrected, another problem was created. As a result, office referrals and alternative placements of students continued to increase.

If the LEA reached a rating of three, TEA required an improvement plan for that indicator, and the LEA developed a plan to address the increase in suspensions of students. The action taken was that the LEA devised a plan to lower the rating, and TEA continued to monitor the agency. As long as the LEA showed improvements in an area

from one year to the next, they progressed from one performance level (PL) to another (TEA, 2011).

Perhaps, the implementation of school-wide positive behavior supports at the secondary level proposed a systematic way of using strategies and positive reinforcements to improve behavior. The positive behavior support system had been implemented in more than 5000 thousand schools across the country (Flannery, Sugai, & Anderson, 2009). The response to intervention (RtI) three-tiered approach using standard-protocol behavior interventions was adopted by the U.S. Department of Safe and Drug Free Schools in 2001 and was widely recognized as a reputable model used in a compilation of research-based classroom management strategies (Benner, Nelson, Sanders, & Ralston, 2012; Marzano, Marzano, & Pickering, 2003). The PBS system used the RtI three-tiered approach for behavior interventions called primary, secondary, and tertiary levels that were defined by specific individual characteristics that corresponded with evidence-based interventions (Sugai, Horner, & Anderson, 2010).

The primary level consists of behavior preventions and interventions for all students in the entire school setting. The secondary level focused on groups of students who needed specific attention. The tertiary level was tailored to individuals needing very specific interventions, which usually required a functional behavior assessment and behavior intervention plan (Sugai, Horner, & Anderson, 2010). Teaching school-wide behavioral expectations to prevent inappropriate behaviors in various school settings became one of the critical features of school-wide intervention efforts. Students who were able to respond appropriately to school-wide interventions did not receive repetitive

behavior referrals reflecting that they were in the primary level (Sugai, Horner, & Anderson, 2010). However, within the local LEA students who did not respond to the school-wide interventions needed more interventions to be successful. School-wide positive behavior support was largely supported as an intervention to behavior concerns within the elementary and secondary school system. Teacher assessments of PBS at the local site were critical for determining if this system was successful for the students.

Rationale

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

The purpose of the study was to explore teachers' perspectives of the impact of the positive behavior support system and whether the approach was effective or not. According to the PBMAS report for 2012, students attending the local education agency (LEA) in the Houston area had a high rate of ISS and OSS placements (TEA, 2012). To increase academic achievement and decrease disciplinary referrals and suspensions, the local LEA implemented a school-wide positive behavior support system. The LEA's out of school placement of elementary students in ISS increased between 2008 and 2012 according to the PBMAS report (TEA, 2012) and students had been suspended across grade levels including elementary students (Freeman, 2012). As a result, elementary schools within the district put positive behavior supports in place to address issues and reduce the PBMAS indicator from a level 2 to level 1 (TEA, 2012).

The high schools within the LEA serve students from diverse backgrounds and are increasing in ISS and OSS placements, but did not implement a positive behavior support system. The need for proactive approaches to support the students rather than

remove them from the educational setting was implemented at the high school level according to the LEA. Students who did not complete high school face many disadvantages (Planty et al., 2009). The LEA's elementary, intermediate, and middle schools found that using PBS was effective in improving school climate and students' behaviors. The next step was to implement the approach at the high school level (Sugai, Flannery, & Bohanon-Edmonson, 2005). The implementation of positive behavior support at the high school level had the potential to impact discipline because the majority of office referrals occurred at those grade levels.

Evidence of the Problem from the Professional Literature

According to federal law for special education, students were entitled to a free, appropriate education in the least restrictive environment with support specified by their IEP. Free, appropriate public education must be available to all children between the ages of 3 and 21, including children with disabilities who had been suspended or expelled from school (TEA, 2012c). The LEA or school district had the responsibility of ensuring that students with special needs were in class being educated with their peers who were not disabled.

Students with more severe behaviors were moved to a more restrictive environment or an alternative school setting (Simonsen, Britton, & Young, 2009). Although the alternative setting addressed the students' needs, it was not a permanent placement. A problem occurred when a student's behavior continued to show evidence of noncompliance and classroom disruption; therefore, the administrators of the LEA opted to keep the student in the alternative setting. As a result, the number of students in

alternative placement increased, which meant that the LEA was moving to a disproportionate or noncompliant status.

To ensure compliance in reference to alternative placements, the special education director and staff limited the number of placements for special education students. School districts found more effective ways to encourage appropriate behaviors, which was done through limiting the amount of suspensions throughout all the LEAs in the United States (National Education Policy Center, 2011). Once a school DAEP had been exhausted or was no longer an option due to special education constraints, administrators moved toward the next option for disciplinary consequences, which was to place students in ISS or OSS.

There was little evidence to prove that suspensions help students to learn appropriate behaviors (Skiba & Sprague, 2008), and punishment suppressed inappropriate behavior, but students rarely learn from punishment (Myers, 2008). Also, the punishment for inappropriate behaviors often exacerbated the problem. Students who were actively engaged were included in the learning process, while students who were suspended were disengaged from the school experience (Kortering & Christensen, 2009). Students learned isolation and separation from their peers, thus, inappropriate behavior continues to occur. When permitted, previously suspended students return to class discouraged and disheartened, which increased the severity of previously displayed inappropriate behaviors (Dupper, Theriot, & Craun, 2009).

The teachers were concerned about students missing quality instruction in the classroom. The way the school responded to students' inappropriate behaviors was

critical to the welfare of students and was one of the most critical challenges in education (e.g., Osher, 2010). Researchers showed that positive behavior supports had been associated with the reduction of discipline referrals, ISS, OSS, and placement of students in the DAEP setting (Barnhart, Franklin, & Alleman, 2008). The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of a PBS training related to the number of referrals and suspensions as well as teacher perceptions about implementation.

Definitions

Disciplinary Alternative Educational Program (DAEP): An educational and self-discipline alternative setting for students in elementary through high school who are removed from their regular classes for mandatory or discretionary disciplinary reasons (TEA, 2011).

In-school suspension (ISS): Isolation of a student to an alternative program within the school for disciplinary reasons but continues to progress with classroom assignments isolated from other students within the school for a length of time (Theriot & Dupper, 2010).

Referrals or office disciplinary referrals (ODRs*):* Documented incidents of problem behavior that require administrative involvement (McIntosh, Filter, Bennett, Ryan, & Sugai, 2010).

Out-of-school suspension (OSS): The temporary removal from school of the student who engages in conduct identified in the student code of conduct not to exceed three school days (TEA, 2012c)

Performance-based Monitoring and Analysis System (PBMAS): A district-level, data-driven analysis system developed and implemented annually (TEA, 2012a)

Positive behavioral support (PBS) or schoolwide positive behavior support (SWPBS): A proactive approach to student discipline that is implemented with consistency throughout the school (Cohen et al., 2007).

Response to intervention: This is a method of intervention designed to provide early assistance to children who were performing poorly. RtI is a process of providing high-quality intervention matched to student need and uses data to make important educational decisions (Batsche et al., 2006, p. 5).

School climate: The collective personality of the school based upon an atmosphere distinguished by the personal, social, and professional interactions of those individuals within the school (Deal & Peterson, 1990).

State performance plan (SPP): The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004, Section 616(b) requires each state to develop a six-year performance plan that evaluates the state's efforts of implementation and continuous improvement of the requirements (TEA, 2012a).

Significance

The importance of the project was to bring social change to the educational setting through determining the impact of positive behavior support in schools. The increased level of suspensions in response to behavior concerns in classrooms led to exclusion of students from instructional time, causing the dropout rates to increase and graduations rates to decrease (TEA, 2011).

In this project study, I focused on assisting in implementing positive behavior support for students that would positively impact all students. This project study also included developing a systemic plan for students with social deficits and helped to identify strategies to increase appropriate behaviors. I identified a plan of action for instructors to acquire additional training during PBS implementation and provided opportunities to utilize the strategies. Implementing PBS throughout schools had the potential of reducing the number of referrals to the office for students with special needs. By focusing on school-wide positive behavior support, students remain in the classroom and receive more instruction.

Research Questions

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to explore the training and implementation of a school-wide PBS training at the local setting. I examined the impact both quantitatively, through the use of the Effective Behavior Support Survey, and qualitatively, in terms of teachers' perceptions of the program on student behavior, discipline, and consequences. My research questions were:

1. What were teachers' assessments of the current behavior support in their school as measured by the EBS survey?
2. What were teachers' perceptions of school-wide PBS training and implementation?

The first question was quantitative and I addressed using teacher responses to the Effective Behavior Support Surveys. Survey data were also analyzed. The second

question was qualitative and I collected these data through personal interviews with teachers at the local site. These data were analyzed through thematic coding.

Review of the Literature

For a review of constructivist theory, I conducted a Boolean search in ERIC, Sage Educational Research Complete using the terms *behavior* and *social constructivism* as search terms which two were applicable to the literature section of the study. Additional searches were conducted using the terms: *positive behavior intervention support* and *office discipline referral (ODR).* In addition *PBS*, and *student and teacher perception* were used. Limiting the time frame to the last 5 years helped me to refine the number of research articles.

Theoretical Framework

The constructivism theory supported the idea of student-centered learning that occurred through a structured curriculum where students used active learning and constructed their own understandings in relationship and in context (Davis & Sumara, 2002; Dewey, 1964; Duckworth, 1987) and adapted their understandings and future choices for action based on the sense they made through those processes of construction. Dewey, one of the most influential philosophers in American history, referenced old education as being passive, criticizing the purpose and means of traditional education.

According to Dewey (1938), society prepared the young to be successful in life through acquisition of information and skills. The subject matter and standards of proper conduct were passed through the generations, and students were receptive and obedient. Textbooks were the wisdom of the past, and teachers connected students to the materials,

and they were the agents through which knowledge and skills were communicated and rules of conduct were enforced (Dewey, 1938). Teachers were the facilitators for the students to acquire knowledge and skills for life.

Constructivism was the idea that students' experiences should be incorporated into the learning environment, so they made connections. Dewey made it clear that the learning experiences of children should not be supplanted, but should be used as a starting point and built upon. Deliberate teaching became a necessity. This theory supported the idea of implementing positive behavior supports and building on students' experiences to teach appropriate social skills (Dewey, 1938, pp. 6-9). "Without such formal education, it was not possible to transmit all the resources and achievements of a complex society" (Dewey, 1938, pp. 6-9). Education was a social function that must be directed through the creation of a social environment.

According to Dewey education was to prepare children to handle situations through their ability to think and use their skills when faced with life's challenges. The concept was relevant today because children were faced with adult situations at much earlier ages due to exposure to technology and nontraditional families. As technology, workplace requirements and changes in family structures increased, the school system increased in importance. The traditional school was even less relevant in the lives of children than it was when Dewey objected to traditional schools year ago (Dewey, 1938, pp. 6-9). According to Gradin (2012), a renowned speaker and scientist who has autism, schools had to meet the needs of diverse learners because the world needed all kinds of minds.

The constructivism concept was important as the framework for this research because instructors in the inclusion setting required more techniques for behavior management as the diversity of the school population changed. Schools were ever changing and needed effective ways to support a diverse population of students in the general education setting (Morrissey, Bohanon, & Fenning, 2010). Education was a social process, and the teacher was the mature member of the group who conducted the interactions (Dewey, 1963, p. 58). The interaction supported students' growth as successful citizens, but that experience was lost when students were removed from the classroom and placed in settings such as ISS OSS and a DAEP where isolation rather than social interaction occurred. The concern was that when negative behaviors occurred, teachers found it difficult to manage instruction and social interaction among students.

Exclusionary discipline had been frequently used within the past decade as a punitive reaction to student behaviors where students were punished in the harshest form for minor behaviors (Welch & Payne, 2012). Doling out suspension as punishment in excess increased isolation of students from their peers. Schools were heavily populated with students who had behavior concerns. These behaviors destabilize the quality of classroom instruction; however, consistent classroom management rather than punitive practices had a more positive effect on students (Thomas, Bierman, Thompson, & Powers, 2008)

Background Literature

Historically, suspensions were one of the most commonly used forms of discipline in schools across America (Lee, Cornell, Gregory, & Fan, 2011). More than 3.3 million students were suspended each year in the US according to the U.S. Department of Education (2008). The Zero Tolerance Policy to create safer schools, inadvertently increased suspensions and expulsions. These suspensions and other reactionary discipline approaches removed the students who needed instruction the most (Skiba & Rausch, 2006).

The Gun Free School Act (GFSA), sparked debate over gun control laws after the Columbine High School massacre of 1999. The availability of firearms within the United States and gun violence involving youth shootings resulted in an increased emphasis on school security. GFSA was meant to promote school safety relating to seriously delinquent behaviors such as guns and drugs, yet it gave discretionary freedom to administrators to modify the policy (Skiba & Rausch, 2006). Many educational and rehabilitative alternatives were abandoned in place of strict zero tolerance policies and increased law enforcement within the school for typical adolescent behaviors. Over time, students' behaviors became widely interpreted, and the use of zero tolerance policies applied mandatory suspensions and expulsions for some of the most difficult students to define behaviors, including fighting, insubordination, and bullying.

Zero tolerance led to what many consider an overly punitive form of school discipline that relied primarily on punishment and, in many cases, functioned to exclude students from opportunities to learn (Rivkin, 2009). In the past 10 years the emphasis of

school discipline shifted from a prevention and correction model to a reactive and punitive model. The zero tolerance policy became widely overused to control major and minor behaviors. Students with behavior problems were reprimanded at a high rate by the teacher but received little recognition for appropriate behaviors (Lago-Delello, 1998; Moffat, 2011). When students with behavior concerns complied with teachers' directives, they were not praised or recognized for their good work or received positive feedback for positive behavior (Jack, Shores, Denny, Gunter, DeBriere, & DePaepa, 1996; Moffat, 2011).

This punitive practice drew more attention to the disruptions in the classroom, leading to increased office referrals and exacerbation of behaviors that were once viewed as minor, and students today were being sent home and expelled to the streets, engaging in criminal mischief. Delisio (2008) found that students who were not permitted in school spend time roaming the streets in the neighborhood. Through suspensions, some students were pushed out of school, landing on a track that for many, led to the juvenile justice system and ultimately to prison (Children's Defense Fund, 2007).

According to Fenning and Rose (2007), this tracking was still disproportionate according to race, gender, and disability. Students with disabilities were three times more likely to be suspended than their peers without disabilities (Caldarella, Young, Richardson, Young, & Young, 2008). The inequitable disciplinary consequences of the zero tolerance policy led to disproportionate suspensions of students with behavior concerns.

Unfortunately, the “one size fits all” consequences shifted the focus of discipline away from helping students develop appropriate social and behavioral skills and potentially increased the likelihood that misbehavior would continue (Stinchcomb, Bazemore, & Riestenberg, (2006). The administrators’ actions to remove the student from the school community led to the student’s lack of exposure to instructional activities and the social community of the school. These practices were the most harmful to students’ success in academics and behavior. Students who were repeatedly suspended were more likely to drop out-of-school than their peers (Wald & Losen, 2003). These students had the highest dropout rate and came in contact with the juvenile and criminal justice system at least once before leaving high school.

In addition to the increase in behavioral concerns, there was also an increase in teacher shortages and a decrease in funding. Local education agencies were struggling to retain qualified instructors, especially in urban schools where the turnover rate was higher and there was use of substitute teachers to cover classes and deliver instruction (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1997). Securing qualified special education teachers for students with behavioral concerns were affected by the shortages, and many instructors were not highly qualified teachers. The least prepared teachers were assigned to teach the most difficult and challenging students, thus, widening the achievement gap and increasing teachers’ frustrations as educators (Hasselkom & Calkins, 1993).

Positive Behavior Support

The attention students received from instructors for unacceptable behaviors reinforced negative behaviors, and these students were likely to lose out academically as instruction decreased and attention to disruptive behaviors increased (Moore-Partin, Robertson, Maggin, Oliver, & Wehby, 2010). Disruptive behaviors occurred throughout the educational system. An early childhood research study by Stormont, Smith, and Lewis, (2007) revealed that combining pre-corrective statements and positive recognition strategies reduced children's problems in behavior in elementary school. An example of pre-correction was when instructors provided statements to students to demonstrate the desired behavior when the specific problem occurred. Then, the instructors praised the students, acknowledging when the student demonstrated the desired behavior. When unacceptable behaviors proliferated at the K-12 grade school level without rectification, some students entered into universities with inappropriate behavior putting a strain on instruction in higher education settings. A system of ongoing, school-wide positive behavior support (PBS) and use of professional learning communities (PLC) provided extra support for staff members who dealt with challenging behaviors on a daily basis while trying to deliver instruction. A significant need existed to help educators more effectively meet the academic and behavioral needs of students. School-wide PBS was an evidence-based practice designed to address the behavioral needs of as many students as possible in an efficient manner, freeing up resources for those who needed maximum support for success (Muscott, Mann & LeBrun, 2008). School-wide PBS had been used for the past 10 years to shift student discipline to a more proactive approach rather than reactive strategies leading to detention, suspension, and expulsion. The minimum

expectation for students in the educational setting when implementing PBS was that teachers taught the school-wide behavior expectations, rules were posted, students were pre-taught expectations, praise occurred at a higher rate than reprimands, and procedures were in place for correcting behaviors (Conroy, M., Sutherland, Haydon, Stormont, & Harmon, 2009;. Stormont, Lewis, Beckner, & Johnson, 2008). The PBS approach was designed to address the entire school as well as individual students, and direct instruction for expectations and appropriate behaviors were the core of the PBS model. PBS interventions to reduce challenging behaviors also led to improvements in academic achievement (Chitiyo, Makweche-Chitiyo, Park, Ametepee, & Chitiyo, 2011).

