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Secondary Teachers' and Administrators' Perceptions of School Discipline Practices.

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Walden University
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Abstract

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MA, Walden University, 2010

BS, University of Maryland College Park, 2002

Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

Teachers and administrators in an urban, suburban, and rural school district on the east coast of the United States faced challenges implementing effective discipline policy interventions to manage student misbehavior. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the perceptions of educators about the challenges of implementing discipline policy interventions and the support needed to increase implementation effectiveness. Positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) a three-tiered framework of data, systems, and practices to affect student outcomes was used to guide this study. The research questions were used to elicit educator's perceptions of the challenges faced and supports needed when implementing interventions in the discipline policy code of conduct effectively. A basic qualitative design was used to capture the insights of 13 purposefully selected educators through semistructured interviews. Themes were identified through open coding. The trustworthiness of the study was established through member checking, rich and detailed descriptions, and researcher reflexivity, The findings revealed that teachers believe behavioral interventions should be implemented appropriately, but they need training support focused on the code of conduct, accessing available resources and alternative approaches. A policy recommendation was created to provide teachers with intervention strategies to resolve challenges faced by educators. Positive social change may be created through a policy paper that teachers can use for effective strategies to implement for improved student behavioral and academic outcomes.

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to every child, student, teacher, principal, educator, parent — human being that has ever experienced being misunderstood by their behaviors described as problematic. Everyone deserves the opportunity to make mistakes, learn from those mistakes and continue to grow beyond their potential capacity. It is my hope that readers of this work find it necessary to do everything they are able and willing to always ask the question, What happened to you? And never What is wrong with you? Together we will transform the world, for the better, one person at a time.

Acknowledgments

I thank God for making it across this finish line of the doctoral journey. If it had not been for him, I would not have made it to completion. I experienced many unpleasant obstacles in life throughout the doctoral journey and by God's grace and the wisdom he provided to me, I give thanks for those experiences for I know myself to be resilient and as one that can persevere through anything. God continuously made a way out of no way beyond my own sight and understanding.

I am thankful to my parents-Willie and Sheila, my sister-Anita, and amazing nephews-Malachi, Rubakoi, and Justice for what you each provided for me throughout this journey.

Dr. Marilyn Robb, Dr. Donna Broide, and Dr. Chris Cale; your care, compassion, belief in me, inspiring messages, and patience is something I will always put at the forefront of my actions as I use this work, to make a lasting difference in the way people get to live and experience living, for as long as I have breath in my body.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Section 1: The Problem

The Local Problem

The problem that I examined in this study was that teachers and administrators at an urban, suburban, and rural school district on the east coast of the United States which consists of urban, suburban, and rural high schools on the east coast of the United States, are facing challenges implementing interventions to manage student misbehavior. According to a former middle school teacher, while some schools use a school-wide behavior management system, such as positive behavior incentive system (SWPBS/PBIS), the implementation of interventions varies by educator, because comfort levels differ. Collier-Meek et al. (2017) found that teachers have difficulty when implementing interventions to address problem behavior in the classroom, due to explicit procedures for implementation and communication protocols for explaining discipline strategies to parents. Educators are essential to the implementation of policy in education, yet they are usually uninvolved in the creation of educational agendas that shape and design policy (Good et al., 2017).

Administrators in the local school district of this study may implement discipline practices differently. According to the Maryland State Board of Education (Maryland State Department of Education, 2023) implementation of the discipline policy was left up to school administrators to implement according to their population needs. A high school principal in the School District A stated that administrators have the right to suspend for misbehavior and disrespect/disruption even though some choose to use alternatives to suspension because it is listed as an option in the Code of Student Conduct. In an

examination of discipline policy handbooks, Camacho and Krezmien (2020) noted that there is administrator discretion in handling consequences for student misbehavior. Administrator decisions in addressing and implementing interventions vary according to their professional choice.

