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## Examining Teachers' School Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support Practices to Improve the Behaviors of Students With Disabilities

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# Walden University

College of Education

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Lolita Hedgeman Owens

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,  
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Walden University

2021

Abstract

Examining Teachers' School Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support

Practices to Improve the Behaviors of Students With

Disabilities

by

Lolita Hedgeman Owens

MA, Walden University, 2013

BS, Hampton University, 1985

Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

May 2021

## Abstract

The problem at a high school in the southeastern United States is that students with disabilities struggle to demonstrate appropriate behaviors despite the implementation of School-Wide Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (SWPBIS). Current research findings have suggested that although SWPBIS includes strategies for students with disabilities, the behaviors of students with learning disabilities have not improved during SWPBIS implementation. There was a need to explore teachers' implementation of SWPBIS for students with learning disabilities. In this basic qualitative study, how teachers at the research site high school were implementing SWPBIS for students with learning disabilities toward improving maladaptive behaviors was examined. The theoretical and conceptual foundations grounding this study were behavioral theory and applied behavior analysis. Purposeful sampling was used to recruit six high school special education teachers who participated in semi structured interviews regarding their classroom SWPBIS practices. Open and axial coding were used to analyze participant responses for emergent themes related to SWPBIS practices. The findings showed teachers' confusion about PBIS procedures, lack of peer and student buy-in, and weaknesses in communication, leadership, and professional development. Based on the findings, a professional development plan was developed to present findings and recommendations to enhance SWPBIS implementation practices for students with learning disabilities. The results of this study could inform subsequent training for teachers' SWPBIS implementation behaviors, leading to the eventual amelioration of maladaptive student behaviors.

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## Dedication

I lovingly dedicate this research study to my family. My husband and children have been so patient and understanding throughout this process when a lot of my attention focused on completing this journey. I hope that I serve as model of what it takes to “keep your eyes on the prize.” With faith in God and belief in his plan there is nothing you cannot accomplish.

## Acknowledgments

My highest acknowledgment goes to God for blessing me with the ability and the desire to accomplish my goal. There were moments when my faith was tested but God provided everything I needed when I needed it. Special acknowledgement to my family for the encouragement and patience you provided. Finally, I thank my committee, Dr. Schroll, Dr. DeSoto, and Dr. Schirmer, for providing much needed guidance and support throughout my journey toward becoming a successful Walden University doctoral scholar.

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## Section 1: The Problem

### **The Local Problem**

The problem that drove this study was the fact that secondary students with disabilities at the local school site continued to struggle with making academic progress because of inappropriate behaviors. There was a need to examine teachers' implementation of School-Wide Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (SWPBIS) for high school students with learning disabilities (LDs) to address their behavioral concerns (McDaniel et al., 2017). Examination of current supports identified gaps in practice regarding the teachers' implementation of SWPBIS. Lowery (2015) noted that over half of SWPBIS state coordinators reported that improving the behaviors of students with disabilities through SWPBIS had not been included in teacher training sessions or conversations; consequently, there was a need to examine this issue more thoroughly.

Secondary students with LDs continue to struggle with making academic progress because of inappropriate behavior (Shuster et al., 2017). Myers et al. (2017) asserted that students with LDs that demonstrate inappropriate behaviors might require more intense SWPBIS than general education students. The problem may lie in the lack of teachers effectively implementing SWPBIS for students with LDs (Sprague et al., 2014). Bernstein et al. (2017) proposed that the manner and extent to which educators implement SWPBIS could play a role in determining whether students with LDs have benefited from this framework.

The local problem requiring a review of teacher implementation of SWPBIS supports was also identified in current literature. Researchers noted few discernible

differences in the number of discipline referrals, or maladaptive behaviors, for students with disabilities after SWPBIS implementation (Flannery et al., 2018). Even with SWPBIS in place, 29% of high school students, including those with disabilities, had not responded to Tier 1 or 2 interventions (Bernstein et al., 2017). According to the local high school in the southeastern United States, despite the implementation of school-wide behavioral interventions and SWPBIS, students with LDs are still exhibiting behaviors that are affecting their academic progress. In particular, ninth and 10th-grade students continue to display behaviors, such as skipping class, absenteeism, and refusal to follow faculty and staff instructions, at a similar rate than they did prior to SWPBIS implementation.

### **Rationale**

Despite SWPBIS implementation at a local high school in the southeastern United States, students with LD are still demonstrating noncompliant behaviors that are affecting their academic performance, such as tardiness, skipping class, and overall lack of engagement. According to the high school, discipline referrals are also prevalent for maladaptive behaviors, which include transition difficulties and verbally inappropriate behaviors toward peers and adults.

As teachers are responsible for direct intervention of students' behaviors in the classroom, it is important to examine the educators' SWPBIS implementation practices. Researchers indicated that when students perceived a positive student-teacher relationship, they felt safer, were more engaged, and exhibited fewer maladaptive behaviors (Hansen, 2014). In addition, when students experienced reinforcement of

positive behaviors through consistent intervention, they were less likely to demonstrate negative behaviors (Myers et al., 2017). Gomez (2017) also noted that students were more compliant when they saw that target behaviors received persistent redirection.

SWPBIS is a school-wide strategy that involves all faculty, staff, and students (Kim et al., 2018). Rather than a single program or plan, SWPBIS is a continuum of behavioral supports designed to improve the school climate by making maladaptive or undesired behaviors less effective (Evans & Weiss, 2014). Therefore, training helps administrators and faculty build collaborative teams to ensure effective implementation. School districts and local school administration should provide ongoing, integrated support on the implementation of SWPBIS for teachers and staff.

The SWPBIS framework is comprised of three tiers of evidence-based behavioral interventions and supports designed to meet students' individual needs (McIntosh et al., 2017). The first tier focuses on foundational supports through clearly defining expectations for all students, teaching those expectations, and providing consistent and meaningful consequences (Mercer et al., 2017). Behavioral data are used to monitor, evaluate, or modify as needed. The second tier focuses on targeted intervention and supplemental support. Interventions in Tier 2 support specific skill deficits of some students at risk for failure. The third tier provides intensive individualized supports based upon a student's need. It is the most intensive level encompassing a narrowed focus and providing support in combination with interventions delivered in Tiers 1 and 2.

The purpose of this exploratory study was to examine how teachers implemented SWPBIS for secondary students with LDs. I collected data from teacher participants to



identify gaps in implementation, such as school-wide consistency, team-based decision-making, continuous monitoring, and ongoing professional development. The results of this study could benefit administrators and other stakeholders by identifying how SWPBIS was used with students with LDs. The findings may also inform subsequent planning for interventions or training to augment teacher implementation practices.

### **Definition of Terms**

The following definitions are provided to understand the context of this study.

*Maladaptive behavior:* Behaviors that interfere with a student's ability to adjust in varied situations (McDaniel et al., 2017).

*Students with LDs:* A psychological processing disorder that affects a student's ability to use language, either spoken or written. The disability, although not the result of a visual, hearing, intellectual, emotional, or motor impairment, may interfere with listening, thinking, speaking, reading, writing, spelling, or the ability to perform mathematical calculations (Kauffman et al., 2017).

*SWPBIS:* A framework for assisting educational staff and personnel in implementing evidence-based behavioral interventions into an organized continuum designed to enhance academic and behavioral outcomes school-wide (Noltemeyer et al., 2018)

### **Significance of the Study**

The U.S. educational system is replete with studies and reports related to improving education. Rigorous and measurable academic standards have been developed with a focus on improved student behavior (Welsh & Little, 2018). SWPBIS is an

ongoing process utilizing evidenced-based behavioral interventions for students. Learners who are unable to employ adaptive behaviors in high school could continue to do so in postsecondary education, the workforce, and in life (Berg et al., 2017). Students with LDs need to master behaviors and skills that promote positive interaction with others that are a part of the social, emotional, and behavioral support of SWPBIS (Putnam & Kincaid, 2015).

Hirsch et al. (2014) suggested that the analysis of SWPBIS implementation in classrooms might significantly predict and increase the sustainability of improved student outcomes for high incidence disability categories. Teachers' SWPBIS implementation practices for students with LDs influence sustainability and could improve students' behaviors and interactions with others (Pitts, 2017). The majority of extant literature on this topic is focused on elementary and middle school populations, indicating a gap in research at the high school level. This study is significant because examining this problem through participant interviews and experiences allowed for identification of key dynamic, themes and insights into participants' SWPBIS implementation practices. The majority of extant literature on this topic is focused on elementary and middle school populations, indicating a gap in research at the high school level. This study is unique because it focused on high school teachers' SWPBIS implementation practices in the classroom in managing the behaviors of students with LDs.

### **Research Question**

The problem at the study site high school was that the principal did not know what SWPBIS implementation practices teachers were using to manage the behaviors of

students with LDs. The purpose of this study was to examine teachers' SWPBIS implementation practices for high school students with LDs to address their behavioral concerns. The following research question guided this study:

RQ: What SWPBIS practices do teachers report using in the classroom to address the behaviors of students with LDs?

### **Review of the Literature**

In the following review of the literature, I provide an overview of SWPBIS practices, implementation, and sustainability in affecting the behavior of students with LDs. To locate literature for this review, I searched EBSCOhost, Education Resource Information Center, Academic Search Premier, Education Research Complete, and ProQuest Central databases and the Teacher Reference Center. The keywords used for this search were *PBIS, discipline, students with LD behaviors and academic achievement, qualitative research, case studies, SWPBIS teacher behaviors and classroom practices, teacher expectations, and behavior intervention support*. Books and journals referencing SWPBIS provided additional data.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework for this study was the behaviorist theory, which proposes that human behavior is learned, influenced by environmental factors, and can be changed (Moore, 2011). As such, behaviorism asserts that by altering something in a person's environment, an individual can change their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Furthermore, when positive reinforcement or rewards are provided for a desired action over time, the person will consequently demonstrate the behavior on their own.

There is substantial evidence to support the use of SWPBIS based on the principles of applied behavioral analysis (ABA) for students with disabilities (Foran et al., 2015). ABA is a systematic process of studying and modifying observable behavior through intervention. Putnam and Kincaid (2015) noted that teachers incorporated components of ABA that included stimulus control, positive reinforcement, self-monitoring, and direct instruction as SWPBIS tools within their classroom to modify student behaviors. These systematic procedures for behavioral interventions are foundational principles of ABA; therefore, SWPBIS encompasses ABA.

### ***Effective SWPBIS***

Effective SWPBIS requires consistent implementation across the spectrum in working toward desired student expectations (Reinke et al., 2013). McIntosh et al. (2012) suggested that successful SWPBIS demanded reliability in both behavioral expectations and consequences. Other researchers further demonstrated a significant inverse relationship between problem behaviors for high school students and the fidelity of SWPBIS interventions (Flannery et al., 2018). Horner and Macava (2018) advised that the adoption of SWPBIS led to documented desirable outcomes for students, faculty, and families. In other words, not only did SWPBIS reduce problem behaviors for high school students, but there was a direct correlation to the integrity of SWPBIS implementation practices. However, ongoing professional development and training were crucial in producing anticipated outcomes.

### ***SWPBIS Professional Development Training and Support***

Successful implementation of SWPBIS has been shown to be a result of the effectiveness of professional development opportunities in schools. Ongoing training and support were required to implement SWPBIS with fidelity (Pinkelman et al., 2015). Training should increase teachers' knowledge base, foster support, and incorporate activities that promote team building, commitment, and participation (Noltemeyer et al., 2018). Operative communication and collaboration between administration, teachers, and the staff are essential for this process to succeed. Training should further demonstrate how to establish consistency and adhere to guidelines as well as the importance of maintaining quality over time.

Johnson (2016) noted that SWPBIS professional development and training should include content related to supporting, or buy-in of, the overall framework. An explanation of infrastructure should follow relating to student expectations, communication between and among team members, and the role of data-based decision-making (Kuchle et al., 2015). Active professional development also provides district and local personnel with behavioral expertise specific to the SWPBIS process (Kuchle et al., 2015). Failure to adapt the SWPBIS framework to diverse environments or populations can lead to a lack of implementation integrity or deficits in behavioral outcomes.

Professional development ensures that faculty, staff, and other stakeholders are able to modify, adapt, or abandon practices/interventions that are not working (Noltemeyer et al., 2018). SWPBIS professional development activities can serve as a means to improve practices at the classroom and student levels. Lewis et al. (2016) asserted that professional development was sometimes too short or focused on knowledge

acquisition rather than fluency building or sustainability. Cressey et al. (2015) noted that professional development alone was insufficient to ensure changes in school operations and sustained practice. In other words, teachers and staff may not have received sufficient performance feedback, thereby impeding practice consistency and the ability to monitor the effectiveness of SWPBIS implementation.

As high school departments can have somewhat different purposes, alternative strategies are necessary to maintain consistent and sustainable expectations for students (Evanovich & Scott, 2016). For example, the expectations for student behavior are somewhat different in physical education or art class from that of an English or math class. The same was true in a resource setting versus a self-contained environment (Hjörne, E., & Säljö, R., 2019). Consistency of implementation should follow the training of the SWPBIS teams in the use of data related to these differing environments (Kennedy et al., 2012).

Implementing SWPBIS with fidelity requires the collection of various types of data to assess the effectiveness of the systems and any need for adjustment. Evanovich and Scott (2016) endorsed the use of data to advise team members and other stakeholders of the status of implementation along with reported best practices, behavioral results, and suggested modifications. My analysis of participant interview responses related to teachers' implementation practices could inform changes to SWPBIS interventions for teachers of SWDs.

## **Broader Problem**

### ***SWPBIS***

The issue of classroom discipline is one of the most significant difficulties that all teachers face (Welsh, 2018). The behavioral approach taken can lead to the success or failure of classroom management (Johnson, 2016). SWPBIS is a research-based model for schools in general education classrooms (Noltemeyer et al., 2018). Bernstein et al. (2017) proposed that students identified with exceptionalities, such as LDs, may need individualized instruction and reinforcement related to their behavior(s) to be successful in inclusive settings. Additional challenges include maintaining effective communication and collaboration between special educators and their general education counterparts when implementing SWPBIS for SWDs (Evans & Weiss, 2014).