Supporting the constructivism theory, instruction took place in the setting where instructors gave examples of desirable and undesirable behaviors, and students were allowed to practice them right way to behave (McKevitt & Braaksma, 2008). This was necessary because active training and individual support with behavior and curriculum were required to maximize academic engagement, minimize disruption, and help students gain greater access to inclusive environments (Sawka, McCurdy, & Mannella, 2002). The increased suspensions and alternative placements decreased to maximize inclusion and instruction. There had to be a positive plan in place which taught students expectations about behavior as the expectations for academic achievement were taught and retaught for mastery. This proactive approach was being used to support students in the regular education setting rather than multiple suspensions and massive alternative placement of students (Farkas, et.al, 2009). Administrative support, relevant staff development, and sustained implementation were effective in implementing a successful

positive behavior support program (Sugai, Flannery, & Anderson, 2009). When implemented properly, PBS had become the initiative to support diverse students in the inclusion setting.

Many U.S. schools were using the three-tiered response to intervention (RtI) model for academic interventions. Similarly, positive behavior support programs also used behavior interventions that were consistent with the core principles of RtI. These interventions were systematically applied to students based on their needs in order to improve behavior difficulties. In the research study conducted by Benner et al., principals, teachers, and staff at each school received ongoing training and then implemented the program which consisted of a four-step process including precision request, behavior intervention, reflective period, debriefing process, and classroom re-entry with the student (Benner, et al., 2012).

According to a case study by Simonsen, Britton, and Young, (2010), Centennial School staff increased school-wide positive behavior and reduced office referrals by adopting a systematic process of school-wide positive behavior support (PBS). The goal of the school-wide PBS was to match academic tasks to students' ability levels, increase positive reinforcement, use social skills curriculum, increase parental involvement, provide professional development to staff members, and implement with fidelity. The use of a shared vision and a data driven, decision-making process was found to be effective. An emphasis on recognizing students' positive behavior and meeting the school's expectations increased positive interactions with students and teachers (McIntosh, Filter, Bennett, Ryan & Sugai, 2010).

Scott, White, and Algozzine (2009) reported in their study that the entire school community made a commitment to impact a change in behavior through all staff members and students behaving responsibly. The teacher and professionals collaborated and developed positive behavior supports, enforcing rules that were clear, broad, and fair. They clearly communicated to all members of the school community that the interventions were implemented and the data were collected to serve as a basis for program adjustments. Teaching appropriate behaviors on a prevention-oriented basis, rather than reacting when problems occurred, kept students in school experiencing success (Morrissey, Bohanon, & Fenning, 2010). Both research studies discussed implementing ongoing professional development to support staff members in systematic change. Teacher buy-in was important when implementing PBS and sustaining PBS. Research from within the past decade suggested that teacher perceptions influenced support and consistency with implementing a PBS climate (Lane, et al., 2009). Teachers understand the concept of implementing PBS and agree that it kept the educational process student-centered. Tillery, Varjas, Meyers, and Collins (2010) conducted a qualitative research study on teacher perceptions and found that teachers agreed with the underlying philosophy of PBS. The concern was that staff members were wrapped into the procedural task and not the innovation of using the interventions to support students (Hall & Hord, 2011).

The importance of the PLC was that built-in time was allotted for staff members to review data and problem solve. The sharing and reviewing of data helped to support the sustained implementation of a program. The use of PLC helped teachers to learn

strategies from each other that increased staff members' abilities to teach students with challenging behaviors in the regular education setting. Research showed that school-wide positive behavior supports prevented many situations from occurring within the school setting with a reduction of school discipline referrals up to 50% over a three year period (Horner et al., 2009). In research conducted by Bradshaw, Mitchell, and Leaf (2010), students in schools, which practiced positive behavior support, were 35% less likely to receive office referrals than those in comparison schools. Staff members were able to build relationships with students, and the students' interaction with instructors improved (Bradshaw, Debnam, Koth & Leaf, 2009). Also recent work on sustainability of PBS suggested that strong leadership at the school and LEAs level helped to implement and incorporate PBS into everyday practices (Barrett, Bradshaw, & Lewis-Palmer, (2008). In review of recent case studies, schools which practiced positive behavior and used PLC as an opportunity for growth and improvement had a positive effect on student discipline.

Implications

In this project study, teachers explained their perspectives on implementing PBS and the impact they perceived on student behavior. Conclusions that were possible upon completion of the study and results of the data collection and analysis were as following: increased positive school climate, teacher instruction, and student achievement and a reduction in disciplinary consequences. A classroom that was conducive for learning began with developing human relationships that were functional and reciprocal (Arthur-Kelly, Lyons, Butterfield, & Gordon, 2006). In addition, interviews with staff members

revealed an increase in teacher-student relationships, strategies for challenging behaviors, and positive improvements of students' behaviors. According to McDonald (2010), developing positive and consistent relationships were very important in classroom management.

A possible project that emerged from the results of this study was a PBS staff training to continue facilitating PBS in the academic setting. Another project that emerged was a review of the students at Tier 2 and 3 in the RTI process for discipline to determine the level of support as behaviors increased and how to scale back the support and lower the levels to Tiers 1 and 2 respectively after the implementation of an effective positive support plan.

Summary

The IDEA of 2004 required each state to develop a six-year performance plan. The Texas SPP evaluated the state's efforts to implement the requirements of IDEA and illustrated continuous improvement. The TEA implemented measurements of 20 indicators for each LEA to be held accountable for the decisions that were made in regard to students with special needs. A major issue for many urban districts was that under-performing students with discipline problems were being removed from the classroom leading to alienation and decreased academic achievement.

Although suspensions were being used to solve disciplinary issues with challenging students, use of suspension became the problem through administrators supporting an alternative educational arrangement that was failing to give instructional support to struggling students. Researchers reported that practices of exclusion through

suspensions negatively affected student achievement, including a reduction in literacy and failure to pass standardized tests (Flanigain, 2007).

In this section, I introduced the study and, in the review of the literature, I explained how exclusionary practices were ineffective for correcting problem behaviors and that PBS was the researched practice for helping all students to be successful in the educational community. In Section 2 of this doctoral study, I focus on the study's methodology, the research design and approach, location, sample, data collection and analysis, assumptions, limitations, scope, delimitations, and the rights of its participants. In Section 3, I will cover the project. Section 4 includes the reflection and conclusion.

Section 2: The Methodology

Introduction

Teachers who participated in PBS staff development shared their views and perception about the impact of PBS training and implementation. The purpose of this study was to employ a mixed method design using descriptive analysis and interviews to determine the effectiveness of PBS. In this study, I used behavior support survey data from teachers and personal interviews to determine the value of the program.

Research Design

The research of the LEA's use of the PBS system for students used a concurrent, mixed-methods approach. I conducted a mixed methods study by collecting quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem. Mixed methods enable the researcher to collect data from two different approaches to develop a deeper understanding of the research problem (Creswell, 2010).

The research study population included staff and instructors at an LEA after a series of PBS training completed in the first quarter of the school year. For the purpose of this research study, I sent the survey to all participants in the PBS training via email. Using the concurrent embedded approach of collecting various data simultaneously helped me to gain a broader perspective from using different methods of data collection rather than using one method. I used interviews to gather information related to staff perceptions about the implementation of a school-wide behavior program and ongoing professional development improvement on student behaviors. Survey data from the EBS

Survey was analyzed to explore the current level of implementation and effectiveness of the PBS program.

In previous years, teachers reviewed classroom rules and expectations for the first week of school, had high school students sign the code of ethics, and began the curriculum standards. Students received office referrals for inappropriate behaviors and were immediately issued a consequence. However, teachers were required to consistently attend PBS training and review classroom and school expectations throughout the year and implemented positive reinforcement for appropriate behavior. Examining the data from the teacher surveys and interviews was helpful in determining the implementation of consistent training, classroom expectations, and positive reinforcement throughout a school year. On the survey, teachers were required to indicate the level at which they implemented each PBS strategy by selecting *in place*, *partially in place*, or *not in place*. Using the data, a plan of action was established in the form of a study deliverable.

Both the quantitative and qualitative methods were beneficial for the study. Quantitative research leads to broader trends and generalizations in larger populations, but qualitative gave more details and views of individuals and their voices (Creswell, 2010). The qualitative sequence was a case study design and included an in-depth study of a group of individuals' perceptions. To present an in depth study, open-ended items were used to gain qualitative responses during interviews of 15 teachers who served as key informants (e.g., Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010). Instructors were participants in the pilot program with specific knowledge about PBS. The quantitative sequence

followed a survey, descriptive design, and had been chosen for this research to explore teachers' assessments of the current behavior support in their school as measured by the EBS survey. The qualitative responses determined the perspective of PBS with suggestions to improve the implementation. Then, the open-ended interviews were compared to the responses from the Likert surveys in order to categorize data to search for themes.

Setting and Sample

Initially, the data collection consisted of gaining a sample from the 301 high school instructors in a large urban LEA who were required to implement PBS schoolwide. According to Lodico et al. (2010), when the population is close to 400 participants, approximately 50% of the population should make up the sample. Therefore, the goal was to gain approximately 150 surveys. I obtained the email addresses of each participant through the districts' website with approval and sent the survey to each participant. When I initially sent the survey, there were only 119 responses. After waiting approximately 3 weeks, I sent the survey again to school instructors. A total of 162 staff members from four high schools responded to the survey. These respondents were participants in the initial PBS training also.

This research design was a nonrandom participant survey, and I also interviewed 15 participants to answer the research questions. Creswell (2009) defined nonrandom participants as those who had been pre-selected by an organization. All instructors at the local site were required to implement PBS and were given an opportunity to complete a

survey, which was a descriptive design using a cross-sectional survey. I used purposeful random sampling (Lodico et al., 2010).

There were two types of nonprobability sampling: convenience sampling and snowball sampling. I used the convenience sampling method. A convenience sample was one that was obtained because the participants were willing, and the surveys were available when they were needed (Fink, 2009). Although, randomization was recommended (e.g., Creswell, 2009), a convenience sample was deployed because the groups were naturally formed through staff members registering for the PBS training, and the names of staff members were available due to the requirement to register for the training on the LEAs website. In addition, trained staff members were required to return to campus and inform their colleagues of the new implementation of PBS in a train the trainer staff development workshop. Registering through the website was the way that the LEA tracked professional development for employees. The first 15 participants to respond were included in the qualitative study.

The LEA had a total of four traditional high schools, an early college, and an alternative high school selected to pilot the PBS system. The PBS trainings were implemented at all schools, and every campus used the PBS model; however, this study focused on the campuses that implemented PBS for the longest period of time and were in the second phase of implementation. The staff members received training for positive behavior support at the beginning of the second semester of the school year by the Region IV Educational Service Center for Texas. Implementation began after the train the trainer session during the January staff development session.

The PBS training, which was the Texas Behavior Support Initiative (TBSI) six modular training series, was delivered during the PLC time on Thursday mornings each week. Students had a modified day in which they attended school two hours later on Thursdays. Although research had shown that implementing PBS at the high school level was challenging, Flannery and Sugai (2010) described 12 examples of promising high school implementation of PBS and discussed the features of high schools that made implementation challenging. The PBS training addressed the concerns of the staff members and supported problem solving through the issues that caused implementation to be a challenge.

Data collection did not interfere with the participants' commitment to education. Also, the components of the survey and participants' identity protection were disclosed in the electronic cover letter enclosed with the survey instrument. Before participating in the research study, individuals were informed through email of the purpose of the study and of how the results were going to be used. The participants also had the right to refuse to participate in the study (e.g., Creswell, 2012). Each participant received an explanation of the nature of the survey and how participants were protected. To alleviate the feelings of obligation to participate in the study or fear of retaliation should the participants choose to not return the survey instrument, the participants were not under my administrative leadership at the high schools.

Furthermore, I received an Institutional Review Board (IRB) certificate of completion from the protecting human research participants tutorial offered online by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research, as required by

Walden University as an acceptable tutorial to ensure that I fully understood what was ethical in conducting a research study and the importance of protecting the rights of the participants. IRB Approval Number: 02-10-14-0181434

Measures to Protect Human Subjects

To protect human subjects involved in the research study, I treated participants as autonomous agents. They were treated fairly and no physical, psychological, legal or economic harm was done to the human subjects participating in the research study. I sent informed consent letters to each participant via email with the link to the survey instrument attached. Responses to the survey indicated consent from the participants. The study did not change along the way; therefore, the participants were not informed of any changes. The participants had the right to withdraw at any time during the study. This research study did not require that participants be paid for their time and participation. The study was strictly conducted on a volunteer basis. The goal of the research and the benefit to social change was the hope that the findings would be generalized to other populations. Participation in this study did not pose a risk to the subjects, and they were not harmed by participating in any aspect of the study.

To protect the privacy and confidentiality of the subjects participating in the qualitative study, I locked the results and interview notes in a file cabinet where they remained. The information was not shared with other researchers unless explicit consent from the participant was obtained. The results of data collected were collected by me and available upon request. All survey results and personal interview questionnaire notes were stored with a plan to be shredded in April 2019.

Concurrent Strategies

Quantitative Sequence

The teacher assessment data used for the research study derived from a survey instrument called the EBS Self-assessment Survey version 2.0 (see Appendix D). I sent the survey via email, to all participants who were a part of the pilot PBS implementation. The identity of each participant remained anonymous. I requested that the participants click on the link and take the survey within the 2-week deadline date. The Likert-type survey instrument to be used for this research study was from the official PBIS organization's website where explicit permission had been given to educators implementing PBS in their schools and written permission given by Rob Horner and George Sugai (Appendix B). The survey questions were predeveloped using a quasi-interval scale. The questions were posted on the PBIS website (see Appendix D), and the quasi-interval, or Likert-type scale, used continuous equal intervals (Creswell, 2012).

According to Creswell, the survey's creator attempted to establish validity through meaningful inferences from scores on the instrument. There were various forms of validity. Content validity measures whether the instrument measures what it is designed to measure, and concurrent validity measures the degree to which the scores predict the criterion measure (Creswell, 2009). There was also construct validity, meaning the instrument measures the concept. Also, in order to establish reliability, there had to be consistency in the scoring (Creswell, 2009). As evidence that the measurement tools on the website were recognized as being valid, reliable instruments, the complete

studies for other state agencies throughout the nation that used the instruments were also posted on the PBIS website.

The PBIS organization's blueprints had been nationally used by various states for longitudinal studies of the effects of PBS. Some of the states that consistently used the EBS instruments while implementing PBS were Illinois, North Carolina, Florida, Vermont, Connecticut, Maryland, and Pennsylvania (Algozzine et al., 2010). The state agencies supported that the instrument was a valid and reliable measurement tool, establishing in the research the validity of instrument and the reliability of the scores. The completed project studies were on the PBIS website. According to the previous studies documented, Cochran-Mantel-Haenszel Statistics test, *t*-test and Chi-square test results showed that there was no significant difference on any factors of the benchmark of quality documents and the methods of administration. Therefore, according to the developers of the PBIS instrument, it was found to be a valid instrument even when it was administered in diverse methods adding confidence to the utility of the benchmark of quality (Childs, George, & Kincaid, 2011). The consent for use of the Likert-type survey questions and open-ended questions to develop a survey was documented on the PBIS organization website for Evaluation Blueprint for School-Wide Positive Behavior Support (Algozzine et al., 2010).

Research Question #1

In order to answer Research Question 1 (RQ1), to determine teachers' assessments of the current behavior support in their school as measured by the EBS survey, I descriptively analyzed data from the survey responses using the Statistical

Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) software. The descriptive analysis includes tables for individual items and means and standard deviations for each of the four scales of the instrument which were: schoolwide, nonclassroom, classroom, and individual. The responses were reported in the form of respondent percentages with tables to report item responses. The study produced what the questionnaire was asking for in terms of teacher perceptions about student behaviors. The following tables depict the researched data showing teachers' perceptions of schoolwide behavior. The standard deviation gave an indication of the average distance from the mean. A low standard deviation would mean that most observations cluster around the mean. According to the EBS Survey, overall 61.3% said that positive behavior support was in place, 27.7% said that it was partially in place, and 10.7% said that it was not in place. The mean for school-wide PBS was 2.62 (*SD* =.52).

There were 162 respondents to the EBS survey showing schoolwide behavior support as having a mean of 2.58 (*SD*=.61) on the 1to 3 point Likert scale. The Schoolwide construct was the overall snapshot of the school in regards to behavior; this encompassed classroom and Non-classroom settings and all three Tiers of Response to Intervention (RtI). Table 1 below indicated that 65.3% of the respondents agree that schoolwide positive behavior support was in place (3) for students. According to the EBS survey 31.3% reported that schoolwide PBS was partially in place (2). Three and five percent responded that PBS was not in place schoolwide. The data also showed that 35.6% of the instructors felt that rewarding behavior was in place (2). The highest percentage that teachers responded to was that problem behaviors were defined clearly

with a response of 92.7 %. The EBS survey question, "Problem behaviors (failure to meet expected student behaviors) were defined clearly" had 12 non-responses on the Likert scale survey. Likewise, the last question in the series "all staff members were involved directly and/or indirectly in school-wide interventions" also had 12 non-responses.