According to Robert (2020), undeveloped teacher and student relationships related to student's needs were barriers to understanding the actions students take in dealing with problems. When relationships are underdeveloped and the needs of students are unknown to teachers, teachers are incapable of intervening in a variety of ways to address student misbehavior (Martin et al., 2017). Managing multiple tasks during the delivery of instruction, finding time to implement strategies, and proper training in differentiating interventions to address individual needs of students have been cited as encounters teachers faced with implementing effective strategies to manage student misbehavior (Camacho & Parham, 2019). Unintended stereotypes and prejudices, such as implicit bias, have also been identified as reasons for how teachers and administrators view students who misbehave (Shuster et al., 2017). There are multiple reasons for inconsistent implementation of discipline policies by teachers and administrators. According to Camacho and Krezmien (2020) future research examining school discipline policies and student school and life outcomes are needed if schools are going to affect the change in behavior for student misbehavior. In this study, I examined challenges that teachers and administrators faced when implementing interventions to manage student misbehavior.

Rationale

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of teachers and administrators about the challenges of implementing discipline policy interventions and the support needed to increase implementation effectiveness. In a methodological review of current discipline policies from 147 districts in the United States, punitive and harsh responses and practices in feedback to student misbehavior were noticed by researchers collaborating on the review of the policy practices (Green et al., 2020). In 2015 a summit was held for district school leaders on improving school climate and discipline focused on the role that school leaders played in implementing discipline within their school districts (Green et al., 2015). During the conference a resource guide, Key elements of policies to address discipline disproportionality: A Guide for a district and school teams, was provided for districts and schools developing policies within their schoolhouse (Green et al., 2020). According to Green (et al., 2015), the guide explained vital characteristics for improving school climate and discipline for school. Addressing discipline in schools to improve school climate, as well as current discipline policies and practices has been a recent trend across hundreds of school districts throughout the United States.

It was important to acquire teacher and administrator perceptions of challenges they face in implementing interventions provided in the discipline policies for the school district because implementation of interventions may vary accordingly to the teacher and or administrator. The results of this study could lead to understanding of the challenges

and needs teachers and administrators have, which may better prepare them to implement interventions in the discipline policy.

Definition of Terms

*Enacted discretio*n: is the ability to consider the context and capacity level of the organization and local government before using discretion in policy implementation (Farooqi & Forbes, 2019).

Positive Behavior Supports (PBIS, SWPBS): a three-tier approach for educator use in addressing student misbehavior, designed to improve social, emotional, and academic outcomes for all students (Center on PBIS, 2022).

Restorative Justice/ Restorative Practices (RP): an alternative to retributive Zero-tolerance policies based on the development of a value set that includes building and strengthening relationship, showing respect, and taking responsibility (Teasley, 2014).

Zero-tolerance (ZT) : rigid policies that limit discretion in individual cases, involve law enforcement, and or mandate some form of out of school suspension or removal for a variety of behaviors without any adjustments or modifications (Camacho & Krezmien, 2020).

Significance of the Study

Educators in the School District A receive a copy of the school district's Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook at the beginning of each year. Educators are strongly encouraged to abide by the recommendations in the handbook. Educators are evaluated on their management of student behaviors, upon notice from the employee performance department *of* being on-cycle per the teacher evaluation guidelines for each

school year. It was important to get teacher's and administrator's perceptions of challenges they face in implementing interventions in the discipline policy because behavioral outcomes of students are pivotal to their ability to receive instruction in class. According to Camacho and Krezmien (2020), research examining school discipline policies and student outcomes is needed if schools are going to reduce student misbehavior. The results of this study can be used by local school boards, superintendents, chief educator officers of local school districts, teachers, and administrators, recognize how the implementation process can be done more effectively, to take actions consistent with affecting positive change for students being disciplined for misbehavior, as well as teachers and administrators providing interventions within the discipline policy.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of teachers and administrators about the challenges of implementing discipline policy interventions and the support needed to increase implementation effectiveness. I used the following research questions to address the problem in this study:

Research Question 1 (RQ1): What are the teachers' and administrators' perceptions of the challenges faced when implementing interventions in the discipline policy code of conduct, listed with the Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook?

Research Question 2 (RQ2): What are teachers' and administrators 'perceptions of the support and resources they need to increase effectiveness of implementing interventions?

Review of the Literature

In this subsection, I present (a) the conceptual framework of the study, (b) literature review search strategy, (c) review of the broader problem, (d) and implications for resolving challenges in implementing the recommended interventions listed in the code of conduct for School District A. I used the sources that I examined in the literature review to understand the implementation of interventions and best practices in discipline policies. The literature was organized into themes: discretion in policy implementation, communication, philosophy of adults, and implementation process and progress monitoring. I conducted the literature review using the Walden's University library database, EBSCO Search Thoreau, and Google Scholar. Some of the keywords used when searching the databases, and search engine were *implementation, discipline policies, strategies,* and *best practices*.