### **SWPBIS and Students with Disabilities**

Although students with disabilities comprised only 12.9% of all public school enrollment, Homer and Macaya (2018) suggested that there is a need for more intensive and individualized supports across academic, social, and behavioral domains. High school teachers typically experienced additional challenges managing behaviors due to class size, the number of staff/student interactions daily, and the varying academic and behavioral expectations for each teacher (Hamann, 2017). As such, it was anticipated that SWPBIS implementation practices may differ based on classroom composition and environment. Losinski et al. (2017) acknowledged data supporting the efficacy of SWPBIS interventions in a controlled context with students with disabilities.

Nevertheless, there are a limited number of studies focused on the participation of students with LDs in SWPBIS (Shuster et al., 2017). In the current study, I collected data through interviews with teachers to examine their SWPBIS implementation practices and behaviors for students with LDs.

Researchers have examined the effects of SWPBIS interventions for students with disabilities (SWD). Losinski et al. (2017) suggested that interventions increased compliance and decreased maladaptive behaviors of SWDs in the school setting. Putnam and Kincaid (2015) also assessed the effectiveness of SWPBIS on student outcomes at schools across the nation (not specific to high schools) through discipline referrals, suspensions, and overall academic progress. Their findings indicated success in some areas, although interventions may vary based upon a student's social-emotional characteristics.

In a sample of 37 high schools, Freeman et al. (2015) evaluated the relationship between SWPBIS and academic, attendance, and behavioral outcomes. The authors noted reductions in maladaptive behavior rates and increased attendance after SWPBIS implementation, which may suggest enhanced student engagement and improved classroom climate as indicators of success when applied with fidelity (Freeman et al., 2015).

Bradshaw et al. (2015) concluded that as student response to intervention varied, additional research was required to identify the baseline characteristics (i.e., behavioral analysis) of students who would be most responsive to SWPBIS. This issue of variation



in effectiveness was particularly relevant to students with LDs because consideration of individual student needs is a critical aspect of special education (Myers et al., 2017).

Integrating SWPBIS and ABA with teacher implementation practices could improve the behaviors of students with LDs (Horner & Sugai, 2015). Researchers have explored the general association between teachers' perceptions and practices over the past 3 decades (Chang, 2013; Fernet et al., 2014; McCarthy et al., 2016).

SWPBIS is based on the principles of behavior analysis. Lewis et al. (2016) referred to behavior analysis as a process designed to identify the reason for an individual's behavior and determining why it is maintained. Schreiber-Bonsell and Beam (2017) stated that a central tenet in ABA is that all behaviors occur for a reason or has a function (e.g., control, avoidance). Freeman et al. (2015) also affirmed that ABA principles were evident in SWPBIS. According to Evans and Weiss (2014), SWPBIS can be a useful model for meeting the individual instructional and behavioral needs of SWDs in inclusive settings. SWPBIS focuses less on punishment and more on teaching and reinforcement of target behaviors, which may be particularly fruitful for SWDs (Lewis et al., 2016). The individualization of SWPBIS interventions can work in partnership with other supports, such as individual education plans, functional behavioral assessments, and response to intervention (Schreiber-Bonsell & Beam, 2017).

SWPBIS denotes a multitiered system of evidence-based supports and interventions designed to enhance students' social behaviors and subsequent academic outcomes (Horner & Macaya, 2018). The use of a SWPBIS framework is a well-recognized model for students taught in general education classrooms (Evans & Weiss,

2014). Noltemeyer et al. (2018) noted that this proactive approach involves systematically defining, teaching, modeling, and reinforcing desired behaviors using data-derived decision-making processes to inform the types and intensity of interventions. Putnam et al. (2015) maintained that SWPBIS guides the selection, integration, and implementation of research-based practices for improving behavior and academic outcomes for students. In short, SWPBIS involves teaching specified proactive expectations to all students. Students should be consistently recognized and rewarded for appropriate behavior.

### ***SWPBIS Results***

SWPBIS results, although not conclusive, have shown significant short-term effects on dropout behaviors, indicating a positive influence on attendance (Freeman et al., 2015). Keane (2017) also proposed that a student's attendance record in high school is a strong predictor of subsequent behavioral or academic struggles. The implication here was that SWPBIS practices to address students' individual needs might reduce maladaptive behaviors, such as tardiness and skipping class or school, which is relevant to SWDs (Ward, 2016).

Although there has been some decrease in disciplinary referrals, suspensions, and special education referrals after SWPBIS implementation, middle and high school students continue to struggle with classroom and school behaviors requiring specific intervention (Schreiber-Bonsell & Beam, 2017). Haydon and Kroeger (2016) replicated a study evaluating the combination of active supervision, proactive correction, and explicit

instruction and found a reduction in the duration of behaviors as well as improved sustainability of SWPBIS across classroom environments.

***SWPBIS Sustainability: Teacher Concerns and Perceptions***

Although not a clear indicator of academic progress, SWPBIS may enhance teaching and learning. Hamann (2017) found that teachers reported higher levels of satisfaction with their teaching conditions when there were shared and consistent expectations for student conduct. In a qualitative, exploratory study, Feuerborn et al. (2016) found that teachers' SWPBIS concerns were mostly associated with staff support and consensus, while their critical needs were related to collaboration with peers and administration. Teachers described successful implementation as fostering their sense of ownership through support, thereby gaining commitment to SWPBIS (Martin, 2013).

Teacher and staff buy-in is a critical component of successful SWPBIS implementation and sustainability (Coffey & Horner, 2012). Through a study of 1,218 participants in schools in varying stages of implementation, Kelm and McIntosh (2012) stressed the importance of a clear definition of *buy-in*. SWPBIS should be a collaborative, shared, and mutually beneficial relationship among administration, teachers, staff, students, and stakeholders (Filter et al., 2012).

School districts with low buy-in may struggle to implement and maintain SWPBIS with fidelity. Teachers reported barriers to successful SWPBIS implementation as lack of state, district, and administrator buy-in, deficiencies in teacher training, as well as lack of parent and community involvement or support (McDeaniel et al., 2017). Betters-Bubon et al., 2016) also found that team use of data and capacity building were

deemed essential in successful SWPBIS implementation and sustainability in the classroom.

SWPBIS implementation should also consider the sustainability of the intervention framework. Pinkelman et al. (2015) examined perceived barriers to the sustainability of SWPBIS in 860 schools currently implementing or in the pre-implementation stage of SWPBIS. Barriers reported by teachers and staff related to sustainability were staff, time, and resources. Teachers reported that successful SWPBIS implementation and sustainability required buy-in and administrative support.

### ***The SWPBIS team***

Among the best practices that teachers reported using to improve the SWPBIS framework was the SWPBIS team. The SWPBIS team should consist of teachers, administrators, parents, and community stakeholders as well as students. Schools sometimes failed to recognize the importance of including students as part of the SWPBIS team, especially at the secondary school level (Schuster, 2017). Without authentic buy-in from students, even a skilled team of adults may have trouble in the development and implementation of the SWPBIS framework.

Teachers also stated that communication and relationship building with families was vital in the success of SWPBIS implementation (Andrew et al., 2018). The need for parent and community relationships was also evident in the literature as McDaniel et al. (2017) noted barriers to successful SWPBIS implementation included lack of parent and community involvement or support. Garbacz et. al., 2015) observed that effective interaction between teachers, parents, and other stakeholders is critical in promoting

SWPBIS outcomes for students. Flowers (2017) advocated that district, family, and community support was vital to the success of SWPBIS.

### **Implications**

Collection of data related to teachers' SWPBIS implementation practices and experiences could provide information to support and inform future SWPBIS best practices for students with LD. Information gathered from teacher interviews may identify gap(s) in practice regarding how teachers implemented SWPBIS for SWDs and the overall SWPBIS school culture related to SWPBIS implementation (Cramer & Bennett, 2015). The results could inform further inquiry based on the results and methods examined, which could improve the implementation or application of SWPBIS by teachers for students with LD.

### **Summary**

Section 1 contained an explanation of the local problem, rationale, and significance of the qualitative study conducted. Included are definitions of relevant terms, the research question, as well as implications for the research. SWPBIS shares the values of affecting positive changes in behavior for students through the application of strategies and actions that promote their worth, dignity, and development (Walden University, 2012). The need to examine teachers' SWPBIS implementation practices in managing the behaviors of students with LD drove this project study. The chapter concluded with a synopsis of literature, which influenced the study.

## Section 2: The Methodology

### **Research Design and Approach**

During the 1980s, educators recognized the need for effective behavioral management of students with maladaptive behaviors (Foran et al., 2015). Proactive measures were suggested to include school-wide systems and processes, specific social skills instruction, and a team-based approach to implementation and professional development (Coffey & Horner, 2012). SWPBIS is an application framework designed to increase academic and behavioral outcomes for students (Schreiber-Bonsell, & Beam, 2017). Intervention decisions are evidence based and data-driven and should be applied and monitored with fidelity (Bethune, 2017).

In this basic qualitative study, I collected data from semistructured interviews to examine teachers' SWPBIS implementation practices to address the behavioral needs of students with LDs. Primary data were collected from nine participants in a natural setting with a real-life context. The results of this study answered the research question and provided further basis for a larger project.

I had anticipated using a case study design for this study but that was not possible due to the COVID-19 school shutdown. Other designs considered included the grounded theory design, which generally requires a larger sample size (between 20 and 60 participants) for collecting and analyzing data toward the identification of an underlying theory. The narrative design was also considered, but using that design, I would have examined just one or two participants' experiences through the lens of in-depth interviews (or their stories).

## **Participants**

In this study, I used a qualitative approach because it is more useful than other types of research in obtaining rich detail through comments, feedback, and suggestions not easily counted or measured in terms of quantities, and as such, the depth of the data was significant (see Creswell, 2007). The criteria used to select participants included special education teachers who worked in an inclusion setting using SWPBIS. I sent all the special education teachers at the high school study site fitting this description an email request for participation. Special educators who expressed interest received additional information. Moser and Korstjens (2018) explained the importance of sample sizes being large enough to obtain information necessary to sufficiently address the research question(s) but not so large as to affect depth of inquiry. Of the 12 educators who met the criteria, nine volunteered to participate in the study.

Data saturation played a role in determining the minimum sample size. In qualitative research, a smaller number of rich interviews/observations can be more revealing than a more significant number (Burmeisrer & Aitken, 2012). Guest et al. (2006) also found that most themes were emergent after just six interviews. Exploring each participant's experiences exposed knowledge and contributed to in-depth, rich descriptions of the phenomena under study (see Lodico et al., 2010).

In this study, I collected data from nine high school special education teachers via semi structured interviews. Initially, I planned to collect data from classroom observations as well; however, observations were removed as a data source due to school

shut down because of COVID-19. The Walden University Instructional Review Board (IRB) granted permission for removal of this data source.

Researchers face ethical challenges in all stages of their research study, including anonymity, confidentiality, informed consent, and the researcher's potential impact on the participants. Informed consent requires open and honest communication between the researcher and participants (Smith, 2016). The researcher must anticipate any ethical issues that may arise during the qualitative research process and cope with new, challenging problems (Sherrod et al., 2009). I provided the following safeguards in this study: (a) participants were advised of the voluntary nature of their participation and that they could withdraw or decline to respond to a question at any time without penalty (see Appendix), (b) the research objectives were articulated to each participant, (c) participants were informed of all data collection methods and activities, (d) provisions were made for monitoring the data collected to ensure participant anonymity, and (e) transcriptions and interpretations of the data were made available to the participants. Interview transcripts were maintained per IRB guidelines.

I completed the National Institutes of Health Office of Extramural Research (2013) human research protections training and received IRB approval before beginning data collection. I met with the local high school principal at the research site to explain the purpose of the research study and gain permission to conduct the study at the school. The principal provided a signed letter of cooperation and research approval form, which was forwarded to the IRB as a supporting document. To ensure confidentiality, I omitted

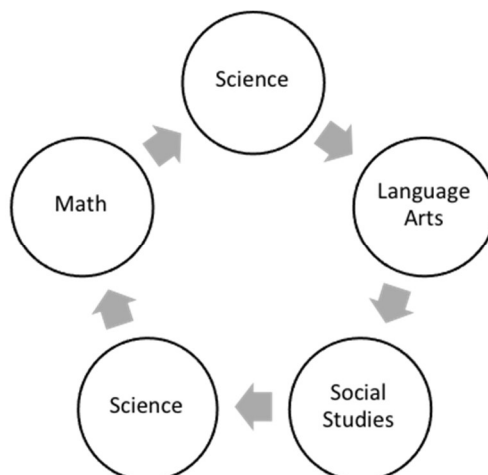


identifying information of the school and participants from the study and will continue to do so in any related future reports.

### **Data Collection**

The selection of data collection instruments was a crucial step in the research process. I determined interviews as the most useful data collection method for this study. Teacher participants provided responses to questions related to their SWPBIS implementation practices in the classroom. Of the pool of 12 high school teacher participants who met the criteria at the study site, nine agreed to participate in the study.

The selection criteria for participants in the study included high school special education teachers in a cotaught core content area using SWPBIS. Five participants were women, and four participants were men. Four interview participants were European American (44.4%), four were African American (44.4%), and one was Hispanic (11.2%). Subjects taught included language arts, science, social studies, and math. Two were first-time teachers, three were new to the research site, and the remainder had been at the local research site for at least 5 years.

**Figure 1***Participants' Content Areas*

Local school administration provided names and contact information for potential special educator participants. I sent an email to prospective teachers explaining the study and its purpose while seeking their participation. Once the teachers agreed to participate, the invitation and informed consent were reviewed with them before the interviews to ensure their understanding. After the participants gave their consent, I collected data through interviews using telephone conference software due to school shutdown related to COVID-19.

Based on the research question for the study, I developed an interview matrix containing six open-ended questions. Teachers answered preliminary probes related to their years of teaching experience and knowledge of SWPBIS. Participants first described their daily implementation of SWPBIS in the classroom for all students and then specifically for students with LDs. They further explained their practices teaching the SWPBIS expectations/consequences to students and reinforcement or modification

required for students with LDs. Finally, participants described the implementation of SWPBIS as a part of the overall school culture.

Nine teacher participants completed interviews between May 5, 2020 and May 12, 2020, using Free Conference Call.com and a Sony ICD-PX470 digital audio-recording device. Temi.com transcribed participant interviews. I anticipated that the semistructured interviews would last approximately 30 minutes each. The actual lengths of interviews ranged between 18 and 39 minutes. The interviews were informal and conducted in a conversational style at a time that was convenient for participants. If participants did not provide an initial response, they had the opportunity to readdress the question. After transcription, I documented and analyzed the information obtained.