Table 1

EBS Survey Report – Schoolwide

	In place (3)	Partially in place (2)	Not in place (1)	No response	Mean	Standard Deviation
Expected student behaviors are taught directly.	105	57	0	0	2.648	0.479
Expected student behaviors are rewarded regularly.	56	106	0	0	2.345	0.477
Problem behaviors (failure to meet expected student behaviors) are defined clearly.	139	11	0	12	2.743	0.754
Consequences for problem behaviors are defined clearly.	101	61	0	0	2.623	0.486
Distinctions between office v. classroom managed problem behaviors are clear.	89	61	12	0	2.475	0.632
Options exist to allow classroom instruction to continue when problem behavior occurs.	90	61	11	0	2.487	0.623
Procedures are in place to address emergency/dangerous situations.	137	15	10	0	2.783	0.5428
School administrator is an active participant on the behavior support team.	116	35	11	0	2.648	0.605
Data on problem behavior patterns are collected and summarized within an on-going system.	125	23	13	1	2.679	0.646
All staff is involved directly and/or indirectly in school-wide interventions.	81	69	0	12	2.366	0.803

Note. $N = 162$.

According to the study the majority of teachers felt that PBS was in place at the school wide level. Systematic approaches to the daily operation and governing of the students was in place according to the questionnaire. Over two thirds of the instructors agreed that behaviors were being taught directly and that the problem behaviors were

defined clearly. They also agreed that the consequences were defined clearly and that the procedures for emergency and dangerous situations were in place. The teachers felt that school administrators were an active part of the behavior support team which reiterated the qualitative study where teachers surveyed stated that behavior support team consisted of at least one administrator. According to the quantitative and qualitative data, Review 360 was the software used to collect data. The concern was that it was a collection database rather than a tool. Once the data were entered, the teachers want the data to be used to help them with strategies and interventions in the classroom. Only 56% of the teachers agreed that options and interventions were in place to allow classroom instruction to continue when behavior problems occur. Quantitative data and qualitative data suggest that teachers were using positive behavior support but it does not apply to all staff in the school, only administrators, instructors and instructional paraeducators.

The Non-classroom construct included areas outside of the classroom that were less structured. These areas include cafeterias, hallways, restrooms, and auditoriums. During these times, students gather for socialization, assemblies, and other activities that require adult supervision. There were 162 respondents to the EBS survey in this category, and none of the questions were left blank. The mean with regard to PBS in the Non-classroom setting was of 2.41 (SD=.75) on the 1 to 3 point Likert scale. Table 2 below indicates that instructors' perceptions about non-classroom settings were that positive behavior support was in place. Overall, 58.8% of the instructors reported that Non-classroom PBS was in place (3), while 23.3 % stated that PBS was partially in place (2). Seventeen and nine percent of the instructors said that PBS was not in place (1). The

question on the EBS survey, "Rewards for meeting expected student behaviors in non-classroom setting" had a response of 42.6%, which was less than half of the instructors surveyed. Twenty-nine percent reported that rewards were not in place in the Non-classroom setting.

Table 2

EBS Survey Report – Non-classroom

	In place (3)	Partially in place (2)	Not in place (1)	Mean	Standard Deviation
School-wide expected student behaviors are taught in non-classroom settings.	104	35	23	2.5	0.732
Supervisors actively supervise (move, scan, & interact) students in non-classroom settings.	104	47	11	2.574	0.618
Rewards exist for meeting expected student behaviors in non-classroom setting.	69	46	47	2.136	0.838
All staff is involved directly or indirectly in management of non-classroom settings.	104	23	35	2.426	0.825

Note. $N = 162$.

According to the survey, teachers agreed that schoolwide expectations were taught in the Non-classroom setting, that supervisors actively supervise students and that all staff was involved with the management in the Non-classroom setting. However, according to the questionnaire concerning PBS, all staff was not involved in PBS in the schoolwide setting. Therefore, according to the Non-classroom survey data all staff was involved with management of students, but fall short of practicing positive behavior support and recognizing appropriate behaviors. Based on the response of only 69 instructors stating that rewards existed for meeting expected student behavior implied that PBS needed to increase to all staff members, not just instructional staff and administrators.

The Classroom construct included settings that were the most structured areas. These areas include gym and elective courses. Although less structured than the core curriculum classrooms such as math, science, language arts, and social studies, the physical education and electives were considered structured areas with a guided curriculum and instruction. Table 3 below indicated that instructors' perception about classroom settings was that positive behavior support was in place overall with an average of 60.2%. According to the data, instructors reported that classroom PBS was partially in place (2) at 28.7%. The data showed that 11.1% of the instructors said that PBS was not in place (1). The EBS question, "Expected student behavior & routines in classrooms were stated positively & defined clearly" showed a response of 97.3%. However, the questions about problem behaviors receiving consistent consequences and consistent school-wide procedures for problem behaviors were left blank by 12 instructors. The mean with regards to PBS in the Non-classroom setting was of 2.46 (*SD* =.69) on the 1 to 3 point Likert scale.

Table 3

EBS Survey Report – Classroom

	In place (3)	Partially in place (2)	Not in place (1)	No response	Mean	Standard Deviation
Expected student behavior & routines in classrooms are stated positively & defined clearly.	146	4	12	0	2.827	0.541
Problem behaviors are defined clearly.	90	59	13	0	2.475	0.642
Expected student behavior & routines in classrooms are taught directly.	123	38	1	0	2.753	0.447
Expected student behaviors are acknowledged regularly (positively reinforced) (>4 positives to 1 negative).	80	57	12	13	2.259	0.909
Problem behaviors receive consistent consequences.	81	24	46	11	2.146	0.972
Procedures for expected & problem behaviors are consistent with school-wide procedures.	79	48	35	0	2.271	0.796
Classroom-based options exist to allow classroom instruction to continue when problem behavior occurs.	112	37	13	0	2.611	0.632
Instruction & curriculum materials are matched to student ability (math, reading, language).	93	58	11	0	2.506	0.623
Teachers have regular opportunities for access to assistance & recommendations (observation, instruction, & coaching).	61	87	14	0	2.290	0.617

Note. N=162.

Over two- thirds of the teachers agreed that behaviors and routines were positively and clearly defined, taught directly in the classroom and classroom based options exist to allow instruction to continue. Teachers felt that they had control over what happened in their classrooms when they handled the disciplinary action at the

classroom level. According to the Classroom section of the survey, only 80 teachers reported that problem behaviors, consistent consequences, and procedures for support with those behaviors at the School-wide behavior were clearly defined. Teachers reported that the routines and expectations were clearly taught but the Schoolwide consequences and procedures were not consistent or clearly define. According to data, 80 instructors indicated that appropriate behavior was acknowledge in the classroom. According to the Non-classroom setting appropriate behaviors were not acknowledged as much as they were in the classroom setting. Sixty teachers selected the option for teachers to regularly have opportunities for access to assistance and recommendation. This indicated a staff development piece and implementation of a process for teachers to access more help and gain more skills.

Individual PBS was the Tier 3 Structure of the RTI model for students who need intense behavior interventions. Table 4 below indicated those instructors' perceptions about individual PBS was in place (3) at 44.0%. According to the data 41.2% of the instructors indicated that PBS was partially in place (2). Fourteen and eight percent said that PBS was not in place for individual support for students (1). The mean with regards to PBS in the Non-classroom setting was of 2.3 (*SD* = 63) on the 1 to 3 point Likert scale.

Table 4

EBS Survey Report – Individual

N = 162	In place (3)	Partially in place (2)	Not in place (1)	Mean	Standard deviation
Assessments are conducted regularly to identify students with chronic problem behaviors.	82	46	34	2.296	0.795
A simple process exists for teachers to request assistance.	93	56	13	2.493	0.642
A behavior support team responds promptly (within 2 working days) to students who present chronic problem behaviors.	62	71	29	2.203	0.723
Behavioral support team includes an individual skilled at conducting functional behavioral assessment.	57	76	29	2.172	0.710
Behavior is monitored & feedback provided regularly to the behavior support team & relevant staff.	62	85	15	2.290	0.627

Note. N=162.

The majority of the responses to the survey about the behavior support team were low Approximately one-third of the 162 teachers surveyed indicated that the behavior support team response to individual student behavior support was prompt, that the team had the skill and that they monitored the behavior and provided regular feedback. This indicated a need for a process to access and monitor support for individual students. According to the 162 teachers surveyed and 15 staff members interviewed, assessments to assess chronic behaviors needed to increase for students to be more successful in the classroom.

Qualitative Sequence

I asked each participant to be a part of the face-to-face interview via the last question on the survey instrument. The participants were contacted through email to schedule an appointment. The qualitative component consisted of the first 15 participants to respond. The participants read the informed consent form and the indication of their

names at the end of the survey was the approval for the interview. Upon arrival for the meeting with each interviewee, I conveyed the purpose of the study and the length of time to complete the interview. I shared the plans for using the results as well as the availability of a summary of the study when the research was completed. The interview took place in each teacher's classroom after school hours. The questions were standardized, open-ended interview questions (Appendix D). All interviewees were asked the same questions. This approach facilitated faster interviews that could be more easily analyzed and compared (Creswell, 2009).

The protocols included a header, the date, place, interviewer, and interviewees. Handwritten notes were the method for recording data (Creswell, 2012). The interview consisted of 10 core questions from the official PBIS organization's website where explicit permission was given to educators implementing PBS in their schools and a letter that followed granting specific permission and guidelines for use of the instruments was inserted in Appendix D. Probing questions were used as needed. There was space between the questions to record responses and an appreciation statement to acknowledge the time the interviewee spent during the interview.

Research Question #2

In order to answer research question two (RQ2) about teachers' perceptions of school-wide PBS training and implementation, questions from the interview participants were open-coded for similarity and categorized by themes. For the qualitative research question, interview data were coded in order to create categories of analysis. Thematic codes were established after the interviews, categorizing by similarities and then

analyzed. Coding occurred when the data was organized into chunks of text prior to bringing meaning to the information (Creswell, 2009). To analyze the qualitative data, the transcripts were read several times, and the three column procedure described by Creswell (2012) for qualitative data analysis was used for categorization and determining themes. Highlighting key phrases was the technique used to determine the codes that emerged. Responses were grouped together.

1. Consistency and structure throughout the school with regard to expectations.
2. More collaboration with students and grade level teachers prior to office referrals.
3. Fewer office referrals for students
4. Students in special education receive more support with behavior in the general education classroom.

Each theme is described below. A table listing a sampling of the codes used to determine these themes was provided in Appendix F, and a sample script was provided in Appendix G.

Theme 1: Consistency and structure. Participants made some statements that one of the main aspects of the positive behavior support so far had been consistency. The schoolwide expectations for students were consistently implemented by all faculty members. Student discipline and expectations were reviewed at the beginning of the year and reviewed during PLC times. If there was a system that had been unsuccessful, the staff used that time to make improvements to the process. P1 stated, "We collaborate all the time during team," which shows that there is consistency among grade levels. P2 referenced the team again, "For the most part, all of other kids follow the rules, we're in

the hallways and even in the classroom, our team uses the same rules." P2, P6 and P8 discussed the consistency with structure and rules. P6 stated, "You can hear us saying the same things in the hallway." P8 also mentioned the consistency with rules stating, "Our students know the rules."

Theme 2: Staff student relationship building. Staff talked with students about behaviors. The staff members agreed that they developed the technique of talking with students about why behaviors were occurring in the classroom and allowed students to express why they chose to behave inappropriately. Many staff members mention that negotiation occurred with the student when they had a discussion about behaviors. Through training and implementation of PBS throughout the school, staff and students look toward rewards for the positive outcomes of student behaviors. Staff and students at one high school made a schoolwide video celebrating success and improved student-faculty relationships. P1 stated, "I had to get to know them first." P3 discussed that they have 5 minute share time so that they can get to know each other. Then, P5 stated, "I don't mind talking in class and I join the conversations too." While P8, said, "The students like the fact that we have allow them to talk to us. It doesn't have to be about school work, we want to help them with their problems." All of these statements suggest that staff members are building a relationship with the students in the classroom to improve behaviors.

Theme 3: Fewer office referrals. Staff members reported that fewer students were sent home for infractions in the classroom. Student behaviors were entered into a student discipline database as classroom behavior for documentation and writing plans

but not as office referrals for minor classroom infractions. It's evident that students are not being sent out of the classroom as often and that became a theme for the qualitative study. While interviewing P1 reported, "I haven't sent any students to the office because you know we have classroom referral first and then come up with a plan." Then, P2 said, "I remember last year, all the kids were being sent home, but now we're trying other things." P6 also said, "We still have office referrals but, we try to get the kids on track with the classroom referrals. It keeps the kids in class." P7 said, "If they wind up in ISS or suspended, they fall behind. My office referrals are low." Again indicating that the referrals are low and students are being sent to the office less often than in the previous years.

Theme 4: More support for students receiving special services. Staff members reported that students receiving special services, who were in the general education classes, were remaining in the classroom with plans developed to help them be successful rather than being sent to the office. While conducting interviews P5 stated, "Our special education students are doing well in the mainstream overall." P7 stated, "My special needs students do well in class. They have a few behaviors, but we work it out." P8 said, "My special ed students struggle with the material but we have co-teach and tutorials. I have good classes. We have good relationships with our students.

Data Analysis and Validation

I applied a mixed design approach to explore teachers' assessments of a positive behavior support program at a local school site. The data were collected and analyzed sequentially, and the results from both were compared to assist in establishing common

themes from the findings. I conducted a member check with 11 of the participants from the study. Five responded stating the overall themes captured their perceptions about PBS. The trends of the quantitative research were triangulated with the details of the interviews. The Likert scale used for this study was a three point scale of closed-ended question items ranging from 1 *(not in place)* to 3 *(in place).* The analyses included ordinal data tables for individual items of the EBS Survey and means and standard deviations for each of the four scales of the instrument: Schoolwide, Non-classroom, Classroom, and Individual. Since survey research designs evoke a concern with internal and external validity, the rules for survey research study outlined by Lodico et al. (2010) were used to establish validity. A threat to validity was a concern when using the Likert scale because of central tendency bias where respondents avoided using extreme response categories, acquiescence bias where respondents agreed with the statements presented, or desirability bias where the respondents portrayed balance within the organization. Social desirability was more of a challenge when using the survey instrument. In an attempt to minimize these concerns, the cover letter emailed with the link to the survey instrument addressed the importance of the validity of the research study to impact change and improvement within the organization and opportunity to share best practices of what the organization was doing well. As an attempt to minimize acquiescence bias, the scale within the survey instrument had the same number of positive and negative statements (Lodico et al., 2010). Survey research depicted the principles of correlational research and provided an accurate way to describe people's thoughts and opinions through a predetermined set of questions through the use of a questionnaire.

I gave participants an opportunity to complete the survey and participate in the face-to-face interview. Those who chose an interview were given an interview appointment at their convenience. The qualitative approach was chosen for this research because an instructors' response to an open-ended questionnaire gave rich data to support the perception of how effectively the PBS system was implemented at each school. Researchers consider the choice of statistics to analyze the data as a critical aspect of the research study. The EBS survey instruments allowed for the staff to give an assessment of PBS implementation. Those who chose to participate in the survey were instructed in a cover letter to complete and submit electronically by the deadline. Staff members who completed the mixed-method research were high school teachers who were trained during PLC times to implement positive behavior support. Those teachers were required to implement PBS. The randomization was applied in the beginning in order to gain participants for the interview, but as the survey responses slowed down, randomization was difficult. An important note was that the survey does not indicate which high school responded, so there was no way of knowing which campuses the respondents were assigned to work. There was no way of determining if there was an even spread of data. The process of accepting every three interviews shifted to accepting all interviews by the end of the survey in order to conduct the qualitative study.

The quantitative and qualitative data were integrated through the triangulation design where the strengths of both types were applied to the same situation at the same time (Lodico, et al., 2010). The reason for combining the data was to gain a clearer understanding of the research through triangulating the trends from the survey with the

details of the participant interviews. For example, the strength of the EBS report was that teachers stated that routines in the classroom were established and expected student behaviors were taught. This information was in alignment with Theme 1 from the quantitative data revealing teachers' perceptions that structure was in place. The EBS survey doesn't show data about teacher/student relationships; however teachers did state that all staff members were involved directly or indirectly with management in the non-classroom setting. There has to be some relationship building for staff members to notice changes in behavior in the non-classroom setting. This indicated that that there were interaction with staff members and students which relates to Theme 2, improvements in staff and student relationships. Therefore; management and rules were established and reinforced through reminder of consequences but not necessary through reward in the non-classroom setting. According to quantitative data, classroom interventions helped to reduce office referral. Teacher stated that intervening early took care of the behaviors in the classroom and they worked on prevention. When reviewing the qualitative data staff members reported during interviews that office referrals were reduced since teachers were consistent with schoolwide rule and supervision. The EBS survey revealed that classroom options existed to allow instructors to continue teaching and the instruction matched the students' abilities. This is also aligned with Theme 4, which indicates that there is more support for students receiving special services. The mixed methods approach was chosen for this research because the research problem could be answered best through the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative

sequence established the overall tendency of responses from the participants and how it differed among people (Creswell, 2012).

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' assessments of the training and current level of implementation of a school-wide positive behavior support (PBS). The proposed research included a concurrent, mixed-methods approach of surveys and interviews from participants trained in PBS. When reviewing the responses from the survey, teachers' perceptions was that PBS was working well for students overall. However, when asked about students with behavior concerns that require an individualized plan, there needs to be a more comprehensive plan of support. When looking at the themes from the personal interview, teachers' perceptions were that students with special needs were being supported in the classroom.

Permission for the research was obtained from the university IRB and the local LEA. Participants were treated as autonomous agents to protect the rights of human subjects, and the information was secured and not shared without explicit consent from the participant.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

The problem described in this study was that students were being placed in settings away from the classroom as a discipline consequence due to inappropriate behaviors. In this section, I describe the plan to increase positive behavior of students in the classroom and in nonclassroom settings. This section includes a plan to provide more assistance to teachers through the development of a 3-day staff development on PBS and the RTI process.