Conceptual Framework

I selected the positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) framework as the foundation for this study. The PBIS framework is an evidenced-based, three-tiered framework for addressing student outcomes by way of student behavior (Center on PBIS, 2022). Embedded in the conceptual framework of PBIS are systems, data, practices, and outcomes. PBIS is a framework that integrates how the school operates at a foundational level to sustain outcomes over time (systems); the way in which schools select, monitor, and evaluate data about students to make the best decisions for effective results (data); the practices schools select to utilize to improve the outcomes of students through strategies and interventions (practices); and the actualized outcomes that are achieved

through the systems, data, and practices (outcomes; Center on PBIS, 2022). The PBIS model indicates that the practices are meant to be used by all key stakeholders. These stakeholders include the teachers, administrators, families of students, students, and various departments or organizations whose guidance and tangible support increase the likelihood of positive outcomes for students (Center on PBIS, 2022).

The PBIS framework's three-tiered approach of supports begins at Level 1 and increases to Level 3 in the formation of a pyramid, with Level 1 at the bottom indicating the type of support students need at the most differentiated approach. As the tiers increase from Level 1 to Level 3, the tiers visually decrease in size, signifying the differences in student needs to produce positive outcomes (Center on PBIS, 2022). Differentiated supports listed in Level 1, noticeably the largest tier to encompass the vast majority of students in the school, is the foundational systems of a school for using data and the evaluation of that data to make informed decisions through a body of internal and external stakeholders. Differentiated supports listed in Level 2 are targeted, intensive, and individualized for students that are identified at risk for developing serious behavior concerns. Differentiated supports listed in Level 3 are targeted, intensive, and individualized for students that are identified at risk for exhibiting the likelihood of serious behavior concerns (Center on PBIS, 2022). If the overall purpose of PBIS is to improve and integrate data, systems, and practice of interventions for positive student outcomes, then the PBIS framework may identify the gap in practice for teachers and administrators that find challenges in implementing discipline policies.

According to Flannery and McGrath Kato (2016), PBIS in the high school setting includes additional components of the core elements for the framework to work efficiently. These components of the core elements include data that expand to student academic outcomes and absenteeism, communication, and leadership (Flannery & McGrath Kato, 2016). These variables can be difficult to capture because the data reporting software for schools is usually designed to report data in the most basic way for state and local reporting (Djabrayan Hannigan & Hannigan, 2020). Intentional planning and preparation are needed by the leadership/implementation team to gather the appropriate data needed for the desired student outcomes within the diverse population of the student body (McDaniel & Bruhn, 2019).

Teachers and administrators faced challenges implementing interventions. I used components of the core elements in the three tiers of the prevention model within the PBIS Framework. Additionally, I used components suggested for high school settings, to ground the study. The components of the core elements I used framed the research questions and was used to gather responses for the challenges faced and supports needed for implementing effective interventions to manage student behavior. I addressed the following components of the core elements: (a) discretion in policy implementation (b) communication (c) philosophy of adults; and (d) implementation process and progress monitoring.

Review of the Broader Problem

I included sources with context related to implementing discipline policies, interventions, and best practices, in the literature review. I reviewed literature that

addressed implementing interventions and recommended best practices in discipline policies. The literature was organized into themes: discretion in policy implementation, communication, philosophy of adults, and implementation process and progress monitoring. I conducted the literature review using the Walden's University library database and found 79 peer-reviewed articles using the EBSCO Search Thoreau in which 74 of those articles were relative to interventions, and 29 were relative to intervention implementation I also used Google Scholar and performed a forward search of articles found for additional articles cited. Search terms included *implementation, implement*, discipline policies, discipline polic*, strategies, and best practices, data collec*, secondar*, behave*,* and *classroom**. The asterisks following the search term was a search strategy to widen the search. I also reviewed information from the School District A's state department of education website.

Discretion in Policy Implementation

The local authority of discretion used in implementing discipline policy is not the same in all contexts. While some teachers and administrators have complete discretion in implementing interventions per the discipline policy, others only have this discretion if specific criteria are met, such as funding. The use of discretion has been supported because both teachers and administrators have been given full autonomy to make choices according to their classrooms and school community (Curran & Finch, 2021). Yet, there is minimal opportunity for discretion in implementing interventions of the PBIS framework. Counter to what the guidelines in the state of Maryland provided as

suggestions for implementation (Maryland State Department of Education, 2023), the PBIS framework is situated to increase the likelihood of positive outcomes for students.