Member checking assisted with credibility. I provided the participants with an interview summary to ensure the precision of their responses (see Birt et al., 2016). Upon review of the completed transcription notes, participants were asked to respond confirming accuracy.

I reviewed the printed transcripts while simultaneously listening to the audio recordings. Each participant was assigned a pseudonym to ensure confidentiality. I save all data electronically via a password-protected personal computer. Physical copies of data were stored in a locked file cabinet in my home.

### **Role of the Researcher**

Yin (2014) suggested that the researcher has the dual roles of guiding the interview process and asking questions in an unbiased manner. In other words, the researcher must seek information objectively related to the line of inquiry while

encouraging subjective responses. Using these guiding principles, I listened carefully to the participant's responses and sought clarity from the interviewee when answers were too vague or cliché, thus mitigating the potential for errors. I advised participants that the information shared was confidential and genuine responses were encouraged.

I have been a resource and collaborative special education teacher for 12 years at the research site and, at some point, may have had a working relationship with some of the participants. To reduce researcher bias, I engaged in reflexivity through a continuous process of recognizing and examining the connections between the participants and myself. Follow-up inquiry ensued when participants' answers suggested new information or ideas not previously mentioned.

My role as a teacher at the research site did not affect data collection or did it wield undue influence because I hold no supervisory position over the participants. I am a member of the SWPBIS team as an observer only through attendance at monthly meetings. I had no affiliation with the SWPBIS implementation process other than reviewing the administrative protocol. Consequently, my familiarity with the school and teachers enabled me to understand the methods described by participants. All participants appeared to be candid and admitted their knowledge of SWPBIS or lack thereof concerning their implementation behaviors.

### **Data Analysis**

Wolcott (2016) advised that data analysis make sense of what the participants do. In qualitative research, this process begins during initial data collection and simultaneously works and influences analytical activities throughout the study (Lodico et

al., 2010; Merriam, 2009). The primary source of data for this study came from participant interviews of teachers. A rereading of the data led to an overall sense of the information and ideas presented. I examined the interview data several times to create tentative labels or themes that summarized the essence, such as recurring participant ideas or language.

I followed a systematic process of collecting and reviewing the patterns or themes within the data. The need to modify inquiry or move in a new direction was considered as more information was gathered (see Creswell, 2007). The data collected from interviews provided a detailed description of the teachers' behaviors and implementation practices in answering the research question. The interview text was uploaded into Atlas Ti software, where it was coded and analyzed. Atlas Ti is a software program designed to assist researchers in coding and analyzing qualitative data (in the forms of textual, graphic, audio, or video data).

The coding process was essential for identifying the necessary codes, categories, and significant themes associated with participants' SWPBIS implementation. The logical process included the condensing, merging, layering, and collapsing of data into thematic features (see Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2009). During data analysis, I also considered the SWPBIS components and recommendations found in the literature review. Open, inductive coding was used to disaggregate and analyze core themes and patterns in the interview data grounded by the framework and research-based practices.

Open coding can serve to discover and define emerging themes from interviews through participants' words and data collected during observations (Erik, 2016). Open

coding helped to identify themes and ideas by a specific keyword or in vivo words used by the participants indicating similar ideas or themes. The large number of initial themes were combined when ideas were identified as interrelated.

**Table 1**

*Open Coding Application*

Open Codes
Repetition
Rewards needs
Communication
Procedures

Axial coding was the second level coding process. Axial coding can expose relationships or connections among the data obtained (Campbell et al., 2015). For example, determining whether relationships existed between the patterns/themes observed or mentioned in teachers' SWPBIS classroom practices. Participant responses were further evaluated based on the context of their statements and the conditions of the situations they described. Related categories, subcategories, and ideas were merged to refine subthemes and categories.

**Table 2***Axial Coding Application*


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Axial Codes
Blaming administration for lack of training
Wanted support and motivation to implement
I and students were both confused
Differences between students

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The final stage in the process of data analysis was selective coding. During selective coding, I interpreted the core variables that emerged in open and axial coding logically linking categories and refining major thematic concepts. This process helped to reveal the conceptual structure of the interview data and information learned from the research. I considered how discrepant data expanded, broadened, or deepened the understanding of the data. Because there were no negative instances identified, further consideration was unnecessary.

Qualitative data collection and analysis eventually reaches a point called saturation, often signaling completion of the study when there is a nonemergence of new themes from data sampling (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Saturation of the data collection in the study was reached when no new themes surfaced. Morse (2015) asserted that saturation indicated qualitative rigor of the research and further suggested that failure to reach saturation may have an impact on the quality of the study conducted.

**Dependability**

Dependability is an evaluation of the quality of the processes of data collection, analysis, and theory generation over time and varied conditions (Lodico et al., 2010). Dependability of the study was established by using a systematic process during data collection and analysis. The findings were consistent with the raw data collected. I was cognizant during the research that it may be necessary to make changes to data collection and analysis due to conditions in the setting or with the participants. One such change was the removal of classroom observations as a data source due to the COVID-19 school shutdown.

**Confirmability**

Confirmability refers to the level of confidence with which the findings of the study represented the participants' narratives and words rather than potential researcher biases. This study established credibility in that the results are believable from the perspective of the participants. To assess confirmability, I focused on the degree to which the participants (coding themes) corroborated the results. The credibility of the study was evaluated by extracting recurring themes from the coding process, and through data displays such as charts, graphs, or participants' narratives revealed through the interview process.

**Evidence of Quality**

Steps were taken to ensure the accuracy of the data, and findings included member checks. An interview summary was sent to participants to check the accuracy of



their responses (Creswell, 2012). They were asked to reply within one week to advise me of inaccuracies. The participants noted no errors.

### **Discrepant or Nonconforming Cases**

A negative or “discrepant” case is one in which the respondents’ experiences or viewpoints differ from the main body of evidence. (Flick, 2017). Any negative case was addressed by clarifying and resolving those differences identified when participants’ experiences or viewpoints differed from the main body of interview data collected. Because there were no negative instances identified, no further analysis was required.

### **Limitations**

The geographic generalizability of the findings was a limitation in that only current special education co-teachers at the local research site from a high school located in the southeast United States participated in this study. The study included participant interviews as the only data source due to COVID-19 school closures. Participants’ words were the primary source for data analysis used to examine and teachers’ SWPBIS practices for students with LD in reaching conclusions.

### **Data Analysis Results**

#### **Findings**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine teachers’ SWPBIS implementation practices for students with LD. The completed research enhances understanding of teachers’ SWPBIS implementation behaviors and processes related to the maladaptive behaviors of students with LD at the local site. Participants in this study were current special education co-teachers in core content areas utilizing SWPBIS. The

participants were asked questions about their implementation of SWPBIS for all students and then specifically, students with LD. All qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis and coded using open, axial, and selective strategies.

### **Documents**

Transcription recordings and transcriptions were stored on a password-protected computer and were analyzed thematically. I sorted that data by participant code and analyzed them using a three-step process. The data for all participants were analyzed. I reread the interview transcripts several times to become familiar with the data and to note participant responses and ideas related to SWPBIS. Initially, this resulted in many open codes, such as “need for more rewards”, “more training and information” and “teacher unfamiliarity with procedures” and student buy in”. I subsequently reduced the varied number of open codes. Next, a search identified participants’ repetitions of words and phrases. Repeated words were relabeled with a term defining the open code.

Axial coding connected the data and the open codes. Relationships between open codes were identified with similar codes grouped into categories such as “blame for administration for lack of training”, “need support and motivation to implement”, “students and I are both confused”, and “differences between students”. The axial codes helped to identify temporary themes.

Patterns were once again determined to move from categories to themes. Gibbs (2018) asserted that themes identify the major concepts that the researcher uses to interpret the data. Four themes emerged from the qualitative research question: What

SWPBIS practices do teachers report using in the classroom to address the behaviors of students with learning disabilities?

The themes that emerged were: (a) SWPBIS rewards needed variation, (b) buy-in and collaboration between administration, teachers, and students was required, (c) additional SWPBIS professional development training was required and (d) SWPBIS rules and expectations should be taught consistently.

**Theme 1: SWPBIS reward system needs variation.**

Based on the interviews, 8 out of 9 participants noted that there was a reward system in place (Mustang Bucks). Seven out of 9 participants agree that rewards could be more effective if given variety. Mustang Bucks are the token dollars given to students when they exhibit behaviors such as assisting a peer in class, completing all tasks as assigned, or remaining engaged during instruction. These “bucks” are redeemed in the school store for products or snacks.

One participant observed that there was a need to revamp of the overall reward structure, as some students were not motivated by the current offerings. LD students sometimes seek to withdraw from tasks that are difficult, time-consuming, or require problem-solving (see Chou, Kroger & Pu, 2018). As such, when they received consequences for maladaptive behaviors and were separated from the group, rather than reduce the behavior, it served to reinforce it.

Several participants reported using “peer time” or homework passes as rewards for students who displayed targeted behaviors. Students received recognition for displays of kindness or time engaged. There was concern regarding student complacency when it

reached the point that rewards were no longer part of a “teachable moment” but simply a transaction.

Participants’ findings for this theme suggested that rewards should acknowledge and reinforce targeted behaviors. Teachers used these opportunities to teach students that their efforts were appreciated, which led to obtaining the desired classroom behavior. There was a need for variety in rewarding students to reinforce positive behavior as motivation varied among students.

**Theme 2: SWPBIS implementation requires buy-in by administrators, teachers, students, and staff.**

A second emerging theme suggested that SWPBIS implementation required more buy-in from through collaboration with administrators, teachers, staff and students. According to one of the participants, “Some teachers do not want the extra work of having to implement it, and that means they will not do it.” “It has to be consistent all the way around, said another.” For example, she shared, “I think it could be more successful if students knew more about it and understand the reasons behind it.” Teachers proposed that SWPBIS could be more successful if the interventions were automatic. “When targeted behaviors become the norm; that is a sign of buy-in.”

During her semi-structured interview, a teacher noted that as a part-year hire, she was not versed in SWPBIS and, as such, could not buy in to or practice what she did not understand. She intended to gain more knowledge before the next school year to implement in the classroom. Another teacher noted, “Students utilized the SWPBIS on their own when they perceive them as positive things.”

Participants agreed that successful SWPBIS implementation required buy-in and acceptance from teachers and students. When teachers did not possess adequate knowledge about SWPBIS or perceived it as just another task added to their already extensive workload, there was less likelihood that they will demonstrate buy-in or implement the framework in their classroom. It became just another new mandate from by the district but never fully actualized.

Students must also buy in and accept the SWPBIS framework. If they perceived it as just more rules or another form of control, it was challenging to win their cooperation. As such, they did not master the skills they needed to make positive changes in the future. Instead, when students viewed SWPBIS as a positive reward system, they were more apt to participate and master these skills.

**Theme 3: Additional SWPBIS professional development and training for teachers, students, and staff.**

A third theme was the need for more training for teachers, staff, and students. Eight out of Nine participants noted this in their interviews. They indicated that administration reviewed the SWPBIS framework at the beginning of the school year, but offered no further training throughout the rest of the school year. “While there are team members who meet monthly, the rest of the staff is not always privy to the data, nor is there training derived from these results conducted with the faculty and staff.” As one participant noted, “they need to share with us.”

Similarly, a participant explained “that not all the teachers were on the same page, I do not think our understanding of SWPBIS is the same.” He believed that SWPBIS had

been attempted in the classroom, “but more training was needed for successful implementation.” A number of respondents stated that although they knew a bit about SWPBIS from a previous assignment, more training was required to be more successful in their current environment.

As part of the training, teacher participants suggested more communication about SWPBIS as it relates to disability type, content area, and general education versus special education students. Information regarding identification of program interventions and modifications, as well as development and utilization were also mentioned.

All participants reported the need for ongoing professional development and training as well as access to data related to the SWPBIS framework. They also desired to see data associated with the current structure and its progress toward targeted behavioral outcomes. Some teachers felt they were ill prepared for SWPBIS classroom implementation and did not receive adequate training. Implementation procedures rely heavily on the implementer skills (Pinkelman et al., 2015; Rubenstein et al., 2018).

#### **Theme 4: SWPBIS rules and expectations taught consistently.**

A fourth emerging theme from this study was the need to teach the SWPBIS rules and expectations to students consistently (fidelity). One teacher noted having reviewed SWPBIS procedures to verify their alignment with her classroom rules and expectations. Others acknowledged that they discussed rules and expectations at the beginning of the year, “but it sometimes got lost in the middle of the everyday routine.”

One participant reported a well-established routine of SWPBIS review of rules and procedures. “So much so that sometimes students reminded him if expectations are

not exhibited by another student or visitor to the classroom”. He advised, “SWPBIS was most effective when he circled the class reminding or reiterating expectations to students when off-task or disengaged”. “Educators have to follow through, be consistent, model it, and guide students.”

Overall, participants suggested a need for more consistency in teaching SWPBIS rules and expectations to students. Teachers played an essential role in actively teaching effective SWPBIS for students. As such, they should model and reinforce the SWPBIS procedures with fidelity to help students learn these skills.

### **Discussion of Research Findings**

Despite the implementation of SWPBIS at a local high school in the southeastern United States in 2016, LD students were still demonstrating maladaptive behaviors that affected their academic performance. In particular, freshman and sophomore students continued to exhibit behaviors such as skipping class, absenteeism, and refusal to follow faculty and staff instructions. There was a need for examination of teacher implementation of SWPBIS in working toward target behaviors. The evaluation of interview findings was consistent with the research presented in the review of the literature. The themes discussed in the literature review included buy-in, sustainability, professional development, and best practices.

### **Conclusion**

This study was designed to examine how teachers implemented SWPBIS in the classroom to manage behaviors for students with LD. The basic qualitative study was guided by a research question: What SWPBIS practices do teachers report using in the

classroom to address the behaviors of students with LD? The study collected data from interviews with nine high school special education co-teachers in core content areas using SWPBIS. Participants ranged in years of experience from 5 to 17 years. The ability to gain insight and understanding into the personal and contextual teacher's behaviors and knowledge of SWPBIS directly contributed to the theoretical framework of this study.

I analyzed interview responses to clarify practices and experiences of teachers on implementing SWPBIS. Six questions, aligned to the RQ was used to guide the interviews. Interviews were analyzed thematically to list, examine, and summarize data to provide answers to the research question. Open, axial and selective coding was applied to the data for the purpose of data reduction. Results of interview responses, and subsequent coding, indicated that most teachers implemented at least some components of SWPBIS in the classroom.