The quantitative data revealed that teachers did not feel that they had regular opportunities for access to assistance and recommendations revealing a need for a question/answer component within the staff development and collaboration where teachers shared strategies across grade levels and disciplines. The qualitative results revealed that an increase in inappropriate behaviors caused an increased disruption in the classroom and rather than sending students to the office with a referral, teachers wanted strategies to reduce the inappropriateness. In order to gain more strategies, teachers prefer a workshop with a clear understanding of PBS and how it related to RTI in the district.

The teachers also requested a specified process for gaining more support and training from district administrative staff to help new teachers and instructional support staff. As a result, staff development was designed to assist teachers with understanding the purpose of PBS and how to gain support for students as behavior s increase. This training occurred after staff members attended the schoolwide PBS overview training. The review of the literature explained how the research supported the project and the

implementation and project evaluation. Finally, the implications for social change are discussed, followed by concluding remarks.

Description and Goals

The project was designed to be a presentation with question/answer sessions for instructors. This project is based on their perception about positive behavior support in their schools after having attended the district's training through Region IV and started practicing positive behavior support. The Region IV overview was great for the initial rollout of PBS but according to the qualitative data, there needed to be a clearer understanding and consistency with consequences and incentives for students who made appropriate choices. The problem was that students were often sent home for behaviors that should have been corrected through training staff how to support students through positive behavior support. The students who struggled the most with behavior concerns were the ones who missed the most instruction. Suspensions were used as consequences for inappropriate behavior in the instructional setting.

In the past 10 years, the national movement toward positive behavior support proactively supported instructors in addressing the behavior concerns of students. From the review of this mixed methods design through surveys and personal interviews of instructors who participated in the staff development, it was determined that school-wide positive behavior support was an effective program for changing student behaviors in the school setting. However, as the behaviors increased teachers needed a plan to access more support from district staff and since the PBS was not as evident in the nonclassroom

setting, PBS needed to be used by all staff to increase positive behavior. As a result, the specific goals of this project were are follows:

- The learner will develop a vision for the PBS within the school district.
- The learner will increase awareness of the characteristics of PBS as it relates to RTI.
- The learner will understand the districts systematic method of communicating PBS.
- The learner will be equipped with the skills needed to support students.
- The learner will understand the necessity of ongoing professional development.
- The learner will know importance of RTI consistency and collaboration.
- The learner will gain knowledge of the use of student support teams.

Rationale

The *Performance Based Monitoring Analysis System* (*PBMAS*) report for 2012 showed that students attending the local education agency (LEA) had high rates of ISS and OSS placements. To decrease disciplinary referrals, the LEA implemented the PBS model. Overall, this project was chosen to streamline the process based the teachers' perspectives. The staff development was designed to address the concerns of the staff members through systematic training and implementation. Hosting a staff development and benchmarking staff perceptions to determine what's working and what needed to be addressed was the next step. After reviewing the data, most instructors agreed that the process was working at the school-wide implementation level for the majority of

students. The classroom positive behavior support was working; however, the level of support when a student behaviors increase and systematic processes for support for the individual level needs to be addressed. Also, all staff members were not trained or required to practice PBS which was evident by the survey response concerning consistency in the non-classroom setting, which was hallways, ancillary, assembly and cafeteria. Students were mainly supervised by support staff in those areas. This project study was designed to determine what aspects of positive behavior support were successful for students.

Review of the Literature

Staff development to help staff members follow a systematic process for accessing more support in the classroom evolved as a result of the data collection. Education advanced in evidence-based practices with regard to positive behavior support (PBS) improving the academic and social outcomes for students (Slavin, Holmes, Madden, Chamberlain, & Cheung, 2010). Schools, districts, and state departments of education implementation of PBS with fidelity were critical when striving to close the achievement gaps between students with disabilities and their peers. Educators could not afford to practice on students. In order for students to be given the best chance to be successful, educators researched, proven strategies (Slavin, Holmes, Madden, Chamberlain, & Cheung, 2010). Although Positive Behavior Support introduced through OSEP was widely accepted as the method to enhance school-wide discipline, there were problems that arose with keeping teachers motivated, interacting more effectively with teams, dealing with philosophical differences, and teacher buy-in. Teachers participating

in more developed PBS teams were less likely to face serious teaching challenges (Odom, 2009).

Although teacher buy-in did not surface as one of the themes in this project study, it was an important component to sustain implementation and success of PBS. Schools established a balance in their daily operations and change had a profound effect on the balance of the learning environment therefore resistance was naturally expected (Noell & Gansle, 2009). When schools face resistance by staff members, it was important to determine why it was occurring and use the information to build capacity. By understanding staff needs and perception of PBS, staff empowerment evolved to develop meaningful change for social, emotional, and behavioral support (Noell & Gansle, 2009).

This study showed that positive reinforcements or incentives were low and that teachers needed more support at the Tier 3 level. Implementing individualized contingencies had an effect on teacher buy-in. While implementation of individual (Tier 3) contingencies helped to shape the behavior of the most severe student through positive reinforcement, it also raised concerns about fairness with regard to other students (Skinner, Skinner, & Sterling-Turner, 2002) indicating that interventions that lack contextual fit may not be effective as interventions (Benazzi, Horner, & Good, 2006; McIntosh, Filter, Bennett, Ryan, & Sugai, 2010). Also, according to Cihak, Kirk, and Boon, (2009), Heering and Wilder (2006), and Wright and McCurdy (2012), group contingencies were highly acceptable by teachers in comparison to individual contingencies.

Commitment toward implementation and sustentation challenged staff support. Achieving adequate commitment from instructors was challenging when taking time to establish buy-in and applying systematic support within high schools that, by their very nature, had their own number of challenges (Bohanon, et al, 2006; Bohanon et al., 2009). The structural variables at the high school level may cause a longer time needed before reductions in ODRs were seen. According to research, full implementation of positive behavior support takes years. It typically took elementary and middle schools 3 to 4 years (Sugai, Horner, & McIntosh, 2008). High schools took an estimated 5 to 8 years (Bohanon et al., 2006; Flannery, Sugai, & Anderson, 2009). Unlike academics, in which curriculum-based measurement tools were used, the access to behavioral data was not readily available (Shinn, 2013). High schools had organized systems of data collection for a variety of information such as attendance, tardy, truancy data and credit accrual. Future work with high schools should implement a data collection system that summarizes universal behavioral supports (Shinn, 2013). .

Professional Development

Professional development was chosen to give all staff members the opportunity to learn more about positive interventions for challenging behaviors. Positive behavior supports were not merely for that small number of highly trained specialists, but also direct service staff were trained and coached to do this as well (LaVigna & Willis, 2012). Professionals at the central administration level and instructors in the classroom learned to effectively use PBS through training, regardless of whether it was the first or consecutive years of training. According to Fallon, McCarthy, and Sanetti (2014),

implementation of PBS in the classroom was a challenge; however district leadership consistency with booster trainings targeted the challenges of PBS implementation. Professional development was a process that was evaluated and responsive to staff and student needs.

Some districts found success in refresher trainings for classroom management provided by the district behavior specialist during in-services preceding the start of a new school year. These trainings were offered to all district instructors. However, the trainings were mandatory for teachers who were first year and those servicing high needs students. Like students, adults required repetition for true learning to occur. A common error that occurred with staff development was the mistake of providing staff development in a one-shot method. It was critical to for ongoing evaluations of school wide positive behavior support (Flannery, Sugai, & Anderson, 2009; Lohrmann, Forman, Martin, & Palmieri, 2008). Coaching teachers increased their effectiveness as classroom teachers (DuFour et al., 2008; Ellison & Venison, 2010). When teachers were provided with opportunities to practice what they had gained from professional development, students' achievement increased (DuFour et al., 2009).

Collaboration

Collaboration was an important aspect for teachers to share strategies and interventions that had been successful for students. Successful implementation requires that teachers collaborate and learn new ways of handling discipline and use social skills and teachable moments. In addition, there needed to be more of a paradigm shift from the perception of traditional punishment for behavior (Sugai & Horner, 2013). According

to Snell and Brown (2006) and Westling and Fox (2009), positive behavior support should be taught through systematic instruction.

Whether it was students or adults, learning was a collaborative activity where people create meaning through their interactions with each other. Communication in the educational community was necessary and must receive ongoing support from all levels. Most of this communication was not possible without support from administrators. According to Chitiyo and Wheeler (2009), difficulties of PBS implementation may be due to a lack of administrative support. Consistency and structure surfaced as a theme for this project study. Collaboration was critical to maintain consistency and structure. Allocated time for teachers to collaborate on an innovation was unlikely to occur without an administrator's support or assistance. Another component that helps PBS to be successful in the educational setting was the use of data to discuss the status and goals of their school (Feuerborn & Chinn, 2012). Data helped administrators to make decisions about PBS practices and to make adjustments to the learning and social environment. Too often, the procedural tasks associated with innovation were prioritized and the support from the staff implementing the innovation was underestimated (Adelman & Taylor, 2007; Hall & Hord, 2011).

Collaboration was crucial to effective PBS. According to Bambara, Nonnemacher, and Kern, (2009), it was in the best interest of the instructors and district leadership to understand why these real or perceived barriers to collaboration exist. Collaboration with others allowed students and staff to develop an appreciation of personal and cultural differences. Working with others to accomplish a socially worthy

goal, students were empowered; they learn about citizenship and building a better world (Schreiber & Valle, 2013).

Social Skills Training

Implementing small segments of social skills lessons that were based on the behaviors that teachers had discussed during the professional development trainings allowed students to learn to self-correct and put into practice what they had learned. The relationship component was a reoccurring theme in the qualitative research segment. Teachers understood that their varied backgrounds and experiences shaped the way students understand and interpret situations, which allowed teachers to have those individual discussions and teachable moments to change some of the inappropriate behaviors in the classroom. The instructors harness the energy of students to promote a discussion allowing them to construct and internalize their own meanings of the concepts (Powell & Kalina, 2009). Students brought their own worldviews and social interaction which allowed for multiple perspectives of reality, which led to inappropriate behavior or responses in the classroom. Teachers also had to understand the needs and strengths of their students to develop appropriate instruction that was meaningful (Downing, 2010). Relationship building helped teachers to understand the learning style of students in the classroom which kept students engaged and reduced problem behaviors. According to Holmes (2013), in examining relationships, the constructivism theory suggested that each relationship was different. Data and information generated within that relationship was understood in the context of that particular relationship.

Social interactions were influential on students, which was critical to the project study. Difficult students usually experienced social and academic deficits. They were several years behind their peers. Pull out social skills were taught for students in behavior programs, but for social skills to be effective, good programs were taught across the whole school day, including social correction procedures that correct skills at the time the behavior occurs (Akin-Little et al., 2009). When students transitioned from an elementary school with one teacher and entered middle and high school with six or seven teachers, the adjustment to various teacher expectations resulted in school failure. While this project revealed consistency with consequences and collaboration with students and colleagues, there was no discussion of there being social skills taught in pullout or across curriculum throughout the school day.

Strategies and Interventions

Strategies and interventions emerged from the desire of the instructors to have tools that they can use for the more difficult behaviors in the classroom such as profanity directed toward others, and blatant defiance through work refusal. According to the qualitative data, it was difficult to reinforce positive behaviors as the level of tiers increased because other students feel that students with inappropriate behaviors are being rewarded. The consequences were in place for inappropriate behaviors, student/teacher collaboration increased, but the more intense the behaviors, fewer tools existed for support to re-engage the student. Educators face challenges with difficult students and need practical strategies to improve behaviors that make all students in the classroom feel rewarded. The project helped teachers understand how to access more support from

district personnel in order to implement positive reinforcement to shape behavior. According to Marten and Andreens (2013), a program for Tier 2 students by which students graduate from social intervention when students were consistently reaching daily behavioral goal and the interventions had proven to be successful. The graduation acknowledged the students' accomplishments and was based on the students' success with social interactions and behavior. However, for some students, adult attention outweighed the desire to graduate. However; Tier 3 behaviors required access to professional competencies of school-based clinicians and social workers, often working in partnership with community partners. The school social workers had been an effective mechanism in many of the districts for extension to community partnerships. Also Tier 3 training series for the most intense students was implemented towards the end of the PBS installation stage (Eber, Hyde & Suter, 2011). In regard to special needs students, schools had a history of referring and placing students with severe emotional disturbances and behavioral concerns. Support for these students required ongoing planning, dialogue, and a closely monitored technical assistance (Eber, Hyde & Suter, 2011). Given the challenges facing those who worked with difficult students in the schools, it was essential that educators had available proven and practical strategies to improve student behavior and student learning. Unless we supported PBS, the field of special education hoping for significant and lasting improvements for children with disabilities was nonexistent (Odom, 2009).

Implementation

After the delivery of the PBS professional development as it related to RTI, the teachers will engage in a question/answer session to discuss the PBS process so that the weaknesses can be identified. Then, more support will be given in the areas of concern. Ongoing analysis of data will support administrators and teachers. The follow-up after the training and review of teacher perceptions will be addressed on a regular basis during professional development to assist new teachers with classroom management.

Potential Resources and Existing Supports

Administrators implemented PBS and committed to sending teachers to training each summer. Once most teachers attended the training, they liked the concept and idea of positive behavior support for the students. The uniformity of the campus expectations helps to increase consistency among administrator, staff, and students. The ongoing staff development to align the process will allow teachers to increase in skill and identify the areas that the study could not address, such as how to gain support when more help is necessary for classroom management.

Potential Barriers

Buy-in may be difficult for instructors and staff who were not selected for training and implementing PBS without the fundamentals of why PBS or the process for gaining access to more interventions were necessary. Staff developments are typically developed at the central administration level, so it is critical that those leaders support the ongoing staff development, starting with the 3 day workshop. Logistics are important because staff members who could benefit from the training may not be on contract at that time.

As teachers implement positive behavior support, there will still be the small percentage of students who are consistently removed from class due to behavior concerns. The willingness to continue to implement positive behavior support consistently becomes difficult if teachers and staff members feel that they do not have adequate support. During the interviews, several staff members reported that software made the documentation easier and allowed for meaningful collaboration with colleagues. However, the use of the software and the increased systematic guidelines need to be more streamline to be used as a tool not just a method of documentation. This will allow staff members to develop strategies for student success based on the data.

Proposal for Implementation and Timetable

The formal request for staff development will be shared with the LEA's leadership team following the successful completion of this project study. Training of new instructors and staff members will take place at the beginning of each school year during new teacher orientation. Ongoing training will occur during PLC time for instructors. Training will take place after school in a series of trainings allowing other staff members to take advantage of the training. Data will be collected each six weeks to be a conversation piece to drive the intervention section of the training and determine if students' needs are being met through PBS when the behaviors intensified.

Roles and Responsibilities of Student and Others

I will continue to support the PBS committees through helping to collect data and analyze the evaluations after delivery of the trainings of PBS as well as support administration and instructors with implementation of effective PBS plans for students. I

will also assist with training for instructors. The goal is that the administrators' role will be to work with their campus staff members to ensure that they participate in the professional development based on the campus needs, follow the developed process and implement the suggestions.

Project Evaluation

This project will be evaluated by presenting the outcome to administrators in the local LEA overseeing the implementation of PBS and sharing the staff development designed for all staff members. After the trainings are accepted I will request to assist with the implementation of the systematic process to address the problem areas. Then another process is that I work to support instructors who indicate that they need PBS strategies for students and want to understand how to access more assistance. Collaboration with instructors about the best practices for students in the educational community will continue to be a part of the implementation process. All participants for the staff development will be given an evaluation for the purpose of documenting the outcome of the training and sharing whether the training is beneficial to their needs. Participants will also offer be asked to offer suggestions for improvement.

Implications Including Social Change

Local Community

Developing a staff development training to help staff members understand the PBS process helped new teachers and all school staff understand how to support students in the classroom and in the Non-classroom setting. It also aided new teachers as they learned strategies to handle behaviors within the academic setting. As PBS continued to

be the model for student support, it will impact social change as graduation rates improve and people see productive citizens entering the work force enhancing the overall community.

Far-Reaching

In the larger context, positive behavior supports will improve student behaviors overall according to teachers' perspectives. The next level is to develop best practices across districts, so that collaboration happens beyond the local LEA. The goal of this project study is to provide staff with the tools for positive behavior support in the learning community. Later, it will benefit the learning community to determine if the use of positive behavior support has an impact on academics. If this project leads to an improvement in students' behaviors and academics as well as teachers' use of best practices for students, then it is worthwhile.

Conclusion

The purpose of the project is to streamline the process and show how PBS and RtI are aligned to help students and staff members. The goal is to implement trainings and evaluate staff members. Afterwards the goal is to determine if the process for gaining support is clear, more streamline and improve disciplinary issues within the educational setting

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Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Introduction

As I reflect on this study, I will share my personal growth and development. This section includes a description of the project's strengths and limitations and concludes with how this project study as a whole shaped and developed my growth as a scholar, project developer, educational leader, and practitioner. I conclude the project with implications for social change.

Project Strengths

The project was designed to increase instructors' knowledge about implementation of positive behavior support (PBS). The teachers were hesitant to implement positive behavior support because punishment of students was deeply ingrained into the behavior curriculum. However, through the development of the training, it allowed me to understand if PBS systems were in place to support students in a positive atmosphere as well as shed a light on the more intense levels of behavior support that needed to be revamped in order to offer more aid to students and instructors.

The project helped me in understanding the need for a more streamline process throughout campuses in the district for minor distractions that were easily rectifiable through collaboration with the student rather than an office referral and student removal. The behaviors that were most difficult for teachers in the classroom such as walk-outs and profane language directed toward instructors by the most intense level students will hopefully become a major discussion piece during the 'question/answer' section of the

professional development. This will allow educators to continue to develop an aligned plan of support for students who are the most at-risk.