Curran and Finch (2021) found while teachers and administrators were responsive to the change in state guidelines, on average, all local education agencies (LEAs) were given latitude to codify the alignment of the guidelines according to their population needs. In their descriptive analysis, Curran and Finch described how their analysis of the alterations and responses of codes of conduct for all schools in Maryland revealed that interpretation of discipline policy implementation relied on teacher and principal understanding of the newly issued state guidelines, as well as their professional choice to select interventions according to their own decision-making process (Curran & Finch, 2021). Given these points, Curran and Finch concluded that decisions made by both teachers and principals in school districts determined the types of infractions implemented for discipline. On the contrary, Farooqi and Forbes (2019) found that autonomy in discipline implementation was resolved to enacted discretion and discretion granted. According to Farooqi and Forbes (2019), street-level bureaucrats (SLBs), known as teachers, social workers, and managers (principals), used a specific form of discretion, referred to as enacted discretion, within particular parameters, in decision-making processes related to policy implementation. The use of enacted discretion was based on the organization's readiness level, the willingness for staff to adopt the policy, and the practicality of the implementation process, and the methods had to be addressed before SLBs could use enacted discretion to implement policy messages. When contextual factors (demographics, etc.) were applicable to meet the needs of their population,

enacted discretion was used in policy implementation. However, when decision-making included funding, discretion granted was needed of principal supervisors. This process of discretion granted in policy implementation traveled through a cultural relic of top-down management from supervisors of principals (Farooqi & Forbes, 2019). Like Curran and Finch, Farooqi and Forbes used discretion in policy implementation, yet when implementation included funding, a directional approach of leadership was needed for approval.

Discretion using documentation was another point of reference for teachers and administrators. Camacho and Krezmien (2020) analyzed and rated district handbooks from LEAs in the state of Maryland using the revised version of the Analysis of Discipline Code Rating. Camacho and Krezmien's rating analysis captured behavioral infractions and possible consequences associated with the behavioral offenses. For a total of 50 violations, students could receive any 30+ consequences for misbehavior. Moreover, the results of their study indicated administrator discretion was present for most implications suggested by the language of "may include" within the code of conduct when multiple consequences were listed for one infraction (Camacho & Krezmien, 2020, p. 59).

Personal discretion from an individuals' moral compass is used by administrators. Gullo and Beachum (2020) concluded that principals decided consequences for behavior infractions using a four-step process based on relationships and morality. The first step of this process suggested that principals followed a tedious process in which their relationships with students influenced the type of data they collected on them. This step

led to varied outcomes based on the principal's sensemaking during the data gathering process, concluding with the selection of the consequence for the misbehaving student. In all, this determining effect for misbehavior depended solely on the principal's preferred ethical structure of reality, based on their prior experiences with the students.

Curran and Finch (2021) and Camacho and Krezmien (2020) described the use of directional approaches to inform the use of discretion in implementing policy. More specifically, Curran and Finch (2021) used a lateral system for discretion in policy implementation between teachers and administrators. In contrast, Farooqi and Forbes (2019) and Gullo and Beachum (2020) described a multistep approach for determining the outcomes of discipline implementation. Although the studies of Curran and Finch (2021), Farooqi and Forbes, and Gullo and Beachum showed that policy implementation was influenced by individual experiences, values, and beliefs of principals and, or teachers at the school and classroom level, Camacho and Krezmien (2020) described that most consequences for student misbehavior at the discretion of the administrator were a result of language provided in district handbooks. The local authority of discretion used in implementing discipline policy is not the same in all contexts. Consequently, it is possible that varied autonomy in discipline implementation can lead to challenges in implementing effective interventions. The use of discretionary practices can lead to varied results for desired outcomes. Varied approaches to data collection can lead to inconsistent disaggregation of data. Additionally, subjective issuance of interventions for students can be based on differences in beliefs, values and experiences of the school staff imposing discipline.

Communication in Policy Implementation.