Four themes emerged from the analysis of the responses to interview questions. The four themes are Theme 1: The SWPBIS reward structure required variation. Theme 2: SWPBIS implementation required buy-in from students, staff, and teachers. Theme 3: There was a need for additional SWPBIS professional development training. Theme 4: Teachers should teach SWPBIS rules and expectations consistently. All participants noted it was imperative to maintain a collaborative and inclusive approach to communication and data. The data revealed teachers implemented SWPBIS by using Mustang Bucks, cellphone privileges, peer interaction and positive reinforcement as motivation for target behaviors for students. Findings, as aligned to the research question, follow.



**Response to interview question 1: Take me through your daily use of SWPBIS in your classroom. Describe what aspects of SWPBIS you are using. (Tier 1, 11 or 111)**

The majority (8 out of 9) of the participants acknowledged that some Tier 1 interventions were implemented and supported in their classrooms. Teachers described how they used SWPBIS in working toward students learning the necessary skills for targeted behaviors. Some of the participants advised it could be overwhelming to implement SWPBIS at the same time as meeting content and academic requirements. T stated, “He sometimes did not implement it as well as he should due to content requirements and pacing guides for academics.” H also noted “she is not the most organized and therefore SWPBIS strategies are not the top priority.” C, B, and W indicated, “they used the SWPBIS procedures that exist to the best of their understanding.” S affirmed, “she did not have very many behavior issues as she established expectations early, and her students know that she is serious.” IH believed “her relationships with her students also served to minimize maladaptive behaviors.”

**Response to interview question 2: Describe SWPBIS implementation for all students.**

Participants stated that in a cotaught setting, SWPBIS was the same for all students as they implemented Tier I interventions. “Students receive cues and reminders to remain on task and engaged with instruction said M.” S advised, “They are to refrain from the use of electronic devices during class time.” “They received Mustang Bucks for targeted behaviors such as engagement, helping peers, or timeliness.” Se pointed out, “students are recognized and applauded for improvements in behavior or academic

progress.” C described her procedure of “maintaining a presence in the hallway, cafeteria and greeting each student at the classroom door as an example of school-wide evidence.”

**Results for interview question 3: Describe your use of SWPBIS for students with learning disabilities.**

All nine participants noted repetition and reinforcement as necessary for students with learning disabilities concerning SWPBIS procedures. T and W indicated that “this could be due to short term memory deficits for some of the students.” “Just as we had to remind them of content details they forgot, SWPBIS cues are necessary when certain behaviors were exhibited.”

**Research for interview questions 4: Can you describe any modifications that you use for students with LD when using SWPBIS? Are they specific to when students behave or misbehave? If so, How?**

Six out of 9 participants noted that modifications were necessary when the SWPBIS protocol in place did not address the student's individual needs to curb maladaptive behaviors. In that situation, additional strategies were required. For example, a recurrently tardy student may get some type of reward if he or she made it class on time even once.

**Results for interview question 5: Are you consistently teaching SWPBIS expectations/consequences to all students? Do you have to reinforce them more for students with learning disabilities?**

The majority of participants admitted a lack of consistency in teaching expectations or consequences to students either because they did not have time or did not

have the expertise. H and S stated, "They initially taught SWPBIS to all students." There were 6 out of 9 participants regarding whether special education or general education students required more reinforcement of SWPBIS rules and expectations.

C, H, and M believed students with LD sometimes exhibited targeted behavior more consistently than their non-disabled peers in the cotaught setting did. C thought, "This was because LD students were already used to behavioral plans or teachers following their behaviors closely." T noted, "Modeling the targeted behaviors of their nondisabled peers in the cotaught setting has helped with less need for reminders." H suggested, "Having two teachers in the classroom who could implement proximity control helped to reduce the need for reminders in the cotaught setting."

**Results of question 6: Describe how SWPBIS was implemented school-wide to make it a part of the school culture.**

All participants mentioned the SWPBIS media posted throughout the school and its discussion during morning announcements established SWPBIS as a part of school culture. "Mustang bucks shout outs" provided accolades to students for displaying a variety of targeted behaviors. S noted, "She had used them in all her classes to help motivate and engage them in target behaviors in all settings." M stated, "She had seen a drastic improvement in school culture since SWPBIS had been in place." T believed that the SWPBIS team and facilitators have also helped to make it an integral part of school culture."

## Summary

In this section, the research methodology, data collection, and analysis were described in Section 2 as it related to the participants, the role of the researcher as well as data collection and analysis. The basic qualitative study examined teacher's SWPBIS implementation practices since the 2016 school year. Included is information defining the characteristics and selection of participants. Ethical considerations and safeguards were noted, as was the role of the researcher and methods for handling data. Data collection and analysis tools and procedures were described with instruments specified. Quality assurance measures such as dependability and confirmability were explained with the chapter concluding in an outline of the reported findings and their use in answering the proposed research question. The findings were used to develop a professional development project. Section 3 details the rationale for the project.

### Section 3: The Project

This project is a professional development plan (PDP) that focuses on SWPBIS for managing behaviors of students with LDs. In this study, I examined teachers' current SWPBIS implementation practices in the classroom, and they indicated a lack of consistency, buy in, and overall knowledge about SWPBIS. Participant recommendations included continuous professional development and improved communication. Based on the findings, I developed a PDP to address the gap in knowledge and practice.

I proposed a professional development (PD) committee comprised of an administrator and/or designee and a district level trainer who would work jointly with the school level SWPBIS team to conduct training. All certified teachers, administrators, support staff, and long-term substitutes are eventual target audiences for the PD training. PD goals include acquisition of the necessary knowledge and skills through ongoing SWPBIS training and support. PD training will allow the participants to learn and practice strategies designed to enhance student mastery of required behavioral skills.

The study site was a high school in the southeastern United States, where SWPBIS implementation, mandated by the study school district, is in the Tier 1 stage. An examination of the problem through teachers' interview responses helped me to identify PD topics that could provide the knowledge and skills needed to implement SWPBIS in promoting positive student behaviors. The PDP provides analysis of data by explaining what participants understood to be the constructs of SWPBIS and the four themes that emerged from interviews (see Appendix).

The emergent themes were variation in rewards system, buy-in and commitment from teachers and students, additional PD and training, and teaching SWPBIS consistently. The purpose of the PD is to provide ongoing training for teachers and staff responsible for SWPBIS implementation in managing the behaviors of students with LDs. Overall, the findings indicated that all the teachers interviewed had implemented some type of SWPBIS in their classrooms, yet there was no cohesive plan with the coteacher in the classroom. In addition, there was a lack of understanding of the school's SWPBIS framework and how it should be implemented.

PD is the bridge between current practice and improvement, and it should align with daily practices and experience. For teachers to buy into PD, there must be a connection to current practices in a relatively short period (Collopy, 2015). Kennedy (2016) noted that effective PD must be purposeful and engaging but not so long as to lose the interest of participants. It should also focus on active learning and provide content specific information. Effective PD is most likely to affect classroom teaching when it can be sustained over time, is clear and focused on specific instructional strategies, and involves participants collectively rather than individually (Avidov-Ungar, 2016; Hynds et al., 2016).

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to examine how teachers implement SWPBIS at the research site for managing the behaviors of secondary students with LDs. I collected data in one-on-one interviews with the teachers. Participants' interview responses indicated that explicit, consistent SWPBIS instruction; varied rewards; teacher and student buy in; and added training and collaboration would assist in

SWPBIS implementation and student acquisition of required skills. Participant recommendations did not align with current classroom practices at the local site. The PDP will present results from the study and the training module designed to enhance SWPBIS implementation practices at the local site.

In this section, I detail the following components of the PDP project: problem/purpose statement, summary of literature, population and sample, data collection and analysis, and social change implications.

### **Problem**

The local school authorized implementation of SWPBIS but had not studied its effectiveness or provided teachers with specific methods for managing the behaviors of students with exceptionalities. As a result, the principal did not know specifically how teachers implemented SWPBIS in the classroom for students with LDs. This problem contributed to a gap in practice. I conducted this study to address that problem.

I chose a PDP as the project genre for this research study because most of the teachers interviewed reported receiving some exposure to SWPBIS and were currently implementing the framework based on their preferred methods of instruction. The recommendation for ongoing PD is supported by research-based strategies included in the literature for enhancing SWPBIS implementation strategies toward managing behaviors.

I collected data to identify gaps in SWPBIS practice, such as school-wide consistency, data-based decision making, continuous monitoring, and ongoing PD and training. Sugai and Horner (2014) and Hirsh et al (2015) proposed that SWPBIS PD and training needed to be ongoing, sustained, and long term. As such, a few days of SWPBIS

training had not met the ongoing, systemic needs of the school. The findings indicated there was a need to extend training beyond the initial SWPBIS training at the beginning of the school year to address inconsistencies in teachers' SWPBIS implementation practices in the classroom.

I considered a case study and program evaluation, which would have included observations. However, observations were removed as a possible data source due to the COVID-19 school shutdowns. According to Werts et al. (2014), teachers' feedback and experiences should advise administration when there is a lack of knowledge or information regarding instructional practices. As a result, I determined a PDP to be the appropriate project for this study. After completion and publication of this study, the PDP will be presented to the principal and administrative and SWPBIS teams to share the study findings, present related research, and propose actions for addressing the problem (see Hayes, 2019).

### **Review of the Literature**

After completing the research, I conducted a review of literature supporting the recommendation for and development of a PD project to present to the principal, SWPBIS team, and other stakeholders at the local research site. In this review, I discuss relevant literature in alignment with an analysis of study findings. Based on the study findings, I propose using the data derived from teachers' feedback and experiences as the foundation for determining PD and training and making necessary modifications to the local research site's SWPBIS implementation.



I conducted a broad search of the literature using the following databases accessed through the Walden University Library: Thoreau, EBSCOhost, Education Resources Information Center, and Academic Search Complete. In addition, the Google Scholar search engine was used. The focus of my search was primary and peer-reviewed research studies published within the past 5 years. In some instances, these were difficult to find due to limited resources on the subject. The following keyword search terms were used: *PD, teacher training, teacher communities (TCs), professional learning communities (PLCs), SWPBIS team, and teacher collaboration*. I used the literature to identify and validate the recommendation for ongoing PD and training for teacher implementation of SWPBIS for students with LDs.

## **PD**

Bolam (2000) refers to PD as activities designed to enhance teachers' knowledge and skills in approaching the education of children. PD for teachers is organized time and activities to improve students' learning and improve teachers' professional competence, skills, and attitudes (Guskey, 1994). Stone (2014) defined PD as planned, unplanned, formal, and informal efforts positively contributing to personal and professional development.

Werts et al. (2014) concluded that teachers' implementation practices might be directly associated with their training, or lack thereof, in how to apply interventions. Castillo et al. (2016) acknowledged that PD training should address the individual school's or students' needs because needs vary in different environments. As a result, when requirements are explicitly taught, teachers can be more successful in their

practices. Findings from the current study indicated that some teachers lacked the knowledge and training required to successfully implement SWPBIS for students with LDs in the cotaught setting.

Prior to planning for and delivering PD, it was important to understand the needs of participants. Mazzoti (2016) described the steps in development an effective PDP as including a stakeholder team, data collection and analysis, identification of goals, and ongoing monitoring and evaluation of results. Activities that are individually participated in are more informal but can be more effective for teachers (Uştu et al., 2016). As such, in-service trainings in which teachers participated voluntarily were more effective and engaging than in-service trainings where the teacher was expected to “sit and get.”

I deemed the gradual PD model as the most appropriate to address the SWPBIS training needs of teachers. The gradual model, or the gradual release model, was regularly used with students at the local school site. Nieto (2003) stated that the gradual PD model was appropriate for the perspective of teaching because it prioritized skills and knowledge for teachers. The collaborative learning phase of instruction is a key component of gradual release where students work cooperatively with one another to discuss, interact, and produce (Dole et al., 2019; Fisher & Frey, 2008).

### ***On-Going SWPBIS Implementation PD and Training***

Ongoing PD should provide initial training with subsequent follow-up to ensure effective implementation and sustainability (Steyn, 2005). The first step in PD training is the supported acquisition of new knowledge and skills; however, training alone is not sufficient to support sustained implementation in everyday practice (Webster-Stratton et

al., 2011). Following the initial training, more intense instruction and practice can address any issues with implementation of what was learned during the PD.

My recommendation for enhanced teacher practices focuses on PD and training for SWPBIS implementation to address the needs of students with LDs. After examining teachers' reported practices and experiences, I determined that they needed additional training to inform current inconsistent applications of SWPBIS. Rivkin and Schiman (2015) concluded that determining the type of support needed to enhance student learning is crucial. Training should demonstrate best practices and provide teachers with adequate resources to promote teaching and learning (Hirsh et al., 2015).

De Neve et al. (2015) noted that on-going training helps teachers better understand and implement intervention processes. Through on-going training, teachers at the local school site can more effectively plan and implement SWPBIS to manage the behaviors of students with LDs. Training may further advance teachers' knowledge of individual student needs in their classroom population.

### ***Effective PD***

The success of PD and training is dependent upon collaboration between stakeholders related to instructional practices (Castillo et al., 2016). SWPBIS is not a curriculum, intervention, or manualized method that can be acquired in a short workshop (Horner & Macaya, 2018). Implementation practices are a result of the strength of training, and equally important is the degree of support provided by the local school and district (Castillo et al., 2016). When support and collaboration are deficient, there is inconsistency and lack of sustainability in practice, which aligned with my study

findings. Lewis et al. (2016) noted that the effectiveness of the training was directly related to active learning, the level of coherence between training activities, and structures in place at participants' schools.

Implementing SWPBIS using a "one size fits all" approach can often prove unwise because it does not consider the variety of classroom circumstances; conversely, simply implementing practices without proper training or clarity can result in implementation in name only, without the true benefit to managing behavior (Gadd & Butler, 2020). Teachers in Gadd and Butler's study expressed that a lack of understanding and engagement in the SWPBIS training process led to confusion during implementation. Bayar (2014) asserted that effective PD and training must address the needs of teachers, students, and the school.

In view of these principles, the literature reviewed implied that teachers' implementation practices could be enhanced when training was relevant to their current needs and that they attached more meaning to active engagement in PD rather than passive association. Traditionally, measuring the effectiveness of PD was focused more on teacher satisfaction rather than teacher learning or use of practices taught (King, 2014). Per Berne et al. (2014), the use of research-based teaching strategies during training can help teachers gain the experience necessary to apply interventions more effectively. Those with appropriate experience, skills, and tools to do the job should provide training (King, 2014).