Recommendations for Remediation of Limitations

In this particular project, I will not specifically address the developed interventions to use in the classroom without the discussion component because the functional behavior assessments will be the driving force for the interventions. If staff members are in need of more tools to work with the students in the classroom, they will not be identified unless they attended trainings or gain a thorough understanding of the process. In order to gain more support with the more intense level behaviors, the collaboration will extend far beyond the 3-day training and needs on-going focus groups allowing teachers to discuss how they desire support with students who have intense behaviors. My recommendation is that staff use cross-vertical training during PLC and afterschool times and attend trainings as a team.

Scholarship

My previous master thesis research was a quantitative design to determine the effectiveness of an afterschool writing project. At that time, I was content with the quantitative design until the end of the project when there was no significant difference. I did not have the qualitative research component to show the difference between the students who wrote for quantity versus the student who wrote using voice. Through this research and project, the triangulation of the quantitative and qualitative data, allowed me to have answers to support the quantitative outcomes of the survey.

Through using the mixed-methods approach as an educator, I developed the training to incorporate systems that addressed the specific weaknesses that may arise during the 'question /answer' section allowing the project itself to be rich with data. I now understand the need for aligned processes prior to developing effective strategies for instructors. Through staff development participation teachers will hopefully appreciate the ability to collaborate with colleagues about what works for the students in the classroom. School-wide consistency was important for the students, but consistency will be important for the district when implementing a new process and measuring the success. I feel that a critical component of positive behavior support is to remain future-focused and survey the students as well as the parents and have periodic focus groups as well. That will make the project richer and more complete because there is training based on outcomes of student and parent feedback. Through this process, I have also learned that I am capable of producing scholarly material which was beneficial as I furthered my career.

Project Development and Evaluation

Throughout this process, I learned that preparation for a project required extensive research, and I gained perspectives from all over the world. While researching behavior, I found research projects that showed behavior as a major concern across educational settings and the utilization of professional development to increase management skills in the classroom. Development of the project took a while to accomplish but it was data driven. Also, it was noteworthy to share that when looking at time constraints while

delivering training, the content had to be reviewed to ensure that it was informative and concise.

Leadership and Change

During this process, I found that leaders who were visionaries promoted change. To promote positive change in staff and students, the leader conveyed to others that the change was necessary and shared with them the benefits of positively impacting students. While conducting research, it was important for teachers to share their perspectives, so the leader designs the staff development and provide support to the staff members while they implemented change. Positive behavior support was not just about the students' behavior, it was about the behavior of the staff members working amongst the students as well. The leader models and facilitates change in the environment and promotes the success of all. As agents of change, the leader has sight of the vision. When the leader remained focused, the staff follows. Those who do not support the vision will eventually move on to other endeavors because the environment will not be conducive for them to remain.

Analysis of Self as Scholar

My goal is to research brain and behavior as a result of this project to support the development of a PBS manual that for staff to understand the behavior in the context of the disability. I have learned to rely on research of various topics. I comb through the research for different perspectives about problems in education. Throughout this research, I have found that there were scholars who I did not identify with because I felt they were presenting information in a certain way to ensure certain views. However,

there were scholars who I identified with as a research scholar because they presented both sides which depicted an interaction between educators, addressing certain views in which I could critically think about as well. When developing a staff development project it was important to have reviewed the positives and negative aspects of the topic because there is no way to determine what may evolve through conversation in the midst of the training. I increased my level of research to support my role as an educator.

Analysis of Self as Practitioner

As a practitioner, I examined the way that I interacted with students and staff members. I evaluated my use of positive behavior support in every aspect of my life. My perception when I started analyzing the quantitative data for the project was to determine how administrators assisted staff members without specific knowledge or feedback of who was having the most problems. As I continued to develop the project, I felt that I grew as a practitioner, realizing that I have the results of the quantitative data, and I have the feedback from the qualitative data. Therefore, I will assist with implementing systematic change in the areas that need the most support. The frustration transformed into a determination to develop a plan of action that will impact change.

Analysis of Self as Project Developer

As a developer, I learned that it was critical to continuously perform analysis before and after a project was completed. I have always supported positive behavior support, but this time I was seeking information and had to be non-biased. When offering training, the approach has to be conducted with objectivity to keep the audience

from feeling excluded. This doctoral study project required me to remove biases of my own.

The Project's Potential Impact on Social Change

This project is important to spark social change in our schools and assess how students are being educated. Using the positive behavior support strategies and RtI model with consistency, teachers will have the necessary skills to engage students in the classroom and deliver instruction to all students. The districtwide relationship built through positive behavior support and ongoing systematic professional development creates an environment where the district has a set of norms and expectations. Parents have consistent expectations throughout the district regardless of which school their children attend. The educational community will have a shared learning experience and hopefully, this project will serve that purpose.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

The EBS instrument is likely to possess utility across a broader spectrum of settings, in attempts to gauge the perspectives of instructors, The instrument hold the potential of providing schools with the advantage of knowing whether the implementation of PBS strengthens the educational setting and improve students behavior and academics. Perhaps the staff development and collaboration of colleagues during PLCs will change students and staff relationships and student behavior for the better. The consistency will hopefully possess the potential to improve staff members approach to discipline in the classroom and student academics.

According to the literature, positive behavior supports has been practiced throughout several districts in the United States. The literature has many examples of where implementation has succeeded and other examples of where implementation has not been successful particularly at the high school level due to consistency with implementation. The PBIS website has several studies that document the use of PBS as the best practice for reducing behavior concerns and increasing instruction in the classroom.

The project was important to share what needs to be done differently in education and to determine if the change was effective. In the future, the educational environment will hopefully continue to evolve into a positive learning environment. Future research would be to determine how students feel about positive behavior support and if academics were improving due to its implementation and use. Additional mixed-method studies on the perspective of PBS in school districts would be one avenue of additional research. It would be beneficial to conduct a project evaluation to determine if the successes and barriers to implementation were consistent and how other districts handled the challenges that they faced.

Conclusion

Many students were removed from class due to behaviors, which led to a decrease in graduation rate. PBS was implemented at the local site to address the issue. A mixed method study allowed teachers to share their perspective, which led to the development of a staff development project to assist instructors with the implementation of PBS through the RTI process. The purpose of this project was to provide staff development

and a system of aligned processes based on the research study. The goal of the training was to streamline the process of accessing more support and tackling the issues that teachers faced during continuous implementation of PBS. It is my hope that teachers continually embrace positive behavior support and implement the guidelines and the strategies with consistency. This study has the potential to impact social change as best practices to provide staff with the tools for positive behavior support in the learning community and ultimately produce productive citizens in society.

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Appendix A: The Project

The project was three days of training delivered to teachers within the LEA where the project study took place.

Audience: The target audience was the secondary teachers, new teachers, staff members instructed and those who service students in the instructional or guidance capacity.

Goal: As learning outcomes the goal for the training was that staff members gained a thorough understanding of PBS as it relates to RTI.

- The learner will develop a vision for the PBS within the school district.
- The learner will increase awareness of the characteristics of PBS as it relates to RTI.
- The learner will understand the districts systematic method of communicating PBS.
- The learner will be equipped with the skills needed to support students.
- The learner will understand the necessity of ongoing professional development.
- The learner will k the know importance of RTI consistency and collaboration.
- The learner will gain knowledge of the use of student support teams.

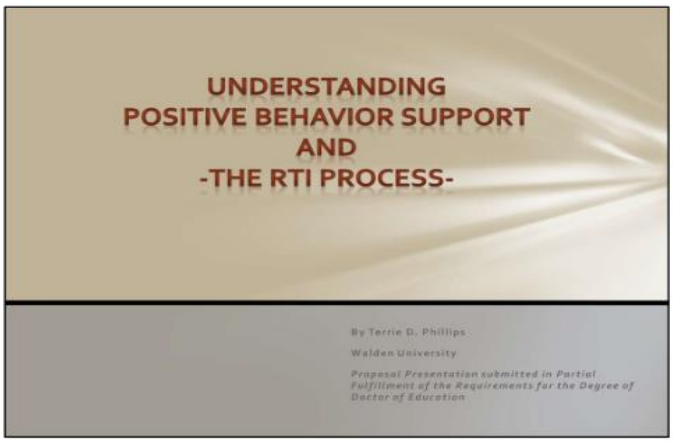
Purpose: Throughout the training sessions, teachers were given time to discuss the content presented and how understanding the Tiers and district systematic processes benefited them as educators. Teachers were grouped by campuses and grade levels for collaborative thinking and then shared in whole group discussions. The leaders completed

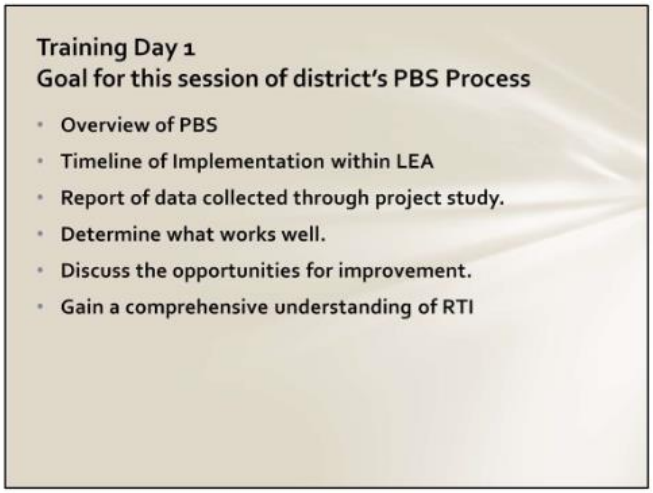
an evaluation of the session at the end where they requested additional support for their training sessions. The sessions were delivered through a PowerPoint presentation.

Evaluation: The evaluation for the staff development was found in appendix G.

Positive Behavior Support Systematic Process Training

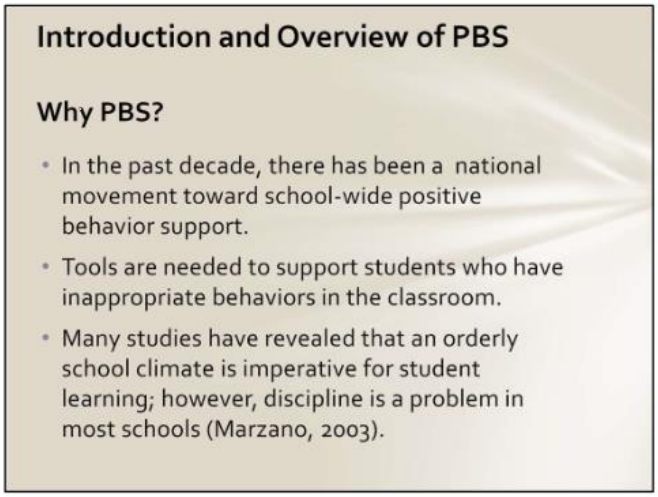
Time	Training Day 1	Training Day 2	Training Day 3
8:00 - 9:00	Introduction and Overview of PBS	RtI Tier 1 and 2: Schoolwide and Classroom Support	Increasing Student Support Teams
9:00 10:00	Timeline of Implementation of PBS within LEA	RtI Tier 3: Individual Student Support	Accessing Assistance and Recommendations
10:00 - 10:15	Break	Break	Break
10:15 - 11:00	Report of data collected through project study	Importance of Consistency and Collaboration with PBS	Identifying Chronic Behavior and response time.
11:00 - 12:00	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12:00 - 1:00	What's working in the LEA	Tackling the tough issues of PBS	Understanding and monitoring the plan.
1:00 - 2:00	Where are the opportunities for improvement?	Motivating each other to continue implementation	Sharing the feedback
2:00 - 3:00	RtI as it relates to PBS	Rewards exist for meeting expected student behaviors	Reducing the tiers


UNDERSTANDING
POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT
AND
-THE RTI PROCESS-
By Terrie D. Phillips
Walden University
Proposal Presentation submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education



Greetings to you

The purpose of this training is to provide and understanding of positive behavior support and how it is connected to the RTI process. Today, there will be an overview of PBS, the timeline for implementation with report of data collected, determine what works well, discuss the opportunities for improvement. We'll also gain a comprehensive understanding of how in the past decade there was a movement toward schoolwide positive behavior support because the current practices were not working under the special-education.



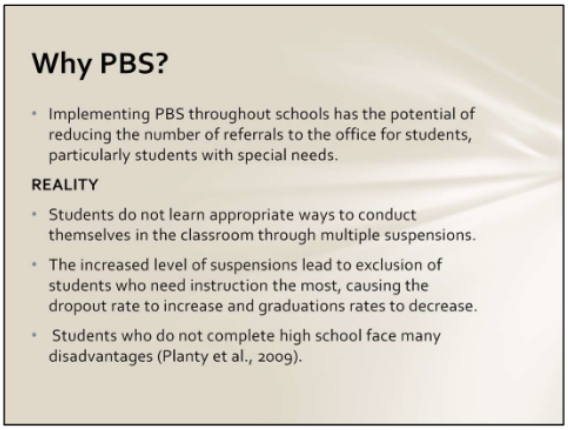
In the past decade OSEP the office of special education programs out of Washington DC is determined that what was happening in education was not working to reach the needs of all of the students and therefore they implemented positive behavior intervention support (PBIS). So with the use of positive behavior support it eas determined that teachers need tools so that they can support students in the classroom who exhibit inappropriate behaviors and that's what this training is about.

Many studies have revealed, it is imperative for student learning to have classroom management. When discipline is a problem, how are instructors supported? Support is given through sharing and staff development and collaboration and with colleagues on best practices. Also, the information that is shared is research-based.

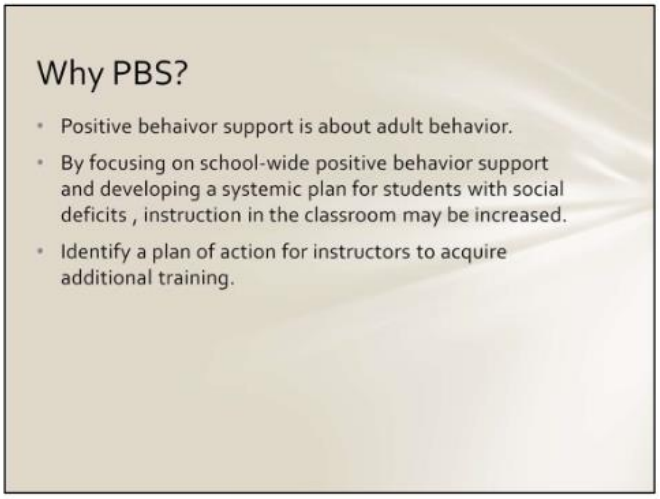
Introduction and Overview of PBS

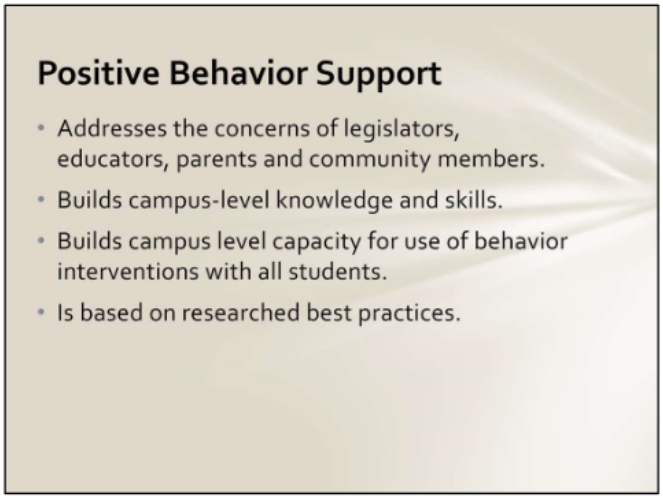
Why PBS?

- Response to discipline and inappropriate behaviors is not suspensions and exclusionary programs which negatively impacts achievement (Surgai and Horner, 2008).
- Students who frequented the exclusionary discipline method were more likely to be negatively impacted through being held back, dropping out or becoming involved with juvenile justice system.



Again, here's the reality, implementing PBS, which is positive behavior support throughout the school has the potential of reducing the number of trips to the office particularly for students with special needs as they have the highest number of referrals and they are not learning what they need to know to be productive citizens in society through multiple suspensions. Increased suspensions, increases the dropout rate and students who do not complete high school face many disadvantages and challenges out in society. So educators always want to make sure that students complete high school and then help them with post secondary education: colleges, universities, technical or trade schools. Educators are charged with helping them learn to be productive members of society

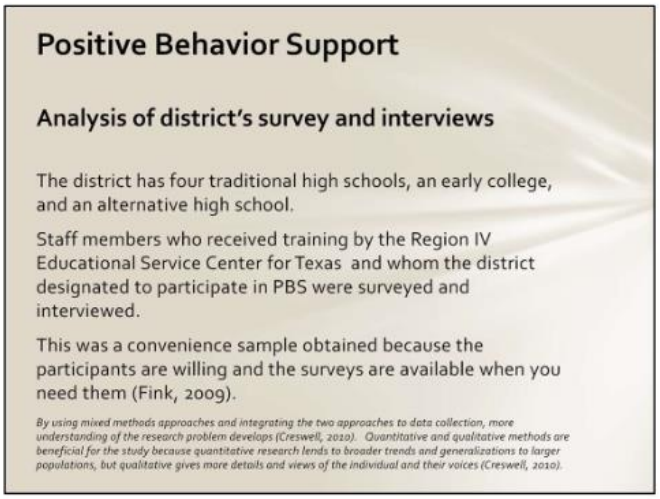

Why PBS?
• Positive behaivor support is about adult behavior.
• By focusing on school-wide positive behavior support and developing a systemic plan for students with social deficits , instruction in the classroom may be increased.
• Identify a plan of action for instructors to acquire additional training.