The known information about a student's behavioral abilities and capacity is something that all teachers and staff need to know if the best possible outcomes are to be reached by the student. The more teachers and staff can collaborate with peers about support needed for students while sharing their expertise, the better they will be at implementing interventions (McDaniel & Bruhn, 2019). Discipline policy is best implemented when communication between teachers and staff members is ongoing with opportunities for staff to offer input from their specialized areas of expertise about diverse student populations (Rainbolt et al., 2019).

There are times when educators of students with special needs, also known as diverse learners, are left out of policy implementation, yet policies being implemented directly affect their work with students. Shuster et al. (2017) found that teachers of special needs students were kept out of the implementation process of the PBIS discipline strategy that affected their students. Additionally, teachers of students with special needs reported that students with special needs were not included in PBIS initiatives, and no accommodations or modifications were made for expectation of lessons. The results of Shuster's study concluded that teachers of students with special needs were unable to provide a definitive reflection regarding the process of implementing PBIS in their school because the lines of communication with implementation were not there (Shuster et al., 2017). Similarly, the absence of classified staff (Feuerborn et al., 2018) during the implementation phase of discipline practices was noted as a barrier to implementing discipline strategies with fidelity, according to study findings. Whereas both studies were

designed to gather perceptions of PBIS as a discipline strategy, Shuster et al. were interested in teachers' ratings of PBIS, and Feuerborn et al. focused specifically on staff concerns with PBIS implementation. The results of both studies revealed that the lack of communication by administrators and the absence of input from teachers of students with special needs created barriers for teachers in policy implementation.

Daily changes to implementation of policy have been an obstacle for teachers responsible for implementing policy changes. Feuerborn et al., (2018) expressed the frustration felt by classified staff, due to administrators' lack of communication with constant daily changes to the implementation process; moreover, they described great difficulty in keeping up with untimely notification of updates to students' individualized support plans after the intervention was implemented. With special attention to the lack of modifications in the discipline policy for students with special needs, Shuster et al., (2017) also discovered that policy implementation did not include teachers of the general student population combined with students of special needs, in their care. Most importantly, these general education teachers were unsure of the implementation process of PBIS in their schools. Like Shuster et al., Rainbolt et al. (2019) concluded that unclear communication about implementation rationale and the outcome for implementation of PBIS was a challenge for teachers implementing the discipline policy for students. Namely, teachers reported that they were rarely made aware of a student's completed process of Restorative Practices (RP) with the administrative team and when feedback was received, it was difficult to determine if the information provided was the result of a teacher's or student's process within RP. Teachers stated this lack of communication

affected their ability to know if the implementation of the RP strategy was working or not. Hence, administrators in three studies were solely responsible for communicating policy implementation.

Teachers of students with special needs were not given opportunities to advocate for best behavioral outcomes for their students, nor offer support with how to include students of special needs into the implementation process and this lack of communication kept teachers of students with special needs unable to be accountable to ensuring the needs of their students are met with discipline policies (Neeleman, 2018). Kurth and Zagona (2018) study added to the challenges presented by both special educators (Shuster et al., 2017) and classified staff (Feuerborn et al., 2018), for general teachers of students with special needs. In the same way, general teachers of students with special needs felt Feuerborn et al. edified this practice of general educators feeling left out of communications regarding students of special needs under their supervision. These general educators expressed feeling uncertain about knowing whose responsibility it was to teach certain behaviors to students with special needs because of the lack of communication received from administrators. Kurth and Zagona revealed that approximately 40% of the general educators had no knowledge of the process for documenting behaviors of students in need of emotional support through SWPBIS, while 88% of administrators indicated there was a formal documentation process. Agreeably, Weaver and Swank (2020) expanded this conversation to include student voice and concluded that because RP requires a shift in thinking from traditional discipline

practices for all stakeholders, noting the process of implementation may not be possible to clearly articulate to a large group simultaneously.

Notably, there were some successes found in communication between staff with the implementation of PBIS, as a discipline strategy. Results of an exploratory semistructured criterion-sampling of 33 district coordinators of PBIS in the state of Florida, revealed specific qualities schools exhibited that were deemed as implementing PBIS with success. These qualities included (1) the establishment of a common language, (2) multiple forms of communication throughout the process; both internally and externally, and (3) a thorough review of how PBIS aligned to and supported the strategic plans participating schools had input in place (George et al., 2018).