In my study, I examined the data derived from teachers' interview responses as to how they implemented SWPBIS in the classroom first, with all students and then,

specifically for students with LD. The findings from teachers' reported practices varied but most agreed they lack clarity and consistency with regard to SWPBIS implementation. As a result, teachers experienced challenges in trying to apply interventions with fidelity. Teachers described prior training as haphazard and lacking specificity to clearly defined learning outcomes for teachers or students. The findings supported the behavioral learning theory by indicating teachers' practical knowledge had been acquired through interaction with the classroom environment and students rather than professional development or training.

The concept of "behavioral spillover" may also have been relevant to the findings of the study. The spillover effect purported that engagement in one behavior was an indicator of engagement or adoption of a second behavior through conditioning (Nilsson et al., 2017; Lauren et al., 2019). In other words, without proper training, teachers' SWPBIS implementation practices (behaviors) may have "spilled over" in response to students' maladaptive behaviors. Conversely, ongoing PD could improve behavioral spillover in managing the behaviors of students with LD.

### **Collaboration**

A collaborative team approach will allow teachers opportunities to become a part of the planning processes of SPBIS implementation. Davis (2015) noted a positive connection between student learning and teacher collaboration. Hannigan and Hauser (2015) proposed that collaboration strengthened instructional skills thus teachers were more willing and able to implement SWPBIS. Voogt et al. (2015) asserted that teachers

are able to learn from each other during collaboration. Sun et al., (2016) suggested that teachers are more willing to accept advice from their peers than from outside sources.

Carreño and Hernandez (2017) noted that teacher collaboration and training is key to the learning process because teachers feel empowered. Through collaboration, teachers at the high school research site can share SWPBIS best practices based on their knowledge and experience for managing behaviors in the classroom. Through collaboration, the teachers could support each other in learning to employ SWPBIS in the classroom (Ficarra & Quinn, 2014; Hayes & Gershenson, 2015). Individually, they may lack knowledge, but collectively they can learn from each other.

Teachers can share their experiences in working to overcome challenges using targeted strategies that promote positive behavior for students. By working together, they can provide the support and reinforcement needed to manage maladaptive behaviors in the inclusive (cotaught) classroom (Evans, & Weiss, 2014). As a part of the collaborative team, the principal would also be able to understand how teachers implement SWPBIS in the classroom for students with LD.

### **Benefits of effective collaboration.**

Prior research supported the progressive influence of collaborative team approaches. Recent studies indicated that teacher collaboration improved instructional practices and, as a result, student mastery. Cooperative ability, as perceived by teachers, is a predictor of student success (Goddard et al., 2015). Through collaboration, the teachers could support each other in learning to employ SWPBIS in the classroom (Ficarra & Quinn, 2014; Hayes & Gershenson, 2015).

**Challenges of teacher collaboration.**

Collaboration can be challenging for some schools. Although collaboration was considered a high priority by most interviewed or surveyed, there was reported lack of teacher buy-in, conflicts in temperament, and inadequate planning time (Global State of Digital Learning Study, 2019). Yuan and Zhang (2016) examined teacher collaboration in Chinese schools and identified similar challenges such as lack of structure and teacher homogeneity that led to surface collaboration. They also noted that improved communication between teachers and administration might improve collaboration. Effective collaboration is not solely reliant upon teachers, but requires direct support from other stakeholders as well (Ronfeldt et al., 2015).

**Collaboration for implementing SWPBIS.**

Horner et al. (2015) promoted teachers' use of evidence-based practices. According to Horner et al., when implementing SWPBIS, a research-based approach offered more opportunities for teacher success when focused on students' socioemotional, and behavioral needs. McCurdy et al. (2016) further affirmed that successful SWPBIS implementation involved a collaborative approach. As a part of a teacher community (TC), teachers could successfully collaborate in implementing SWPBIS in the classroom for students with LD.

**Resources**

The success of implementing my recommendations at the study site is dependent upon the required resources and support. To facilitate my recommendations, the school will need to schedule a time for me to meet with the administrative team to share and

discuss the PDP. The principal, administrative and SWPBIS team as well as teachers serve as the primary audience for this project study. The principal supported this research and requested specifics of the findings in a summary report.

Research derived from peer-reviewed articles were used in the study and in development of the PDP. My recommendations were based on my research results and peer-reviewed articles. Resources needed to release the report include a Zoom or Google Meets space, Google or PowerPoint slides, and supporting technology to display or print the report (see Appendix).

### **Potential Barriers and Solutions**

I may encounter a number of barriers to implementing my recommendations, which include rejection of my findings, or recommendations, PD and training not available for SWPBIS team collaboration; or lack of resources or funding from the school/district. A solution to addressing the rejection of findings or recommendations is to meet with the principle or his designee to address any concerns or questions prior to presentation to the remainder of the stakeholders. Buy-in to the findings and conclusion surrounding the study is crucial to effect changes in current practices (Piper & Zuilkowski, 2015).

Some may reject the findings as it challenges their beliefs of what SWPBIS is. Changing the structure without changing the belief system will not bring about fundamental change (Markauskaite, 2020). If there is pushback to developing collaborative teams either because the training does not exist or the resources are not available within the district, this would be a barrier to implementing the



recommendations. A solution might be to make contact with the district with regard to availability of resources, personnel or funding for this endeavor.

PD should strategically address SWPBIS implementation in the classroom to manage behaviors of students with LD. Previous training was conducted by the school's SWPBIS team coordinator who had been trained by district personnel through professional development prepared by the state. The state department did not provide training relevant to SWPBIS implementation for managing the behaviors of SWDs. As noted earlier, funding could be a barrier if the school or district's budget does not allocate funding SWPBIS training such as this. One solution could be collaboration through professional learning communities (PLCs or TCs).

A TC can improve the planning and problem solving ability of teachers who sharing knowledge acquired through organizational training (Markauskaite, 2020). In other words, during the upcoming school year, if appropriate, the school might be able to divide the teachers into PLCs with a SWPBIS expert assigned to each group. As such, PLCs could reduce cost by providing training to a smaller group (i.e., the principle or an administration member and a number of teachers), who would then provide training to the teachers assigned in their PLC.

During the current pandemic, online training modules could be the only option but might not provide the authentic hands-on experiences required for increased knowledge base. Finally, providing resources such as hardcopies of the PDP or other SWPBIS resources may be a barrier if the school's budget for paper, ink or other printing

supplies is limited. A solution may be encouraging that PLCs share one or two hard copies while providing electronic copies of information to all.

### **Proposal for Implementation**

Upon approval of this doctoral study project by Walden University, I will email the PDP report to the principal of the study site. I will include a cover letter requesting a designated time to present the plan to the principal and other administration or SWPBIS team members as designated. The principal may choose to invite teachers and other stakeholders to the meeting. I will provide a copy of the plan to all in attendance at the meeting. I will present the recommendation identified as ongoing PD training relevant to SWPBIS implementation to manage the behaviors of students with LD as well the adoption of a collaborative team approach to improve knowledge, buy-in, and consistency.

### **Timetable**

After presenting the PDP, I will propose a timetable for implementing of the recommendations. The proposed timetable for the presentation of the PDP recommendations is during the fall semester of 2021. After formal presentation and the principal's approval, he will disseminate the findings and recommendations of the study. The principal will then determine PD and training needs for teachers, with assistance from the administrative and SWPBIS teams. During Week 9 of the fall semester of 2021, teachers should begin PD training for learning how to implement SWPBIS in the classroom for students with LD (see Appendix).

If enough funding exists for simultaneous teacher training, a schedule will be provided with pertinent dates and times. If a lack of funding plays a key role in defining the training delivery, teachers may receive training in a staggered method and participate in biweekly meetings to discuss progress. If video modules are the necessary method, teachers will receive an electronic link to this source with a date for necessary completion. Digital planning meetings would need to follow in preparation for implementation of the recommendations during the second semester of 2022.

### **Roles and Responsibilities of the Researcher**

My role and responsibilities as the researcher are to design a project in response to the problem of not knowing teachers' SWPBIS implementation practices to manage behaviors for students with LD. I chose a PDP project, based on the data source and themes that emerged from data analysis. I will present the PDP plan to the principal and other administrative staff or designees (invited by principal) to provide details of the findings and recommendations for a solution. The Walden IRB gave me approval to collect and analyze data for the study (Approval Number 04-24-20-0318092). The chair, methodologist, and University Research Review member provided guidance and productive feedback to confirm the quality of my project study.

### **Project Evaluation Plan**

The PDP was designed to present details of the problem and findings derived from data analysis and literature. The plan provides recommendation for additional PD training with a collaborative team approach to SWPBIS implementing practices. I chose a PDP because prior training had not met the ongoing needs of teachers and other

stakeholders. The PDP presentation will be evaluated using a Google form formative assessment (Appendix).

### **Justification for Type of Evaluation**

A formative evaluation tool, a survey, will be used to collect feedback from attendees (principal, administrative and SWPBIS team, and teachers) after the presentation (Appendix). The survey will be sent electronically to all attendees requesting their participation. Using Google Forms, I will ask questions to collect data to evaluate the attendees' comprehension of recommendations stated in the PDP. Quantitative responses to statements will be documented using a short response format. I will examine response data to substantiate the efficacy of the presentation and, verify suggestions for improvement (Levitt et. al., 2018). The quantitative data will help me isolate areas that require revision in my presentation. The qualitative data will provide an overall review of the presentation.

### **Goals of the Evaluation**

The goals of the evaluation are to determine possible barriers to the recommendation suggested, strengths and weaknesses of the presentation and comprehension of the information in my presentation. The aforementioned goals will be assessed with regard to organization of the research, quality of the presentation and, stated problem and solution. Overall, I wish to assess if the presentation was clear enough to support the recommended training based on the study results.

### **Project Implications**

I chose to design a more extensive PDP because the day or two of PD training previously provided did not meet the ongoing, needs of the school. The PDP was developed to address the problem of inconsistency and knowledge gaps of teachers for implementing SWPBIS from the analysis of findings. The findings indicated the need to extend SWPBIS professional development and training beyond preplanning days. The findings may be used to meet the needs of current and future teachers at the study site.

### **Possible Social Change Implications**

The PDP will be used to provide training for teachers' SWPBIS implementation practices in managing the behaviors of students with LD. Teaching practices and student behaviors can improve when they work together. Active and ongoing PD and training may improve instruction and assist students with skill acquisition. Positive social change can occur when teachers effectively teach SWPBIS knowledge and skills, and students master them.

On the local level, the PDP may inform social change. SWPBIS is still a continuing initiative at the local school site. Through improved training and collaboration by teachers, students may increase mastery of the required skills. They, in turn, may be better equipped for success in high school, postsecondary education, and their prospective careers and in life. The skills acquired may affect social change in that students become productive and proficient citizens of the world.

## **Conclusion**

In Section 3, details of the PDPs goals and rationale, relevant literature, evaluation, as well as implications of social change were provided. There was also discussion of a research-based PDP for PD and a collaborative team approach to SWPBIS implementation practices. Components included were literature related to effective PD and planning, the gradual release model, active engagement and collaboration with benefits and anticipated barriers noted. Plans for the PDP project and required resources were explained. The section concluded with the project implications of social change. In Section 4, I will present the strengths and limitations of the study along with recommendations for alternative approaches and implications for future research. I will complete this section with a summary of the knowledge gained from the study and subsequent project.

#### Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

I conducted this project study to address the problem of not knowing how teachers implemented SWPBIS to manager behaviors for students with LDs. To address this problem, I examined teachers' implementation practices through data collected from interviews. After analyzing the data, I created a PDP to enhance teachers' practices through ongoing SWPBIS training as indicated by the participants' responses. Previous training takes place during planning days at the beginning of the school year; however, SWPBIS implementation requires more than a few days of PD and training (see Hirsh et al., 2015).

Interview data indicated the need for ongoing, systemic PD and training to address the problem of SWPBIS implementation in the classroom to manage behaviors for students with LDs. The PDP provides the study findings; interrelated research; and research-based, training recommendations.

In Section 4, I discuss the strengths and limitations of the study after examining the data derived from teachers' interviews about their SWPBIS implementation practices. Details of the proposed method to solving the problem; a description of the overall significance of the work and the impact for positive social change; and a self-reflection on my growth and learning through the lens of practitioner, scholar, and project developer are also provided. The PDP was developed to allow the local site to make evidence-based decisions as the SWPBIS program moves forward. I consider the outlook for future research in this area before summarizing the key points of my work and providing conclusions.

### **Project Strengths**

I identified four strengths of the project. First, this project addressed the need to examine teachers' SWPBIS implementation practices with students with LDs. The data derived from the study may be used by stakeholders to modify or enhance programs (see Jabeen, 2016). The principal and administrative and SWPBIS teams can determine changes necessary to the local site's SWPBIS framework. Thibeault (2017) purported that effective leadership creates and supports opportunities for change by building a school culture that supports collaboration and ownership.

Another strength of this project lies in the ability to provide stakeholders with data regarding participants' experiences with SWPBIS implementation practices at the local research site. The PDP is presented using a clear and precise language to help stakeholders (i.e., principal, administrators, SWPBIS team, and teachers) clarify the problem and understand why it needs to be addressed (see Malone & Wright, 2017).

A third strength is that the recommendations are research based, which verifies reasons for using the methods suggested as a solution to the problem (see Sakamuro et al., 2015). All stakeholders must work together to enhance SWPBIS implementation practices. Research-based recommendations will help stakeholders understand how to apply the proposed solution and make necessary enhancements through training with continuous progress monitoring (Campbell & Naidoo, 2016; Pershing, 2015).

A fourth strength is that the PDP and ongoing training will help to establish a process for filling the practice gap at the study site. The plan will provide the stakeholders with facts, logic, and recommendations for solving the identified problem



(see Graham, 2019; Hayes, 2019). The principal can subsequently ask questions and seek clarification with regard to implementing the recommendations.

### **Project Limitations**

There are some limitations of this PD project. First, scheduling a time to present the report may be an issue because there is only so much time in the day. Previously scheduled district training; department, team, and grade-level meetings; faculty meetings; and parent contacts and conferences are all already a part of the master schedule. Second, selection and attendance at the meeting is subject to the discretion of the principal. He will determine the criteria and number of attendees permitted to attend the presentation. The third limitation is lies in the flexibility of school budget. The 2021 budget may not have funding available for the extended PD training of teachers. Limited funding may further affect the availability of resources (e.g., hard copies of the Powerpoint slides, etc.) for individual teachers.