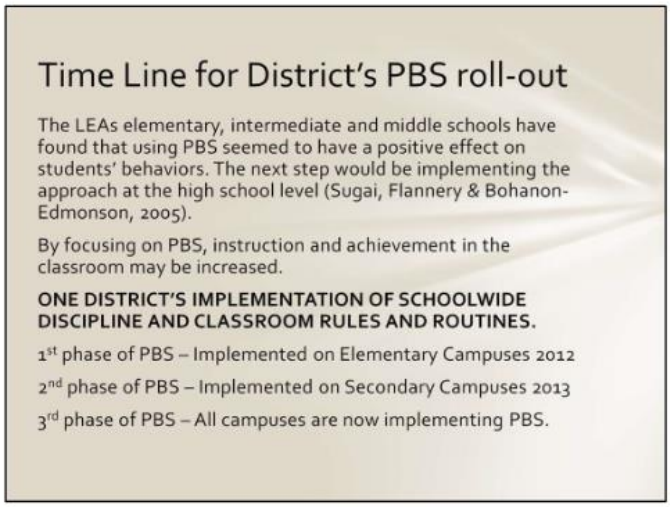


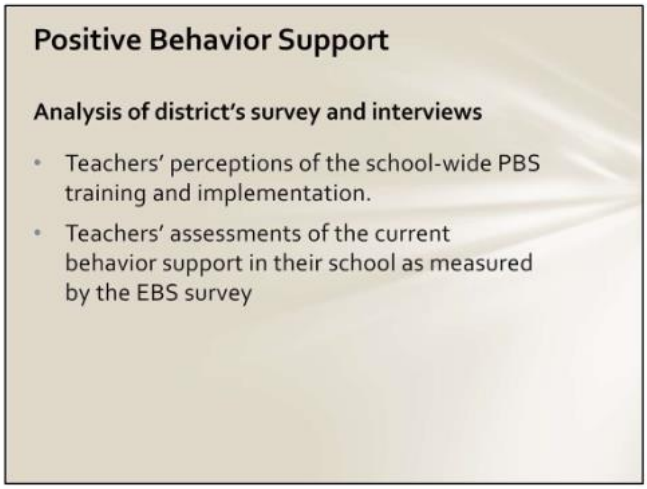
So what happens at the national level? Changes must be made because children were dropping out of school being incarcerated and were overall having negative school experience. According to PBS, children need positive school experiences.

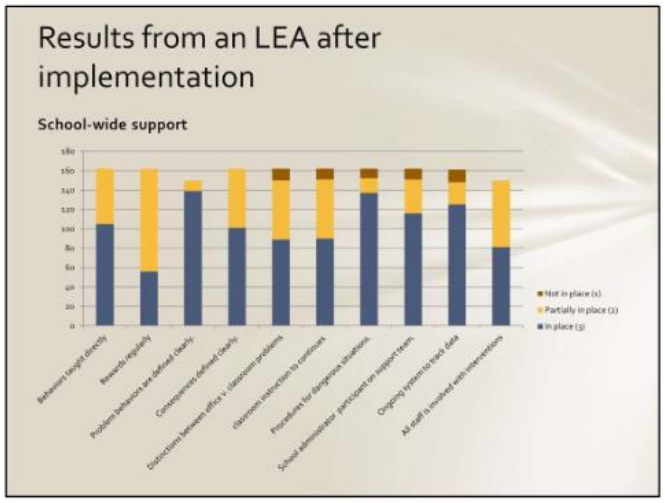
In order to address the concerns of legislative, educators, parents and community members, positive behavior support was implemented and in doing so campus level knowledge and skills are built through training and capacity among colleagues to share interventions with all students increase.

Staff members share through the collaboration component that is research-based practices. Educators and leaders find out what works in other districts and other schools and other places that have used techniques that are tried-and-true Then, develop them to fit the campus and into the norms for what works.

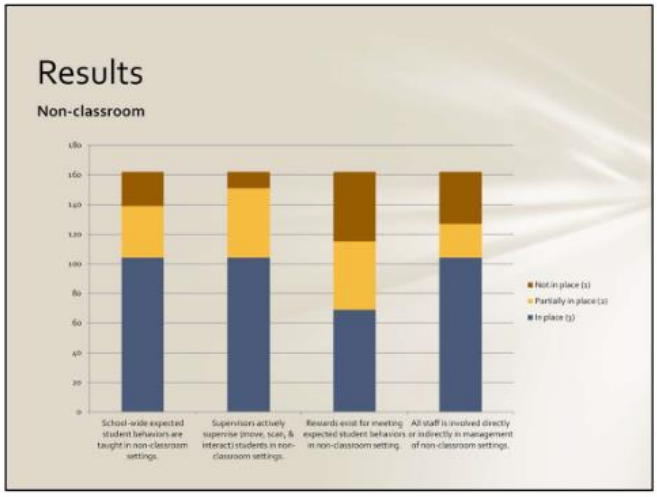

Positive Behavior Support
Analysis of district's survey and interviews
The district has four traditional high schools, an early college, and an alternative high school.
Staff members who received training by the Region IV Educational Service Center for Texas and whom the district designated to participate in PBS were surveyed and interviewed.
This was a convenience sample obtained because the participants are willing and the surveys are available when you need them (Fink, 2009).
By using mixed methods approaches and integrating the two approaches to data collection, more understanding of the research problem develops (Creswell, 2010). Quantitative and qualitative methods are beneficial for the study because quantitative research lends to broader trends and generalizations to larger populations, but qualitative gives more details and views of the individual and their voices (Creswell, 2010).


Time Line for District's PBS roll-out
The LEAs elementary, intermediate and middle schools have found that using PBS seemed to have a positive effect on students' behaviors. The next step would be implementing the approach at the high school level (Sugai, Flannery & Bohanon-Edmonson, 2005).
By focusing on PBS, instruction and achievement in the classroom may be increased.
ONE DISTRICT'S IMPLEMENTATION OF SCHOOLWIDE DISCIPLINE AND CLASSROOM RULES AND ROUTINES.
1st phase of PBS – Implemented on Elementary Campuses 2012
2nd phase of PBS – Implemented on Secondary Campuses 2013
3rd phase of PBS – All campuses are now implementing PBS.

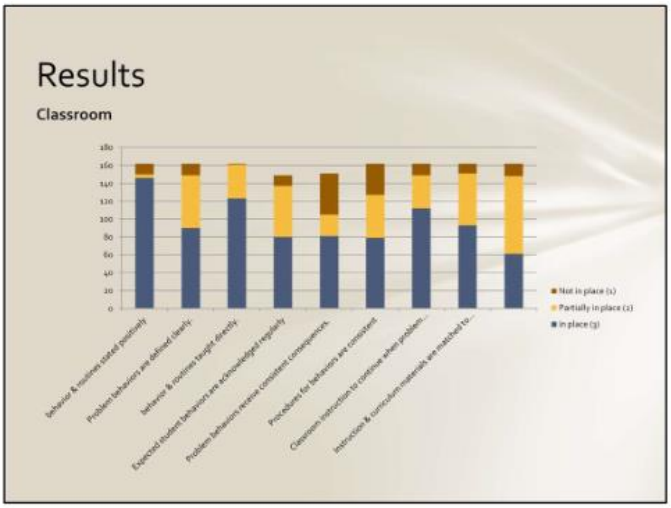

Positive Behavior Support
Analysis of district's survey and interviews
• Teachers' perceptions of the school-wide PBS training and implementation.
• Teachers' assessments of the current behavior support in their school as measured by the EBS survey



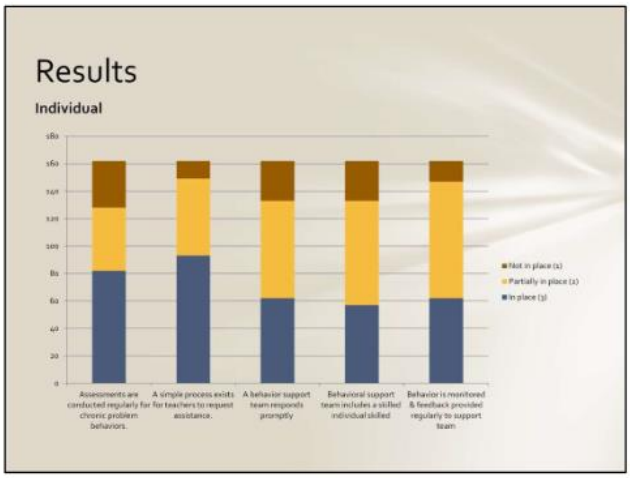
Tell me what you see at the school-wide level.



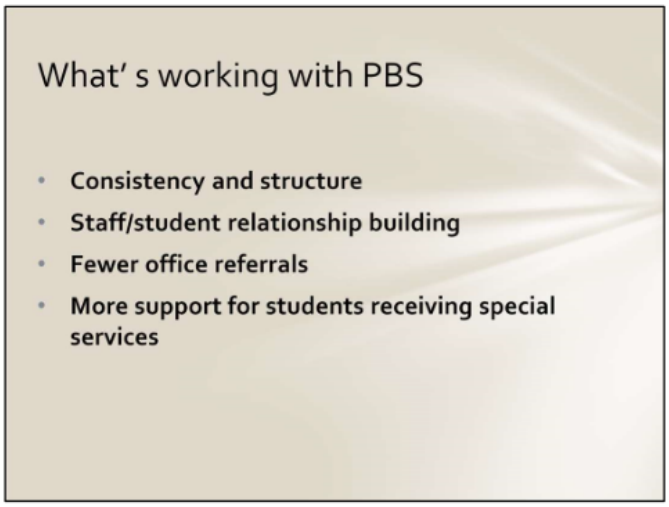
Someone tell me what you see at the non-classroom level.



Someone tell me what you see at the classroom level.



Someone tell me what you see at the individual level.



Here's what the study revealed through qualitative data.

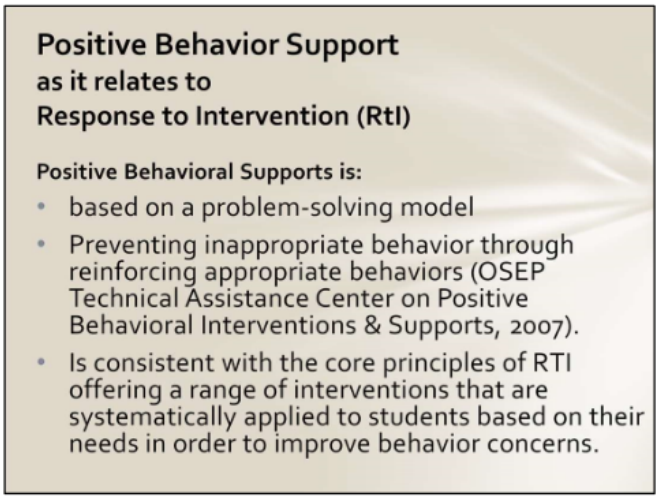
The schoolwide expectations were consistently implemented by all faculty members. Student discipline and expectations were reviewed at the beginning of the year and reviewed during PLC times. If there was a system that had been unsuccessful, the staff used that time to make improvements to the process.

The staff members agreed that they developed the technique of talking with students about why behaviors were occurring in the classroom and allowed students to express why they chose to behave inappropriately. Many staff members mention that negotiation occurred with the student when they had a discussion about behaviors.

Staff members reported that fewer students were sent home for infractions in the classroom. Student behaviors were entered into a student discipline database as classroom behavior for documentation and writing plans but not as office referrals for minor classroom infractions.

Staff members reported that students receiving special services, who are in the general education classes, are remaining in the classroom with plans developed to help them be successful rather than being sent to the office.

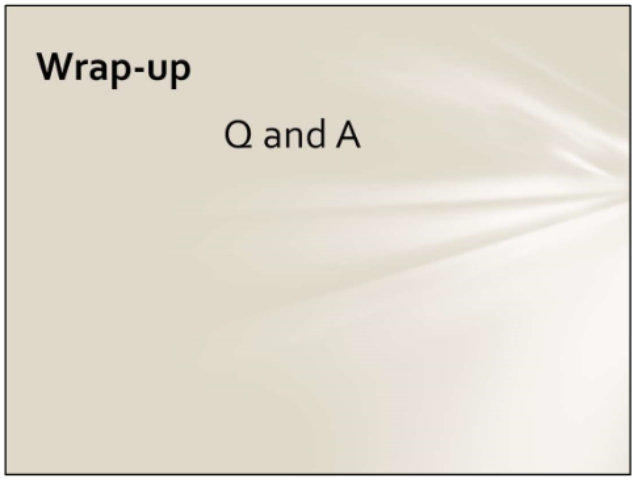

Where are the opportunities for improvement with PBS?
Consistent Ongoing Professional Development
Increase Collaboration amongst campus staff and district personnel
Effective Social Skills Training and Alignment
More Strategies and Interventions as behaviors increase



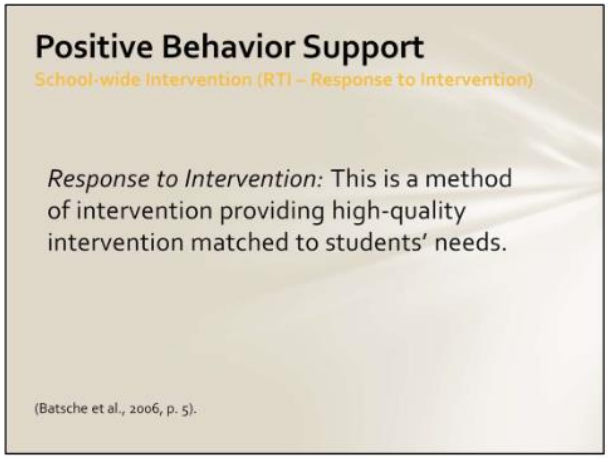
So what is positive behavior support as it relates to response to intervention or RTI?

Positive behavior support is based on problem-solving model and reducing inappropriate behavior through reinforcing appropriate behaviors. It is consistent with the core principles of RTI offering a range of interventions that are systematically applied to students based on their needs in order to improve behavior concerns.

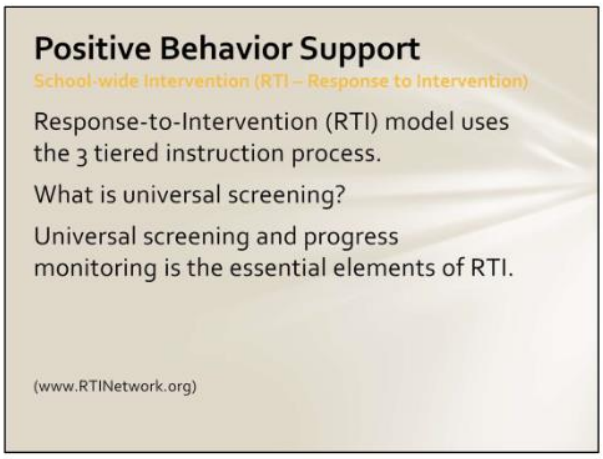
So how are the two into intertwine? Positive behavior supports look at promoting and rewarding success of students in order to achieve goals. It's about goal setting and it's a problem-solving model which ties into RTI. Each time the problem occurs a way is found to solve it through developing an intervention. There are 3 tiers.



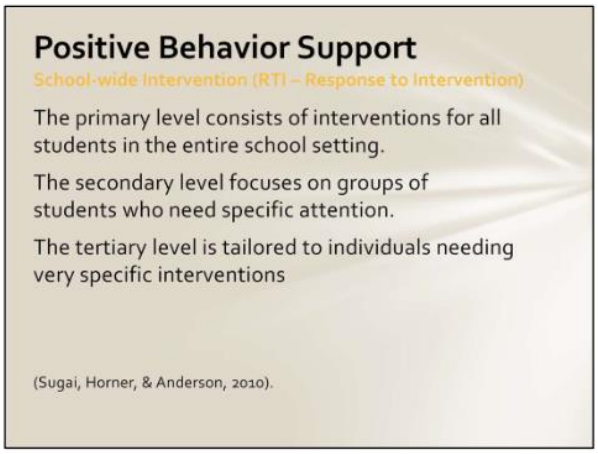
Are there any questions? If not let's address the questions posted on the parking lot. (After the questions are answered, all of those who participated in the discussion or posted a question on the parking lot, will received a small prize for participation).



So response to intervention is the method of intervention designed to provide early assistance to low performing students. Now with RTI it is a process of providing highly qualified interventions that match the student needs and then use the data to make important educational decisions. For example, when a student is performing poorly academically, academic RtI is implemented Well, likewise when it is found that a student is behaving poorly which is a directly to their academic performance, then implement behavior RtI. Functional behavior assessment are developed to help the student be successful in the classroom and then the student is tracked and use the data so to make decisions. It's not just the collection of data that makes the difference. Data is not merely used to determine how many times the child has acted out in the classroom and to record how many times this behavior has occurred without an intervention. The plan has to be tweaked or an new intervention developed Then, different plan is made to help the child be successful which can take anywhere from 4 to 6 weeks to implement and determine if a positive change in behavior has occurred.



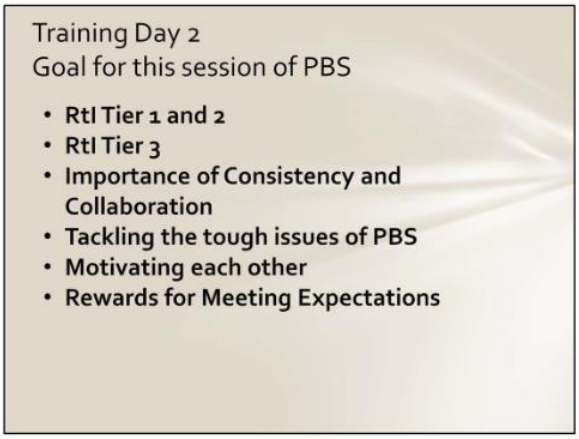
Response to intervention uses the three tiered instruction process and response to intervention also use what is called universal screening what what is that universal screening and progress monitoring is the essential elements of RTI. the tiered instruction is a model in which instruction Varies on several dimensions that are related to the severity of the students difficulties.
As the behaviors increase, the tiers increase.

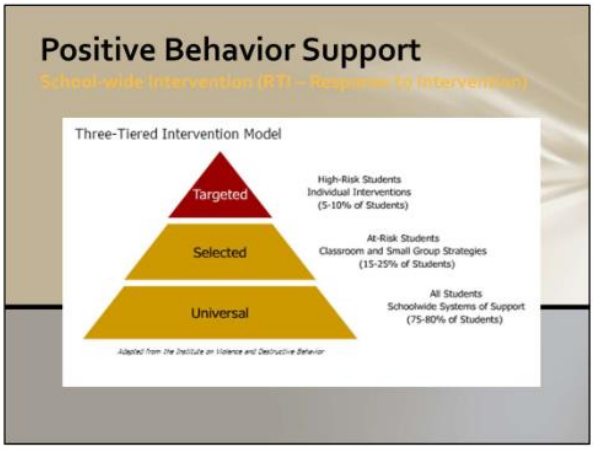


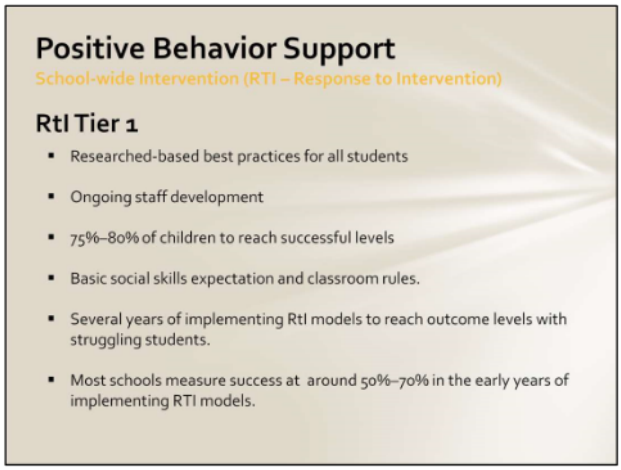
The primary level consists of behavior preventions and interventions for all students in the entire school setting. The efforts are school-wide.

The secondary level focuses on groups of students who need specific attention.

The tertiary level is tailored to individuals needing very specific interventions, which usually requires a functional behavior assessment and behavior intervention plan


Training Day 2
Goal for this session of PBS
• RtI Tier 1 and 2
• RtI Tier 3
• Importance of Consistency and Collaboration
• Tackling the tough issues of PBS
• Motivating each other
• Rewards for Meeting Expectations

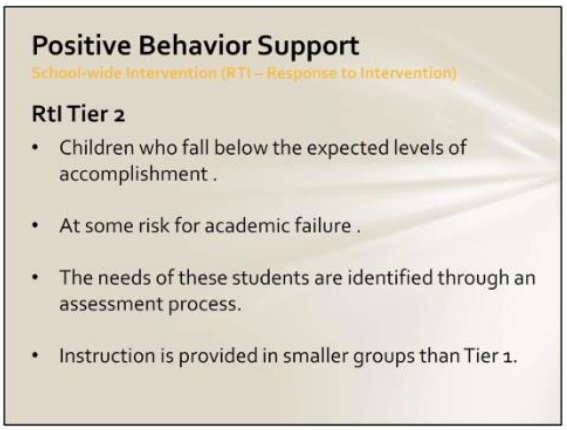

Positive Behavior Support
School-wide Intervention (RTI – Response to Intervention)
Three-Tiered Intervention Model
Targeted
Selected
Universal
High-Risk Students
Individual Interventions
(5-10% of Students)
At-Risk Students
Classroom and Small Group Strategies
(15-25% of Students)
All Students
Schoolwide Systems of Support
(75-80% of Students)
Adapted from the Institute on Violence and Destructive Behavior



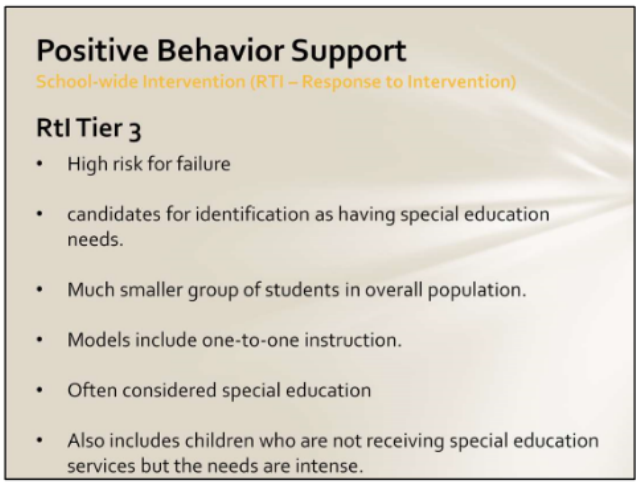
At the RtI Tier 1 level, schoolwide best practices are implemented by all staff members for all children. Ongoing staff development is implemented to help refine the RtI process and implement with fidelity.

The goal is to help the majority of students in the school. As you look at the percentage of children who should reach the successful level. Social skills are taught in every classroom The rules are consistent and reinforced by all instructors.

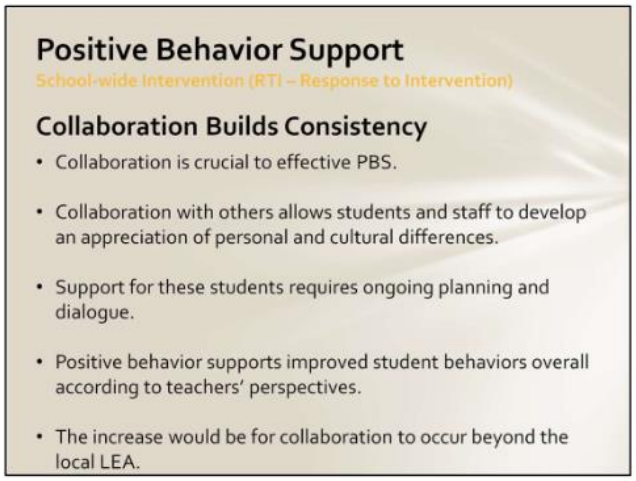
And although RtI can be implemented in a school year, to be successful, professional development is necessary to allow for collaboration. Overtime, research says that improvements in behavior for struggling students will occur due to the consistency of practicing positive behavior support and having an effectively designed RtI model that allows early intervention to keep students on track.



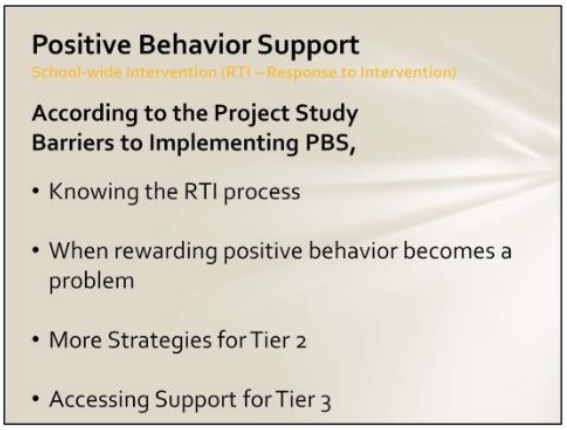
At the RtI Tier 2 level, students have fallen below the expected levels of accomplishment and are at risk for failure. Needs are identified through the assessment process and programs are developed to focus on their needs. At this point periodic counseling or being a part of mentoring type programs are used to support the students. They may be in a form of pullout to give them guidance and more social skills.



Tier 3 consists of children who are considered to be at high risk for failure and, if not responsive, are considered to be candidates for identification as having special education needs. The groups of students at Tier 3 are of much smaller sizes, ranging from 3 to 5 children, with some models using one-to-one instruction. In such models where one-to-one instruction is used, Tier 3 is usually considered special education; however, in many models it is viewed as a tier that includes children who are not identified as being in need of special education but whose needs are at the intensive level.



Collaboration is crucial to effective PBS. it is important to district leadership to understand why barriers exist with implementation or fidelity to the program. Students are empowered to make right choices and support for these students requires planning and dialogue.

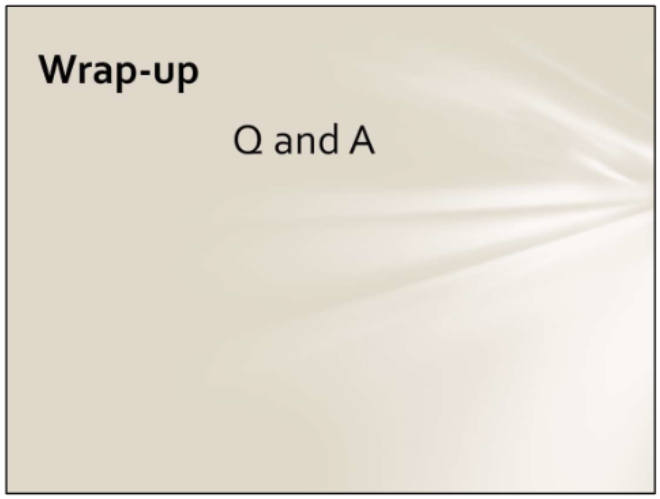


In order to understand the implementation of PBS, it's important to understand the RTI process as it relates to students. It's important to know the levels of each student and whether they are Tier 1,2 or 3.

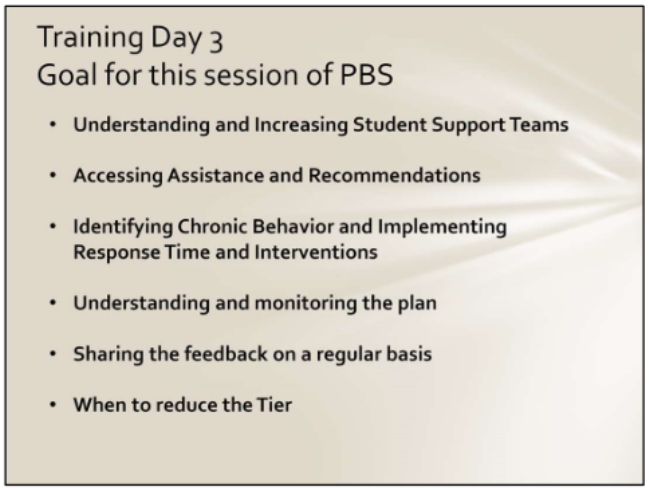
It is also important to understand how rewarding students in order to increase positive behavior with students who have concerns, has to be counter-balanced with rewards for students who chose to behavior appropriately all alone.

Strategies for Tier 2 requires looking at the various behaviors that you are targeting, classifying the students and designing programs, etc. to ensure that they meet the needs. This requires support for the staff members who are skilled in designing support programs.

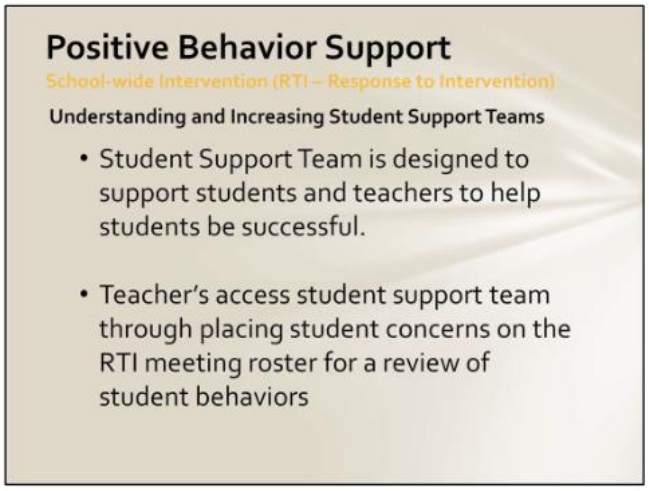
Accessing support for Tier 3 requires a sound progression process which increase in staff expertise.



Let's talk about the training and get questions answered before leaving today. (After the questions are answered, all of those who participated in the discussion will received a small prize for participation).



- Greetings,
- We've completed day one and two of training. The goal of day one was to review PBS as the segue to the RTI process. Day 2 was to look at RTI and some of the barriers to implementing PBS as well as barriers with the RTI process.
- Now on day three, which is the wrap-up day, hopefully you will understand:
- How to access assistance, identify chronic behavior and implement a response time, monitoring the plan, how to develop time lines to share feedback on a regular basis, and when to reduce the tiers.

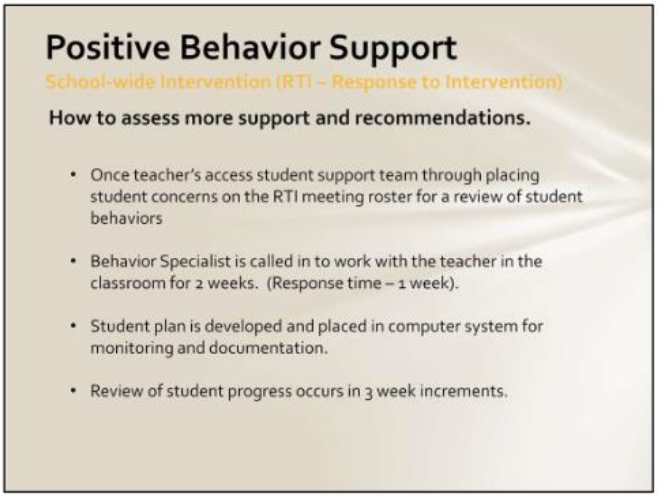


It's important to note that you are not alone in your strive for student achievement. The student support team is designed to help support students and teachers. For example, when you have a difficult situation with a classroom management, the teacher can go to RTI and request support from a mentor, veteran staff member or district staff for guidance on how to get the students to respect the learning aspect of the classroom.

The support staff will come in and observe the class that is considered to be a challenge, analyze what is happening and offer support. Perhaps there needs to be a classroom incentive for all students, maybe pair off in teams and make learning a game of competition in which they all win at some point. And if support staff is struggling during assembly or in the cafeteria with student management, a member of the team can do an observation and determine how to support the staff members in the less structured areas.

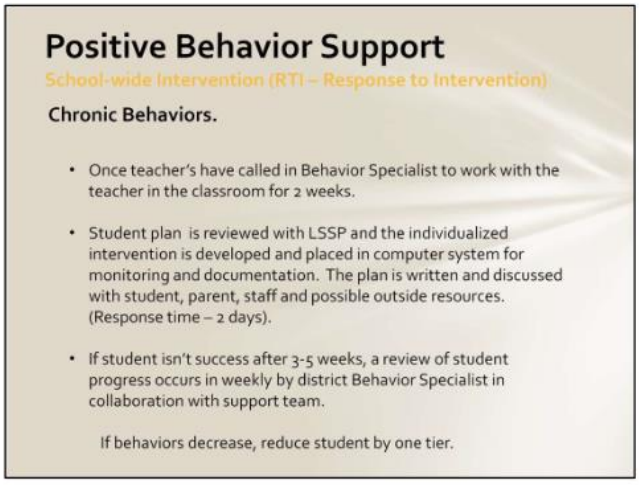
Then, if there are struggles with just a few of the students in the classroom but the majority of the students are doing well. Perhaps these students can be part of the Tier 2 intervention. For example, the teacher or support staff would sign up for a review by the RTI team members and become an ad hoc member to get support with those few students who are a challenge. Once those teachers signed up for support, the team begin categorizing the kids and developing a plan for those students outside of the classroom in a smaller group setting that can help them to generalize and be successful in the larger group setting, knowing what they will gain as an incentive for engaging appropriately in the classroom and making the right choices. Of course the member would support the concerns with sound documentation to support the claim.

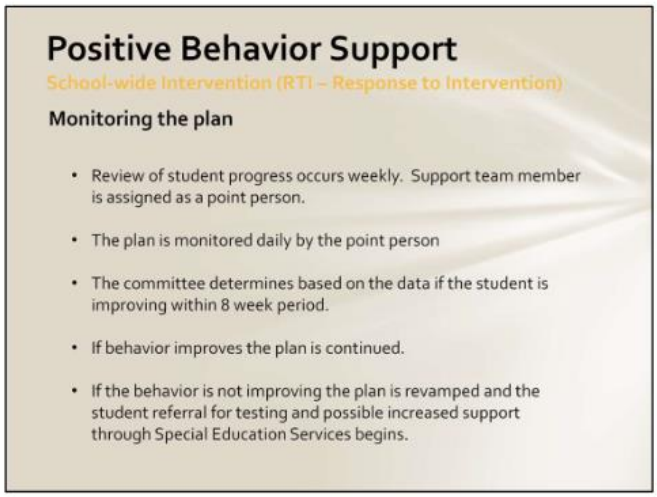
Finally, if there is a student in the classroom that just cannot get on board after having an intervention at the Tier 2 level with their peers, the staff member remains an ad hoc member of the RTI committee with the request for a more individualized intervention plan for this student. At this point, behavior specialist and LSSP's are involved in developing the plan and giving support to the staff member and student if necessary.



Here's the time line.