### **Recommendations for Alternative Approaches**

This study further informed the gap in research regarding SWPBIS implementation practices for students with LDs. Beyond the local level, the project could help other schools and districts modify teachers' SWPBIS classroom practices. The desired outcomes for SWPBIS are to work toward reduce maladaptive behaviors and increase targeted behaviors through the reflective, data-based application of interventions.

I chose a PDP design to present the findings of this study, research about the problem, and my recommendation for solving the problem at the local study site. Before

determining the most suitable method, I considered a program evaluation of the SWPBIS implementation process. If using a program evaluation, I would have focused on evaluating the fidelity of teachers' SWPBIS implementation practices as the independent variable and office discipline referral (ODR) or maladaptive report data as the dependent variable. To collect data, I could have conducted a survey to measure fidelity of teachers' practices and reviewed data from ODR reports for SWDs. Data could have been compared for the past 4 years of SWPBIS implementation. The ODR report contains relevant data with specific rule infraction notes. Changes in the ODR data reports could denote the fidelity of SWPBIS implementation to manage the behaviors of SWDs. A recommendation to address the problem could have been extended SWPBIS training designed to increase implementation fidelity.

Another recommendation could have been to develop a research-based, how-to guide. The guide would have provided teachers with instructions for implementing SWPBIS in the classroom to manage behaviors for students with LDs. I determined through research that this how-to guide would not have been the most appropriate method for the current study. Both projects would have included recommendations for changes to implementation practices. PD and training is crucial to making changes in teacher practices (Whitworth & Chiu, 2015). Castillo et al. (2016) declared that PD training is directly related to the degree of support provided to school and district leaders. These factors helped me to understand that a PDP would be the best approach to inform school leaders about the problem and the need to solve it at the study site.

I currently serve as a high school special education teacher at the study site and am cognizant that teachers' practices can improve when they actively participate in PD aligned with their instructional needs. However, the success of PD is contingent upon collaboration between teachers, administration, and other stakeholders to identify and make needed improvements (Castillo et al., 2016). As a result, I determined additional PD training and a collaborative team approach were needed to enhance SWPBIS implementation practices for addressing the behaviors of students with LDs in the classroom.

### **Scholarship, Project Development, and Leadership and Change**

#### **Scholarship**

I chose a PD project because the study findings indicated the need for additional PD training beyond initial preplanning days to address the problem of teachers' SWPBIS implementation practices. In the PDP, I presented a recommendation for solving the problem with continuous training and a collaborative team approach. Completing this project study advanced my growth as an academic practitioner, scholar, and project developer by helping me to develop a process of logical inquiry.

I learned the importance of reviewing research and maintaining objectivity in acquiring knowledge. I now understand the importance of reading for understanding, concluding, and synthesizing information from the literature. I can define a problem, identify and classify relevant resources, and cite the works of others. In making the transition from student to scholar, I can now identify the connections between ideas and have the ability to approach problems systematically.

Researchers must locate information and gather data about a topic. As I progressed through this project, I refined my knowledge and skills in data collection and analysis while making connections and drawing conclusions using higher order critical thinking skills. I developed a clearer understanding of academic writing, which requires proper mechanics and attention to detail. In scholarly writing, a person must be specific about their word choice and use precise language to support their ideas. Scholarly writing also involves careful citations of the sources used to support assertions. In addition, I learned the importance of incorporating evidence and avoiding bias in my writing.

Researchers locate information and gather data about a topic determining which information is most relevant to their purpose. I used Walden's library services, doctoral resources, and academic collections and applied them as appropriate to my research study.

While writing this doctoral study, I encountered some unexpected challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic presented a challenge to the number of data sources I proposed using because I had to remove observations as a data source with schools being shut down. Because it was no longer feasible to conduct a case study, I considered the PD genre as a possible project choice. After reviewing the study checklist and examples, I determined that a PDP was the best project for this study because it can be used to provide information that can help the reader comprehend how to apply a solution to a problem (see Pershing, 2015). I determined that an exit ticket survey would be the best evaluative tool for the PD training because with this tool I could use attendee feedback to refine the presentation for future audiences.

Throughout my research study and recommendations, I have proposed methods that could support and strengthen the core SWPBIS practices at the school site.

Additional PD training will support teachers in attaining the required knowledge and skills to enhance SWPBIS implementation to manage behaviors for students with LDs. Strengthening their knowledge base will enable teachers to become more effective in addressing maladaptive behaviors in the classroom. The ideas and experiences shared during collaboration will further strengthen their essential practices. Overall, this research process has helped me to recognize my ability to bring about change through engaging in frequent communication, fostering a team culture, and providing feedback and reinforcement (see Sharon et al., 2020).

### **Project Development**

This project began as an idea to evaluate teachers' SWPBIS implementation practices in the classroom to improve the behaviors of SWDs. In order to develop the project, I collected and analyzed data to determine the findings. In writing the PDP, I highlighted the findings and recommendation and included a brief overview of the project. Additionally, a program description is provided to add context to the findings for the stakeholders (i.e., principal, administrative team, SWPBIS team, teachers, and other staff as deemed appropriate). There is also a description of the data source and research method used. The report ends with a discussion of the results, conclusions, interpretations, and recommendations.

## **Leadership and Change**

The scholar leader can lead and influence policy decisions at all levels to solve problems in education. Through the doctoral experience, I was encouraged to exhibit curiosity, collect evidence, and demonstrate action. I can now assist with the identification of the strategies and interventions that will enhance the local site's SWPBIS framework. Through this process, I have learned that to be a successful leader requires specific skills. To this end, the SWPBIS leadership team members must engage in a collaborative process to identify what skills students need, how these skills can be taught, and what can be done to determine mastery. As a leader, I can assist in applying interventions designed to reduce the maladaptive behaviors of students with LDs. In addition, I learned that a successful leader in SWPBIS ensures that the team is focused on making data-driven decisions in working toward successfully implementing SWPBIS.

## **Analysis of Self**

### **Analysis of Self as Scholar**

When I began the doctoral journey, I did not have a real understanding of the role of a scholar. I have some prior exposure to scholarly writing through the Master's program at Walden University. The doctoral process however, was more challenging. Locating journals that were relevant to my topic proved time consuming. Initially, I considered myself a good writer but had to continue to improve the writing skills needed to produce scholarly writing.

My professional reading habits have changed during this process. I will continue to read peer-reviewed journals and articles focused on SWPBIS practices designed to

improve students' behaviors. I have gained perseverance, strength, and patience throughout this journey. I have always been a teacher, problem solver, critical thinker, and lifelong learner in search of expertise. I now realize that these are qualities describing a scholar. As a scholar, I will continue to study and work as an agent of social change.

### **Analysis of Self as Practitioner**

I have grown into a scholar-practitioner in the course of the doctoral journey. I am no longer simply a consumer of knowledge but will also seek to be a doer as well. I seek to facilitate social change, which will enhance the lives of individuals, organizations, and my community. This project will inform my professional work as I employ scholarly inquiry to make changes to my classroom practices. I can effectively perform research that is relevant to behavioral practices and identify strategies to reach targets. I can identify a problem and apply research-based methodology and analysis to find a solution. I am reminded to use precise language in my professional interactions when writing correspondence to staff, colleagues, parents, and other stakeholders.

### **Analysis of Self as Project Developer**

I learned the requirements for creating a project based on scholarly research in consideration of the problems and challenges in a local school setting. This project strengthened my ability to examine and evaluate a program. The doctoral process requires dedication, attention to detail, flexibility, and the ability to deal with obstacles. Organization of materials is crucial as a project developer. The direction and progress of the project depended on my efforts. The use of the program checklist helped identify the priority of tasks needing to be completed. The number of revisions suggested helped me

focus on attention to detail in minimizing errors. I learned the importance of compromise and patience. I was more productive than not when working on the project in small incremental steps. Distractions did occur but were managed so that I could focus on project completion. There were obstacles, but I was able to persevere and overcome those challenges.

### **Reflection on Importance of the Work**

I chose a PD project because the findings indicated the need for additional SWPBIS training beyond the preplanning days to address the problem. While reflecting on the importance of my study, I recall that this journey has not only advanced my learning but also given me the skills required for identifying a problem and proposing a solution. The most important part of my work was the effort to expose the challenges teachers face in implementing new programs without sufficient training specific to their needs.

This project has enabled me to understand the significance of knowledge. Each school year teachers receive a great deal of new information along with increased expectations. Aslanargun (2015) acknowledged that expectations without sufficient explanation might result in misinterpretation. As such, teachers must be equipped with the training tools required to implement SWPBIS for managing the behaviors of students with LD. Moreover, through collaboration, teachers can better conceptualize and strategize by sharing their experiences and expertise.



### **The Project's Potential Impact on Social Change**

Teaching practices and student behaviors improve when they work collaboratively. Teachers need active and ongoing PD and training to improve instruction and assist students with skill acquisition. SWPBIS is a framework that many schools have adopted to assist teachers and students with managing behaviors in the classroom. Positive social change can occur when teachers effectively teach SWPBIS knowledge and skills, and students master them. Teachers identified collaboration, consistency, and ongoing training as recommendations for improved implementation.

### **Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research**

I chose a PD project because the findings indicated the need for additional PD training beyond a few preplanning days to the problem of SWPBIS implementation practices to manage the behaviors of students with LD. This study could bring about social change by providing research-based data to inform district leaders and policy makers about the need to approve the funding and resources necessary for training teachers. Training would be available for all teachers to increase their knowledge and skills with SWPBIS implementation practices. Improved implementation practices for students with LD could lead to increase student mastery of the adaptive skills required for them to be successful now and in the future.

More than 24,500 schools in the United States are currently implementing some form of SWPBIS (Georgia Department of Education, 2017a). The majority report challenges associated with the implementation process (Hannigan & Hauser, 2015). The first presentation of the PD training will be for stakeholders at the study site. Later, I

would like to present the findings and PD plan to the school district for the benefit of other schools implementing SWPBIS.

Implications for future research could include a comprehensive study examining teacher's SWPBIS implementation practices by content area, exceptionality, or classroom experience. A qualitative study using observations (which were removed due to COVID-19) could be used to examine teachers' classroom practices further. In addition, results could differ upon examination of practices after the introduction of Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions.

### **Conclusion**

This research study was focused on examining teachers' reported SWPBIS implementation practices for managing the behaviors of students with LD in the classroom. I designed a PD to provide information to help the principal and other stakeholders to understand the issue and I made data-based recommendation for solving the problem (see Malone & Wright, 2017). The data, derived from teacher interviews, indicated that additional training and collaboration could improve teacher's knowledge of SWPBIS implementation practices for reducing maladaptive behaviors for students with LD.

In the PD, I presented details regarding PD activities designed to increase teachers' knowledge and facilitate collective dialogue and experiences through TCs or PLCs) McIntosh and Goodman (2016) asserted that PD training and teacher collaboration could improve teacher learning and succeeding practices. Developments in these two areas will encourage social change at the study school and local community by preparing

teachers to help students master the adaptive behaviors and skills necessary to become productive citizens of the world.

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## Appendix: Professional Development Plan

**SWPBIS IMPLEMENTATION Professional Development Plan**

<b>Introduction</b>	<p>The purpose of this study was to examine how teachers implement SWPBIS for secondary students with learning disabilities (SLD). One on one interviews collected data regarding teachers' reported SWPBIS implementation practices for management of behaviors in the classroom. Most participants indicated that consistency, varied rewards, student/teacher buy in and, ongoing training and development would assist in SWPBIS implementation and acquisition of required skills. Teachers' recommendations did not align with current practices at the local research site.</p>
<b>The Problem:</b>	<p>The problem that drove this study was the fact that secondary students with disabilities (SWD) continued to struggle with making academic progress because of inappropriate behaviors. The local school authorized implementation of SWPBIS, but had not studied its effectiveness nor provided specific methods for managing the behaviors of students with exceptionalities. As a result, the principal did not know specifically how teachers implemented SWPBIS in the classroom for students with LD.</p> <p>Despite the implementation of SWPBIS at a local high school in the southeastern United States in 2016, LD students were still demonstrating maladaptive behaviors that affected their academic performance. In particular, freshman and sophomore students continued to exhibit behaviors such as skipping class, absenteeism, and refusal to follow faculty and staff instructions. There was a need for examination of teacher implementation of SWPBIS in working toward target behaviors.</p> <p>Examination of current supports identified gaps in practice regarding the teachers' implementation of</p>

	<p>SWPBIS. Lowery (2015) noted that over half of SWPBIS state coordinators reported that improving the behaviors of students with disabilities through SWPBIS had not been included in teacher training sessions or conversations. Even with SWPBIS in place, 29% of high school students, including those with disabilities, had not responded to tier one or two interventions (Bernstein et al., 2017).</p> <p>Despite the implementation of SWPBIS at a local high school in the southeastern United States, students with LD were still exhibiting behaviors that were affecting their academic progress. As such, there was a need to examine this issue more thoroughly. This study was conducted to address that problem. Data collected identified gaps, such as school wide consistency, continuous monitoring, and ongoing professional development and training. The findings indicated there was a need to extend training beyond the initial SWPBIS training during pre-planning to address the problem of teachers' SWPBIS implementation practices in the classroom for students with LD.</p>
<p><b>Goals:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide outline of the PD based upon study findings</li> <li>● Introduce TCs or PLCs as deliverable for ongoing PD</li> <li>● Define Specific Learning Disability.</li> <li>● How might it manifest in the classroom?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Purpose:</b></p>	<p>To enhance understanding of teachers' SWPBIS implementation practices and processes related to the' maladaptive behaviors of students with LD at the local site.</p>

<b>Research Question:</b>	<p>What SWPBIS practices do teachers report using in the classroom to address the behaviors of students with LD?</p>
<b>How was it addressed?</b>	<p>A basic qualitative design, through semi-structured interviews, examined teachers' SWPBIS implementation practices to address the behavioral needs of students with LD. The study collected primary data from nine participants in a natural setting with real-life context.</p>
<b>Themes identified in the study:</b>	<p><u>Theme 1: SWPBIS reward system needs variation.</u></p> <p>Participants' findings for this theme suggested that rewards should acknowledge and reinforce targeted behaviors. Teachers used these opportunities to teach students that their efforts were appreciated, which led to obtaining the desired classroom behavior. There was a need for variety in rewarding students to reinforce positive behavior as motivation varied among students.</p> <p><u>Theme 2: SWPBIS implementation requires buy-in by teachers, students, and staff.</u></p> <p>Participants agreed that successful SWPBIS implementation required buy-in and acceptance from teachers and students. When teachers did not possess adequate knowledge about SWPBIS or perceived it as just another task added to their already extensive workload, there was less likelihood that they will demonstrate buy-in or implement the framework in their classroom. It became just another new mandate from by the district that was never actualized.</p> <p><u>Theme 3: Additional SWPBIS professional development and training for teachers, students, and staff.</u></p> <p>All participants reported the need for ongoing professional development and training as well as access</p>

	<p>to data related to the SWPBIS framework.</p> <p>They also desired to see data associated with the current structure and its progress toward targeted behavioral outcomes. Some teachers felt they were ill prepared for SWPBIS classroom implementation and did not receive adequate training.</p> <p><u>Theme 4: SWPBIS rules and expectations taught consistently.</u></p> <p>Overall, participants suggested a need for more consistency in teaching SWPBIS rules and expectations to students.</p> <p>Teachers play an essential role in actively teaching effective SWPBIS for students. As such, they should model and reinforce the SWPBIS procedures with fidelity to help students learn these skills.</p> <p><i>Implementation procedures rely heavily on the implementer skills (Pinkelman, McIntosh, Rasplica, Berge, &amp; Strickland-Cohen, 2015; Rubenstein, Ridgley, Callan, Karami, &amp; Ehlinger 2018).</i></p>
<p><b>Recommendation:</b></p>	<p><b>After completing the research, I conducted a review of literature supporting recommendations for and development of a professional development plan to present to the principal and the SWPBIS team at the local research site. Based on the study findings and relevant literature, I proposed using the data derived from teachers' feedback and experiences as the foundation for determining professional development and making the necessary modifications to the local site's SWPBIS implementation practices.</b></p>

<p><b>Relevant Literature:</b></p>	<p>Rivkin and Schiman (2015) concluded that the examination of instructional methods is key in determining the type of support needed to enhance student learning. Training should demonstrate best practices and provide teachers with adequate resources to promote teaching and learning (Hirsh et al., 2015). As such, augmenting teachers' instructional methods through strategic development and training could assist students in mastering the required skills.</p> <p>De Neve et al. (2015) noted that on-going training helps teachers better understand and implement intervention processes. Through on-going training, teachers at the local school site could more effectively plan and implement SWPBIS to manage the behaviors of students with LD. Training may further advance teachers' knowledge of the specific students in their classroom population.</p> <p>Castillo et al. (2016) acknowledged that professional development training should address the individual school or students' needs, as needs vary in different environments. In addition, training activities should focus on the needs of individual classrooms and educators (Castillo et al., 2016). Identification of prerequisite skills are a critical component in planning for implementation training (Castillo et al. 2016). As a result, when teachers are properly trained, they can be more successful in their practices.</p>
<p><b>Proposed Timetable: Fall Semester 2021</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A formal meeting will be scheduled to present the project to principal</li> <li>● During the meeting, findings from the study and</li> </ul>



	<p>recommendation will be presented.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● The principal will then determine professional development and training needs for teachers, with assistance from the administrative and SWPBIS team.</li><li>● As a follow-up, the principle will plan and schedule needed professional development for teachers on taking a collaborative team approach to planning PBIS with instruction. The principal may employ the assistance of other administrators (i.e., assistant principal, lead teacher, social studies department chair) and SSES, PBIS training team.</li><li>● During week 9 of the fall semester of 2021, teachers should begin professional development training for learning how to implement SWPBIS in the classroom for students with LD.</li><li>● March 2021. Teachers start training for learning how to take a collaborative team approach to implementing SWPBIS for students with LD.</li><li>● April/May 2021. Following completion of training, teachers can discuss plans for adding the collaborative team during regular team meetings.</li><li>● August 2021. Begin the collaborative team approach to helping teachers implement SWPBIS to manage behaviors for students with LD.</li><li>● If funding is available for simultaneous training, a schedule</li> <li>● would be provided with dates and times. If a lack of funding determines the method of delivery, for instance, if video modules were selected as the preferred method, teachers would receive an electronic link to the training with a date designated for completion during the fall semester of 2022.</li></ul>
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<b>PD Hours:</b>	<b>10 professional development hours will be awarded for completion of the professional development activities described.</b>
<b>Conclusion:</b>	<p>In summary, recommends additional professional development as well as an ongoing collaborative team approach to SWPBIS implementation to address the maladaptive behaviors of students with LD. The recommendations were identified through research-based literature relevant to methods for improved new program implementation. The PD plan was designed to provide information to help the principal, administrative and SWPBIS teams, as well as other stakeholders, gain a better understanding of the problem. Consequently, the PD plan emphasizes that effective implementation of SWPBIS, through training and collaboration, may provide a solution to the problem of teachers' SWPBIS implementation for students with LD.</p>

**This PDP was discussed and approved on** \_\_\_\_\_

**Principal Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**SWPBIS Instructor Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

### Ongoing Professional Development Training Timetable

2021-2022 School Year	SWPBIS Training Office	
The proposed timetable for the presentation of the PDP is during the fall semester of 2021.		


Timetable of Events		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● PDP Summary will be emailed to the principal for a 2-week review period.</li> <li>● During the review period, the principal will be contacted to schedule an initial presentation of the PDPr with him to discuss details and address questions.</li> <li>● After formal presentation and the principal's approval, he will inform the teachers of the PD training.</li> <li>● The principal will then determine professional development and training needs for teachers, with assistance from the administrative and SWPBIS teams.</li> <li>● The principal may employ the assistance of other administrative staff (i.e., assistant principal, lead teacher, department chairs)</li> <li>● The PD training will be scheduled to present to other administrative and SWPBIS team members and teachers</li> <li>● During week 9 of the fall semester of 2021, teachers should begin PD training for implementing SWPBIS in the classroom for students with LD.</li> <li>● March 2022. Teachers continue collaborative training</li> <li>● April/May 2022. Following completion of training, teachers can discuss plans for collaborative teams during regular team meetings.</li> <li>● August 2022. Full integration of SWPBIS strategies to implement SWPBIS to manage behaviors for students with LD.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● If funding is available for simultaneous training, a schedule would be provided with dates and times.</li><li>● If a lack of funding determines the method of delivery, for instance, if video modules were selected as the preferred method, teachers would receive an electronic link to the training with a date designated for completion.</li><li>● Planning meetings would ensue to prepare for implementation of the recommendations during the fall semester of 2022.</li></ul>	
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Slide 3

1-7% of your students can consume up to 70% of your time and energy.



Adult behavior holds the key.

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Slide 4

When you plant lettuce, if it does not grow well, you don't blame the lettuce. You look for reasons it is not doing well. It may need fertilizer, or more water, or less sun. You never blame the lettuce.

*Thich Nhat Hanh*



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Slide 5

"If a child doesn't know how to read, we teach."  
"If a child doesn't know how to swim, we teach."  
"If a child doesn't know how to multiply, we teach."  
"If a child doesn't know how to drive, we teach."  
"If a child doesn't know how to behave, we...  
...teach? ...punish?"

**Think about this:**

**"Why can't we finish the last sentence as automatically as we do the others?"**

(Hermer, 1998)

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Slide 6

**All Humans thrive within Positive environments**  
**Examples of Negative versus Positive Reinforcement**

<i>Negative</i>	<i>Positive</i>
Critical	Compassionate
Reactive, punitive	Proactive, supportive
Unstructured	Structured, organized
Rejecting students	Encouraging
"Can't you do better?"	Empathetic
"You're not doing it right!"	"You're doing great!"
"Do this or else!"	"Thank you for your effort!"

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Slide 7

**Positive Relationships Are Crucial!!**

Strong teacher-student relationships are necessary:

- to help students optimize their learning and behavior
- Increased cooperation and compliance
- Lower rates of problem behavior



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Slide 8

Every child deserves a **champion** — an adult who will **never give up** on them, who understands the power of **connection** and insists that they **become** the best that they can possibly **be.**

— Rita F. Pierson

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Slide 9

**Ingredients to Promoting Student Success**

- Create a positive, structured, predictable and safe environment for students
- Maintain positive relationships so that students feel a sense of belonging and connection to school
- Provide rigorous, effective instruction teaching students the behavioral skills needed for success
- Support student ownership (buy in)
- Ensure that students receive the supports they need to be successful (equity based framework)

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Slide 10

Putting it simply ...



School-wide Positive Behavior Support is a process for teaching expected social and behavioral skills so the focus can be on teaching and learning in a positive, proactive school environment. (like putting a roof on a house)

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Slide 11

**School-wide Behaviors**

**Definition:**

- Positively stated behaviors that are expected of all faculty, staff and students
- Expectations should be consistent with the school's mission statement

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Slide 12

**SWPBIS Emphasizes *Prevention and Instruction* at Each Tier**

- Tier 1 emphasizes prosocial skills and expectations by teaching and acknowledging appropriate student behavior.

Critical Components:

- Working as a team,
- Collecting and analyzing data
- Practice consistency
- Professional development/training
- Evaluation

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Slide 13

To be effective, the intervention strategy needs to fit the misbehavior.

Take a moment to think about the following questions.

- 1) What do discipline practices currently look like at our school?
- 2) How are they similar and/or different as compared to the ingredients described so far?

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Slide 14

**Time Lost to Discipline...Who is losing here?**  
(Barrett and Swindell-2002)

	Teacher	Student	Administrator
<b>Referrals</b>	5 minutes	20 minutes	10 minutes
<b>In-School Suspension</b>	5 minutes	6 hours	20 minutes
<b>Out of School Suspension</b>	5 minutes	6 hours	45 minutes

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Slide 15

**How Do Schools Typically Respond to Problem Behavior?**

- Reactive/Consequence Strategies
- Office referral, detention, suspensions, etc.
- \*\*Consequences will not teach the "right way"
- \*\*Consequences may actually reinforce the behavior



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Slide 16

**How do we respond to problem behaviors? Have you heard this before?**

1. "Joseph, I'm taking your book away because you obviously aren't ready to learn. That'll teach you a lesson."
2. "Juan, you are going to learn some social responsibility by staying in timeout until the class is willing to have you back."
3. "You want my attention?! I'll show you attention...let's take a walk down to the office & have a little chat with the Principal."
4. "Karyn, you skipped school 2 days, so we're going to suspend you for 2 more."



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Slide 17

➤ The Goal of SWPBIS is increased positive behavioral interaction thereby engaging students which increases instructional time



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Slide 18

**SWPBIS Theory:**

- All behaviors occurs within an environment
- Examines the scope of the problem
- Identifies problem behaviors
- Build staff capacity to systemically teach appropriate behaviors
- The framework and any changes are databased
- The objective is self-management



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Slide 19

**Can you list some common Behavioral concerns?**

- Transitions in hallway
- Lunchroom
- Locker breaks
- Tardy to school/class
- Inappropriate language
- Physical/verbal aggression
- Physical contact
- Lack of motivation/engagement



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Slide 20

**Paradigm Shift...**

- From aggressive disrespect to an appreciation of manners, respect and excellence.
- From "us against them" to shared, thoughtful collaborative relationships between students and teachers.
- From emphasis on teaching to an emphasis on learning.
- From "Do what I say" to "this is why I am asking you to do this."

M. Levy 20

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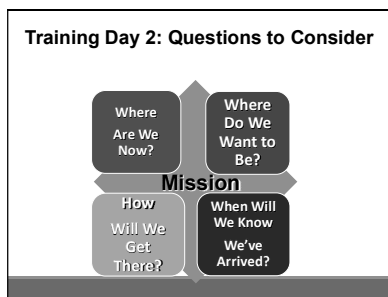
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Slide 21



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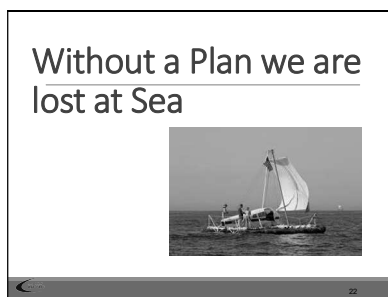
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Slide 22



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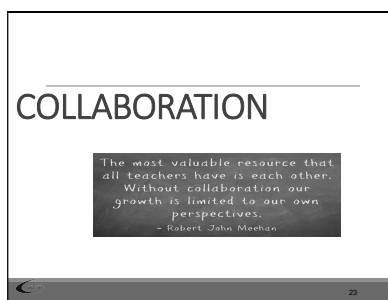
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Slide 23



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Slide 24

**“A Goal with a Plan is just a wish.”**

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SWPBIS Planning Requires:

- Team Effort
- Identifying Expectations
- Lesson Planning
- Reinforcement/Acknowledgement
- Data/Evaluation



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Slide 25

**THE SWPBIS TEAM:**

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**WHO ARE THEY AND HOW CAN THEY HELP YOU?**



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Slide 26

**SWPBIS Team Functions**

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- Assess current behavior management practices
- Examines patterns of behavior
- Promotes staff commitment and buy in
- Develops school wide agenda and materials
- Seeks student and parent participation and input
- Oversees, monitors, and evaluates SWPBIS goals and progress

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Slide 27

**The SWPBIS Team**

- Communicates a common vision for SWPBIS
- Works collaboratively to establish school wide capacity to support all students
- Commits resources to establish support
- Develops methods for evaluation of anticipated outcomes
- Action planning based on ongoing data



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Slide 28

**The SWPBIS team should include Administration**

**Administrators should:**

- ALL administrators are encouraged to play an active role in SWPBIS.
- Actively communicating their commitment and buy in to the process denotes success.
- They should be familiar with SWPBIS progress, data and reporting systems.