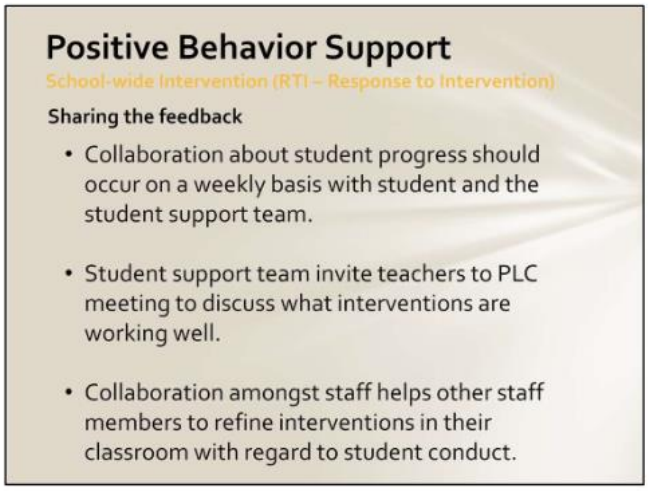
- Once teacher's access student support team through RTI meeting for a review of student behaviors, the behavior specialist is called in to work with the teacher in the classroom for 2 weeks and conduct a functional behavior assessment, gather information and develop a plan for the student who has reached the 3rd tier. (Response time – 1 week). The student plan is developed and placed in computer system for monitoring and documentation. Staff members will track the student and tweak the plan if it is found that the logistics aren't working out. The plan will be implemented and reviewed in 3 week increments. Three week increments are logistically beneficial because the district is on a 6 weeks grading period. Three weeks would lead to progress report and review or progress or a grading period.


Positive Behavior Support
School-wide Intervention (RTI – Response to Intervention)
Chronic Behaviors.
• Once teacher's have called in Behavior Specialist to work with the teacher in the classroom for 2 weeks.
• Student plan is reviewed with LSSP and the individualized intervention is developed and placed in computer system for monitoring and documentation. The plan is written and discussed with student, parent, staff and possible outside resources. (Response time – 2 days).
• If student isn't success after 3-5 weeks, a review of student progress occurs in weekly by district Behavior Specialist in collaboration with support team.
If behaviors decrease, reduce student by one tier.



Once the teachers have called in the specialist to work in the classroom and the plan has been developed, it's discussed with the student, staff members who teach the student and parents, so that the support for the plan can be reinforced at home. Once the plan has been developed, it is important to note that the response time for sharing the plan needs to be completed within two days.

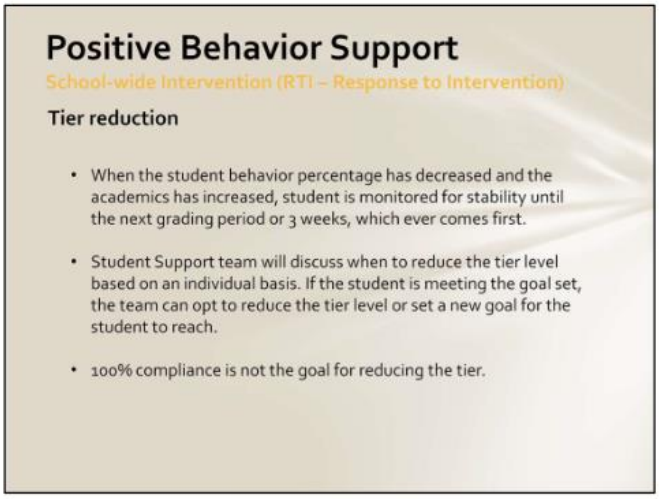
Now when the plan has been implemented and reviewed on 3 week basis if the scores remain the same or decrease the district specialist support and team collaboration increase and continue support Beyond, 5- 9 weeks support, the team will determine if there is more going on with the student and if a psychologist need consent to initiate a more intense level functional behavior assessment. If the student score has increased, the team determines when the student will be moved to a lower tier and introduced to the Tier 2 categorized groups for interventions. The first plan is not abandoned but re-developed and less intense. In other words, rather than fixed ratio reinforcement, the student my receive intermittent reinforcement within the group setting.



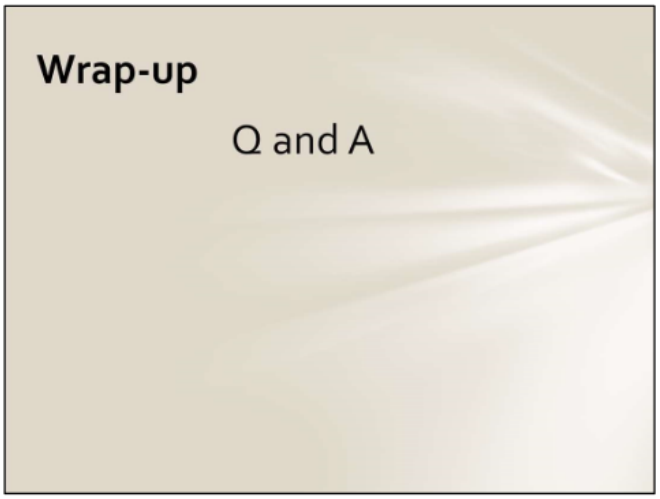
Here's the collaboration component that make the difference.

- Collaboration about student progress should occur on a weekly basis with student and the student support team.
- Student support team invite teachers to PLC meeting to discuss what interventions are working well.
- Collaboration amongst staff helps other staff members to refine interventions in their classroom with regard to student conduct.

This is the time to discuss everything that is working and what has been unsuccessful. This is also the time to discuss why some concepts worked out well and why others did not. The only way to make the PBS system consistent and the RTI process stronger is to assess what is making the difference.



- When the student behavior percentage has decreased and the academics has increased, student is monitored for stability until the next grading period or 3 weeks, which ever comes first. It is critical to note that in addition to seeing the behavior decrease, there should attention given to whethere there is an increase in academics. Once that student has fallen upon the radar, that student will need consistent monitoring for increased stability. Then, slowly decrease in the level of support. Student Support team will discuss when to reduce the tier level based on an individual basis. If the student is meeting the goal set, the team can opt to reduce the tier level or set a new goal for the student to reach. The monitoring system gives a daily percentage for the student's behavior based on the plan. Many staff members look at 70% as passing and 100% as mastery, but this is based on the individual. It is not in the best interest of the student to set the numbers concretely at a number that the student many not achieve in one school year. The goals is to see success in the student, but there has to be a collaboration with the support team. 100% compliance is not the goal for reducing the tier.



Let's talk about the training and get your questions answered before leaving today. (After the questions are answered, all of those who participated in the discussion will received a small prize for participation). Please fill out the evaluation prior to leaving today. Your feedback is invaluable.

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Appendix B: PBIS Instrument Use Approval Letter

DATE: June 20, 2013

Terrie D. Phillips

RE: Permission to use information from www.pbis.org for educational citations:
This letter gives permission to use the following images for the purposes of dissertation, review of literature, professional development, or other related non-profit endeavors:

- PBIS Triangle or Pyramid- Continuum of Services for School-Wide PBS
- PBIS Circles- 4 PBS Elements
- Flow Chart for Leadership Team (State and District)
- Implementation Levels
- School-wide Systems Circles
- General Implementation Process Flow-Chart
- Behavior Support Elements
- Sustainable Implementation & Durable Results Through Continuous Regeneration

Caveats for using the above images are as follows:

- For research, academic, and professional development purposes
- Not to be used for profit, monetary gain, or other activities that might represent conflict of interest

Not to be altered or given authorship to anyone other than indicated original authors. If authorship not stated specifically, credit and source should be cited as the "OSEP Technical Assistance Center for Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support."
For clarifications, questions, or additional information, please contact Project Directors
Rob Horner,

Sincerely,
Dr. Rob Horner and Dr. George Sugai
Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports
1235 University of Oregon
Eugene, Oregon 97403-1235
Co-Directors of the Technical Assistance Center for Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

Appendix C: Effective Behavior Support (EBS) Survey

Effective Behavior Support (EBS) Survey
Assessing and Planning Behavior Support in Schools

Name of school _____ Date _____
District _____ State _____

Person Completing the Survey:

· Administrator · Special Educator · Parent/Family member
· General Educator · Counselor · School Psychologist
· Educational/Teacher Assistant · Community member · Other _____

1. Complete the survey independently.
2. Schedule 20-30 minutes to complete the survey.
3. Base your rating on your individual experiences in the school. If you do not work in classrooms, answer questions that are applicable to you.

   To assess behavior support, first evaluate the status of each system feature (i.e. *in place, partially in place, not in place*) (left hand side of survey). Next, examine each feature:

   a. "What is the current status of this feature (i.e. *in place, partially in place, not in place*)?"

   b. For those features rated as partially in place or not in place, "What is the priority for improvement for this feature (i.e., *high, medium, low*)?"

4. Return your completed survey to _____ by _____ .

SCHOOL-WIDE SYSTEMS

Current Status			Feature	Priority for Improvement		
In Place	Partial in Place	Not in Place	**School-wide** is defined as involving all students, all staff & all settings.	High	Med	Low
			1. A small number (e.g. 3-5) of positively & clearly stated student expectations or rules are defined.			
			2. Expected student behaviors are taught directly.			
			3. Expected student behaviors are rewarded regularly.			
			4. Problem behaviors (failure to meet expected student behaviors) are defined clearly.			
			5. Consequences for problem behaviors are defined clearly.			
			6. Distinctions between office v. classroom managed problem behaviors are clear.			
			7. Options exist to allow classroom instruction to continue when problem behavior occurs.			
			8.Procedures are in place to address emergency/dangerous situations.			
			9. A team exists for behavior support planning & problem solving.			
			10. School administrator is an active participant on the behavior support team.			
			11. Data on problem behavior patterns are collected and summarized within an on-going system.			
			12. Patterns of student problem behavior are reported to teams and faculty for active decision-making on a regular basis (e.g. monthly).			
			13. School has formal strategies for informing families about expected student behaviors at school.			
			14. Booster training activities for students are developed, modified, & conducted			

Current Status			Feature	Priority for Improvement		
In Place	Partial in Place	Not in Place	**School-wide** is defined as involving all students, all staff & all settings.	High	Med	Low
			based on school data.			
			15. School-wide behavior support team has a budget for (a) teaching students, (b) on-going rewards, and (c) annual staff planning.			
			16. All staff are involved directly and/or indirectly in school-wide interventions.			
			17. The school team has access to on-going training and support from district personnel.			
			18. The school is required by the district to report on the social climate, discipline level or student behavior at least annually.			

Name of School _____ Date _____

NONCLASSROOM SETTING SYSTEMS

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

Name of School _____ Date _____

CLASSROOM SYSTEMS

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

Name of School _____ Date _____

INDIVIDUAL STUDENT SYSTEMS

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

Name of School _____Date _____

Please write your name and campus if you would like to be contacted for a personal

interview_____.

Appendix D: PBIS Personal Interview Questionnaire

1. Briefly describe what the PBS program is…
2. How has the PBS training impacted student behaviors in your classroom?
3. In your opinion is it working? Why or why not?
4. What influence has PBS had on staff member's behaviors?
5. What impact has PBS has had on students' behaviors?
6. What impact has PBS had on student referrals in your class?
7. In what ways, have PBS changed special education student referrals in your class?
8. Since the implementation of PBS, how do you feel about staff and student relationships in the classroom?
9. What changes have occurred in school climate since the implementation of PBS?
10. What additional feedback could you offer to improve PBS at your campus?
11. What do you feel is still needed for student behavior in the classroom?

Appendix E: Codes and Themes Determined for Research Question 1

Participant	Consistency	Student - Staff relationships	Fewer OSS placements	Support for students in special services
1.	We collaborate all the time during team	Once I found out how some of them learn, I designed my lesson plans in groups of different learning styles. I had to get to know them first.	I haven't sent any students to the office because you know we have classroom referral first and then come up with a plan.	We started coming up with plans and talking to the behavior specialist about how to keep them in the classroom
2.	For the most part, all of other kids follow the rules, we're in the hallways and even in the classroom, our team uses the same rules	I started talking to some of my students after class about their behavior in my classroom. I had to find out why they felt like they had to show out. Then I looked at scores to see if math was a struggle for them.	I remember last year, all the kids were being sent home, but now we're trying other things.	Our school has consistent rules from classroom to classroom, so our kids in special education know the expectations. It's way better now because we are consistent.
3.		We have a 5 minute share time so that we can get to know each other. I share stories too.	I believe suspensions have went down because we don't have as many office referrals. That's good.	
4.	I share information with my group all the time. I know the 9th grade team does as well. We know our students and we talk about what works.			We have co-teach and also our behavior teacher comes in the classroom sometimes to assist the student s in ____program. She helps with our special education students.
5.	We share data and have positive rewards in the classroom	I don't mind talking in class and I join the conversations too. I encourage talking and problem solving. When I do have a problem with a student, I talk to them, redirect and keep going. I know each one of them.		Our special education students are doing well in the mainstream overall. The one's with the major behavior problems, like aggressive. They usually remain in the behavior class and I send the work.
6.	Our school has its	I try to build a	We still have office	

	share of problems, mainly with central admin requirements but we work together. You can hear us saying the same things in the hallway	relationship with some kids but some of them are hard. Their home lives make it difficult. I do remind them of the expectations.	referrals but, we try to get the kids on track with the classroom referrals. It keeps the kids in class.	
7.		For my most difficult students, I have call the parents and talk to the students more frequently. I think that helps.	I try to handle everything in the classroom before sending a student to the office. If they wind up in ISS or suspended, they fall behind. My office referrals are low.	My special needs students do well in class. They have a few behaviors, but we work it out.
8.	I didn't write my first discipline referral until October. Our students know the rules	The students like the fact that we have allow them to talk to us. It doesn't have to be about school work, we want to help them with their problems.		I have more problems out of regular ed than special ed but for the most part. My special ed students struggle with the material but we have co-teach and tutorials. I have good classes. We have good relationships with our students.
9.	It's working on our grade level because they're older now.			

Appendix F: Sample Interview Script

Interviewer: Briefly describe what the PBS program is…

Participant: The Positive Behavior Support is the program that we are implementing with Review 360 in order to reduce our discipline referrals.

Interviewer: How has

. I had to get to know them first.

Interviewer: What changes have occurred in school climate since the implementation of PBS?

Participants: We've always had a good school climate. I can say that since we talk about student behavior more in team and PLC, we have a better plan for teaching the students. That makes most of us feel happy, well all of us when we see that student progress with behavior and academics. You know *(student's name)* is actually involved in extracurricular now.

Interviewer: What additional feedback could you offer to improve PBS at your campus?

Participants: I don't know what you do with the teachers that don't want to change. Maybe get them one on one.

Probing question by Interviewer: Change in what way?

Participants: Those teachers who still kick the students out of class. Never want to be positive. Maybe they're just unhappy with their job. It's not many, but you would think

they would get it after being trained. They think it's too much documentation. We offer suggestion but oh well. It doesn't do any good.

Interviewer: What do you feel is still needed for student behavior in the classroom?

Participants: We have to figure out what to do with the students that really disrupt the class. It's only a few but we need more help with them. Like *(student's name)* does he benefit from a smaller setting? He has gaps academically that we try to fill but how do you make him want to learn? I guess that would be the help I would want.

Appendix G: Staff Development Evaluation

1. **The training session provided an opportunity for me to acquire knowledge and expand methods of support with behavior.**

   Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐

2. **Sharing in a discussion with the facilitators enhanced my understanding of how Positive Behavior Support and staff collaboration is critical for our students' achievement based on their abilities.**

   Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐

3. **The presenter demonstrated knowledge of Positive Behavior Support and thoroughly answered questions of concern.**

   Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐

4. **The PBS Support System through RtI provided within the training was helpful to me, and I feel that I will be able to implement the process into my current assignment.**

   Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐

5. **The information and strategies discussed with the facilitators will help me to improve instruction for all students in my classroom including students with the most chronic behavior concerns.**

   Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐

Please answer the following in as much detail as possible. Your feedback is valuable.

6. **What suggestions do you have for improving this session?**

7. **Has your participation in this session helped you in any way? If so, please explain.**

8. **Please provide any additional comments regarding this session. Use the back of this sheet if needed.**

Name (optional)

Curriculum Vitae

Terrie D. Phillips

EDUCATION

MS Curriculum and Instruction, University of Houston, 2005
BS Behavior Science, University of Houston, 1999
AS Social Science, San Jacinto College, 1996

CERTIFICATIONS

Principal: ILD AND PDAS CERTIFIED
Special Education K-12, Elementary Education 1-8
Specialization Areas: Curriculum, Instruction and Discipline
Crisis Prevention Institute: NCI Certified Trainer

PROFESSIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP IN THE EDUCATION

Behavior Specialist Administrator - Goose Creek ISD, 2012 - present. -Developed various guidelines and procedural systems for the district's behavior and transition programs for students receiving special services.
Serve as administrative leadership and program developer for the district's therapeutic behavior center.
Assistant Principal-Aldine ISD, 2007-2012 – Increased students' academic and behavioral achievements through developing systematic programs and procedures for academic, behavior and transition programs.
Reorganized the district's programs to increase achievement of students in special programs by overseeing the district-wide behavior coach program to support campuses. Served as IEP meeting facilitator, testing coordinator, RtI chairperson and LPAC co-chair.

PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP IN THE COMMUNITY

Founder of Inspiration Outreach -Serving the community as motivational speaker and juvenile probation trainer, restructuring and developing programs to increase the achievement of at-risk youth. Serve as Department of Assistive and Rehabilitation Services, job placement specialist, coach and personal social adjustment trainer for post graduates and adults with disabilities.