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Slide 29

**Administrative Buy in:**  
**What does it look like?**

Administrator or a designee agrees to:

- attend meetings 90% of the time
- allocate time and resources for SWPBIS
- Actively promote SWPBIS as a priority
- Integrate SWPBIS with other school improvement initiatives



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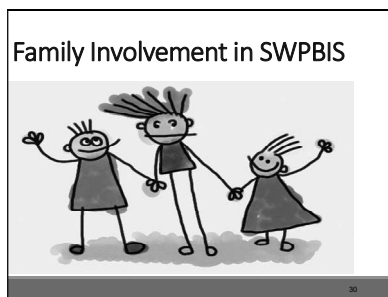
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Slide 30



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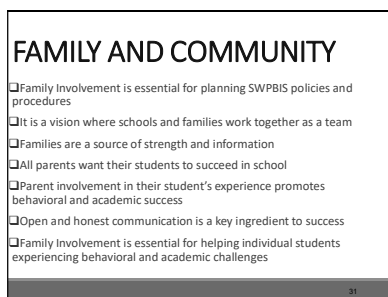
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Slide 31



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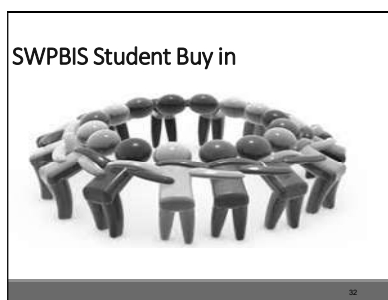
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Slide 32



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Slide 33

**SWPBIS Student Buy in**

- Promoting student motivation and engagement facilitates learning
- Improving the efficiency of student learning is key
- SWPBIS buy in can install a sense of personal responsibility for self improvement and self management
- SWPBIS can level the playing field for learning
- Students can acquire the skills needed for success (behavioral and academic)
- Fosters a lifelong value of achievement

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Slide 34

**Does Knowing How to Behave in One Setting Mean Someone Should Know How to Behave in Another?**

Children should be taught and continually supported in learning how to behave well in school and get along with others



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Slide 35

**WHAT IS SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITY?**

A Specific Learning Disability (SLD) means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia.

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Slide 36



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Slide 37

**WHAT IS SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITY?**

8 Academic Domains of SLD:

- Oral Expression
- Listening Comprehension
- Written Expression
- Basic Reading Skill
- Reading Fluency Skills - flow and flow of speech
- Reading Comprehension
- Mathematical Calculation
- Mathematical Problem Solving

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Slide 38

**WHAT IS SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITY?**

Learning disabilities can cause frustration for students.

They are able to perform some tasks quite well while struggling considerably with others.

They may listen to what is read but put their heads down and refuse to cooperate when asked to read

They may become over excited or disruptive during long periods of instruction

They may then engage in certain maladaptive behaviors to cover up a problem or deficit

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Slide 39

**WHAT IS SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITY?**

Some Examples:

A chemistry student who finds multiplication and division difficult might become frustrated and throw his paper or refuse to complete an assignment.

An ADHD student who has trouble focusing in class might have an outburst by slamming their book shut and saying that they "can't do this work" because there are too many distractions.

A 16-year-old who reads at a fourth-grade level might frequently skip classes and school. They appear bored when they do attend class. When asked to read aloud, the child throws a book on the floor, calls the reading "stupid," and refuses to read the passage.

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Slide 40

**WHAT IS SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITY?**

\*Other behaviors might include impulsivity, inattention, not following directions, mood swings, disorganization, displays of temper and defiance.

-A child's learning disability may result in an emotional battering that impacts their everyday interactions with teachers and peers at school, with parents at home, and others in the community.

-This is where developing relationships and knowing our students comes in

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Slide 41

**WHAT IS SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITY?**

\*Other Look fors:

Anxiety or depression  
Blaming teachers for bad grades  
Bullying their peers  
Physical ailments, such as stomach aches or headaches  
self-derogatory or self-critical comments  
Refusing to communicate to avoid confrontation

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Slide 42



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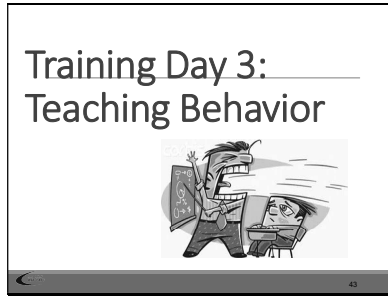
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Slide 43



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Slide 44



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Slide 45

Designing Classroom Routines			
Routine	Desired Behavior	Signal	Teach Routine
Entering Class	Walk in, sit down, start work	Instruction on board	Positive and Negative Examples
Obtaining class attention	Orient to teacher, be quiet	?	
Getting Help during seat work	?	?	

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Slide 46

School-Wide Behavior Matrix					
<b>** Observe 6 foot social distancing rule</b>					
Expectation	Cafeteria	Hall	Common	Bus Area	
Cooperative	Go straight to lunch and return promptly.	Stay to the right. Support to stand on lines.	Walk quietly to the designated area and stay there.	Use the restroom quietly. Report back to class.	Walk quietly to your bus and enter side of a bus.
Problem Solver	Raise your hand quietly if you have a question.	Ask for help from an adult when needed. Walk directly to your destination.	Ask an adult for help when needed.	Report plumbing and cleanliness problems to an adult.	Ask for help if needed.
Responsible	Blow through when it is your turn. Take steps to verify your food.	Be on time to all classes.	Accepted quietly to the ball and adult directions.	Throw garbage in the trash can. Adjust seating to follow other rules before eating.	Go immediately to the bus area when the bell sounds.
Respectful	Stand behind an person in line.	Use zero voice in the main hall.	Dispose of garbage in trash barrels.	Wash and dry your hands.	Listen to the bus driver or if needed. Talk quietly to your neighbor.

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Slide 47

**Behaviors Most often occur because:**

- Students do not have appropriate skills...  
    “Skill Deficits”
- Students do not know when to use skills
- Students have not been taught specific classroom procedures and routines
- Skills are not taught in context (in the environment where they are used)

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Slide 48

### Examples of Behaviors by Severity

<b>Minor</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electronics</li> <li>• Disrespect</li> <li>• Talking</li> <li>• Horseplay</li> </ul>	<b>Major</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fighting</li> <li>• Cursing (severe)</li> <li>• Bullying</li> <li>• Severe Disrespect</li> </ul>	<b>Crisis</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arson/Flammables</li> <li>• Weapons</li> <li>• Drugs</li> <li>• Intruder</li> <li>• Bomb threat</li> </ul>
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Slide 49

### Traditional Discipline vs. SWPBIS

<b>Traditional Discipline:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Goal is to stop undesirable behavior through the use of punishment</li> <li>• Focus is on the student's problem behavior</li> </ul>	<b>SWPBIS:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Goal is to proactively stop undesirable behavior by:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replacing with a new behavior or skill</li> <li>• Altering environments</li> <li>• Teaching appropriate skills</li> <li>• Rewarding appropriate behavior</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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Slide 50

### Define/Categorize Behavioral Errors

<b>Teacher Managed Behavior</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance/Tardy</li> <li>• Electronics in class</li> <li>• Profanity directed at Student</li> <li>• Non-compliance (work of behavior)</li> <li>• Name calling or belittling</li> <li>• Minor stealing</li> <li>• Cheating</li> <li>• Dress Code Violations</li> <li>• Minor Harassment</li> </ul>	<b>Office Managed Behavior</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance/Tardy</li> <li>• Vandalism/Stealing</li> <li>• Substances</li> <li>• Major Defiance/Disruption</li> <li>• Weapons</li> <li>• Profanity directed at Adults</li> <li>• Fighting</li> <li>• Verbal/Physical intimidation</li> <li>• Skipping school/class</li> <li>• Gang Related Activity</li> <li>• Chronic Dress Code Violation</li> <li>• Harassment (including sexual)</li> </ul>
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Slide 51

**Why Develop a System for Teaching Behavior?**

Behaviors are prerequisites for academics  
Procedures and routines create structure

Repetition is key to learning new skills:

- For a child to *learn something new*, it needs to be repeated on average of 8 – 25 times (but as long as it takes)
- For a child to *unlearn* an old behavior and replace with a new behavior, the new behavior must be repeated on average 28 times (*Harry Wong*)

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Slide 52

**Biggest Misconception of SWPBIS is the Recognition System**

- There is a difference between bribery and recognition
- Recognition/Rewards are not only designed to change student behavior
- Also designed to change adult behavior
- Rewards and Recognition are designed to prompt conversation (relationship building)
- Conversation/relationship changes the behavior
- Positive social engagement (know your students)

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Slide 53

**Reinforcement:**

- Focuses attention on desired behaviors
- Increases the repetition of desired/new behaviors
- Fosters a positive class climate
- Reduces amount of time spent on discipline
- Increases instructional hours
- Builds positive relationships with students

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Slide 54

**Reinforcement is used both in and out of the classroom**

- Safe Driver Discounts
- Merit pay and performance bonuses
- Insurance discounts for taking Defensive Driving
- Reduction in sentence/time off for good behavior
- Incentives for being a responsible customer
- Dress-Down Fridays
- Tax codes are structured to promote certain behavior
- Rewards for information related to a crime

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Slide 55

**Remember This:**

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**Every time any adult interacts with any student, it is a teachable moment and an opportunity for recognition or reward!**

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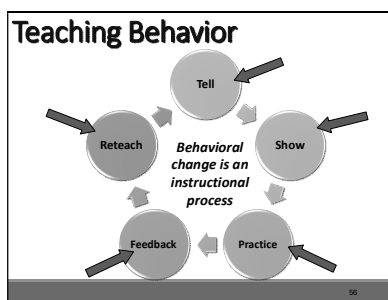
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Slide 56



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Slide 57


**Identifying Behaviors:  
Moving from Problem to Replacement** 

Observable 

Measurable 

Positively Stated 

Understandable 

Timely 

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Slide 58

**SWPBIS Communication System**



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Slide 59

**SWPBIS:  
How do we get the word out?**

- Morning announcements
- Email bulletin to staff
- Grade level meetings
- SWPBIS Team Reports at staff meeting
- PTSA newsletter
- Family nights (Conferences)
- Bulletin boards in hallways
- District website



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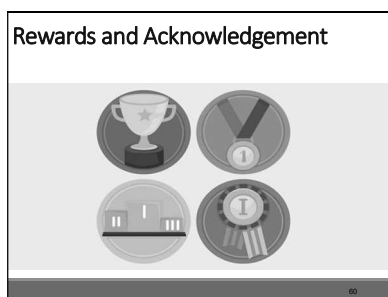
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Slide 60




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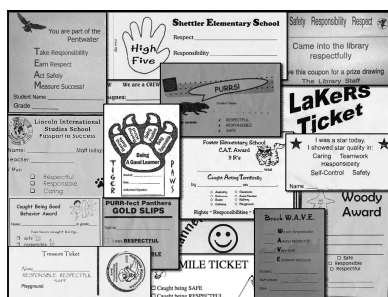
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Slide 61




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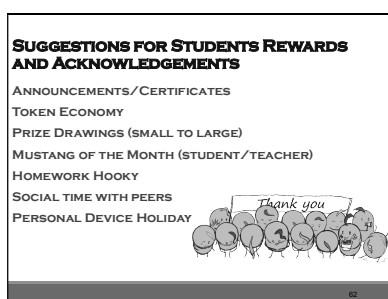
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Slide 62




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Slide 63

**Motivation**

"People (adults and children) are motivated by a mix of intrinsic and extrinsic factors, so we must increase both of these" - Sprick

Thinking about your job. What are the factors that motivate you both intrinsically and extrinsically?

Schools that employ a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic strategies are the most successful

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Slide 64


Praise can be used as an extrinsic motivator to teach intrinsic behavior

**What Kind of Mindset Do You Have?**



**Growth Mindset**

I can learn anything I want to.  
When I'm frustrated, I persevere.  
I never let challenges myself.  
When I fail, I learn.  
I don't give up.  
If you succeed, I'm inspired.  
My effort and attitude determine everything.



**Fixed Mindset**

I'm either good at it, or I'm not.  
When I'm frustrated, I give up.  
I don't like to be challenged.  
When I fail, I'm so good.  
I don't try hard.  
If you succeed, I feel threatened.  
My abilities determine everything.

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Slide 65

**Staff Rewards and Motivation**

- SWPBIS requires motivation by teachers and staff as they in turn motivate students
- If you want to change student behavior, you must *first* change adult behavior.
- Acknowledging staff for their work and investment in the process makes it meaningful for them and they are more likely to buy in.




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Slide 66

**SUGGESTIONS FOR STAFF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**



STAFF SPOTLIGHT  
REWARD SYSTEM FOR TEACHERS  
PRIZE OR TICKET DRAWINGS  
SPOTLIGHT BULLETIN BOARD  
FACULTY MEETING CELEBRATIONS  
QUARTERLY POSTERS

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Slide 67

<p><b>“SNACK PATROL”</b></p> <p><b>Procedure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Aides deliver snacks of choice to staff weekly</li><li>Staff fill out “wish list” and tape to classroom door</li></ul>	<p><b>“1 FREE PERIOD”</b></p> <p>Contributing to a safe, caring, effective school environment</p> <p><b>Procedures</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Given by Principal</li><li>Principal takes over class for one hour</li><li>Used at any time</li></ul>
<p><b>“G.O.O.S.E.”</b></p> <p>“Get Out Of School Early” Or “arrive late”</p> <p><b>Procedures</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Kids/staff nominate</li><li>Kids/staff reward, then pick</li></ul>	<p><b>“LUNCHABLE”</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>staff to receive free lunch (off campus)</li></ul> <p><b>Procedures</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Given by Principal weekly</li><li>Location chosen by survey</li></ul>

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Slide 68

**Resources**

<http://www.pbisworld.com/>  
[www.pbismaryland.org](http://www.pbismaryland.org)  
<http://flpbs.fmhi.usf.edu>  
[http://pbismissouri.org/teams/t1\\_workbook](http://pbismissouri.org/teams/t1_workbook)  
<http://www.njpbs.org/>  
<http://www.wisconsinpbisnetwork.org/>  
<http://verywellfamily.com>

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2/9/2021

Evaluation - SWPBIS Professional Development

## Evaluation - SWPBIS Professional Development

Thank you for participating in the Quarterly Professional Development Training Session. Please take a few minutes to complete the evaluation below. Your feedback will provide valuable information to the facilitator and help prepare for future training sessions.

\* Required

1. Name \*

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2. What's one important thing you learned today?

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2/4/2021

Evaluation - SWPBS Professional Development

3. Were the professional development goals clearly stated? Explain.

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4. Did this professional development activity helped you better understand how to implement SWPBS? Explain.

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2/4/2021

Evaluation - SWPBS Professional Development

- 5. Did this professional development activity helped you better understand your role as in SWPBS? Explain.

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- 6. Will this professional development activity helped you to implement SWPBS classroom strategies with more confidence and knowledge?

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2/8/2021

Evaluation - SWPBS Professional Development

7. Overall, was this professional development activity a successful experience for you? Explain.

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