Rainbolt et al. (2019) and Feuerborn et al. (2018) both agreed that classified and non-classified staff felt more aware of the implementation process and their role when clear communication about the steps of the process was made clear to them, during the process. Shuster et al. (2017) went a little further in the case of special educators, making it clear that when they are not included in the implementation process, vital information about implementing discipline practices for students with special needs may not be addressed or taken into consideration. Weaver and Swank (2020) proposed the best way to implement a policy-driven practice was through a cohort implementation approach. In cases such that implementing school policies schoolwide are the outcome to be reached, utilization of a cohort method approach for participating educational stakeholders may be more feasible especially when educators involved in the implementing process are tenured and have a high comfort level with traditional discipline practices. The lack of

communication in implementing discipline practices can confuse those responsible for students with special needs. Agreeably, George et al. (2018) confirmed Kurth and Zagona (2018) conclusion by highlighting that successful implementation of discipline policies is evidenced when varied forms of communication are delivered to all school community stakeholders.

Collaboration between peers and school staff will help improve the likelihood that appropriate interventions are selected for students, and it is critical that all teachers are aware of plans being created for students that they teach because their expertise in various arenas within education can help support the selection of the intervention for students. Additionally, consistent communication in data gathering and monitoring of interventions is critical for school staff that are responsible for adhering to the implementation of interventions. It has been noted that when there is a shared language, multiple forms of communication and monitoring of data collected; the implementation of interventions can be successful. Further, it has been suggested that it may be best to begin the process of implementation in smaller group setting, such as a cohort, when the school population is large.

Philosophical Beliefs

Teachers are constantly inundated with multiple programs and strategies to use with students daily, causing resistance to the perceived outcomes of these changes because they are almost always mandated to be in implemented without input of their expertise (Ben-Peretz & Flores, 2018). Moreover, the frequency of changes for teachers in all aspects of their workload can cause them to resist changes to mandated policy

because they do not believe they are being implemented for the right reasons (Ben-Peretz & Flores, 2018).

An evaluation of interventions used with high school students that displayed emotional or behavioral issues identified challenges teachers had with implementation of the intervention (State et al., 2017). These challenges included disagreement about the methodology of the intervention. For example, teachers felt it unnecessary to praise students for behaving properly because the expectation was that students are already expected to behave appropriately in school. Others expressed that students without individualized plans should not get accommodations of interventions noting it was unacceptable to provide accommodations for general education students. Teachers felt that by engaging in the process of either acknowledging students for behavior expected of them or providing them with accommodations they did not warrant would be counterproductive to students taking ownership for their behavior.

The findings of State et al., (2017) aligned to the results of Feuerborn et al. (2018). Feuerborn et al., concluded that teachers felt that awarding students for behavior expected of them would diminish the value of rewards so students would begin to behave below expectations. Additionally, they felt that behavior changes in secondary students were not going to make a real difference in the grand scheme of things alluding to it being too late in life for students to think differently about their behaviors. High school teachers felt that implementing SWPBIS in high school did not promote the critical inquiry students needed to navigate tough choices in life and some expressed that using the strategy would set students up for failure as they matriculate from school into

adulthood. While State et al., focused specifically on the use of an intervention package consisting of multiple behavioral strategies to change behavior of students, PBIS was the strategy used in the study conducted by Feuerborn et al. Yet, both studies were qualitative in approach to gather participant responses. Using semistructured interviews of three administrators and one central office personnel about the implementation of RP in their schools, Gilzene (2021) concluded that teachers felt RP intruded on their personal beliefs of keeping their professional and personal lives separate at work. They also noted their feelings regarding the abuse of the strategy by students being allowed to come to class late because they were in an RP conference with administrators.

On the contrary, Robert (2020) conducted semistructured interviews of two principals, an assistant principal, and a specialist in an urban school district in Texas and found that administrators appreciated the flexibility of PBIS because it provided room for innovative thinking in individualizing the discipline of students. Participants reported that they were able to find out why students took actions that were seen as misbehavior using the PBIS strategy and in some cases were able to accommodate students with their needs, thereby decreasing misbehavior amongst students while creating a positive relationship between students.

State et al. (2017), Feuerborn et al. (2018) and Gilzene (2021) argued that PBIS and RP were not realistic strategies to use with high school students because it not only was not realistic for what students would encounter as they grew older in age and responsibility in the world, it also evaded the space between teachers keeping their personal lives separate from their professional lives, with students. On the other hand,

administrators appreciated how PBIS provided the opportunity to build relationships with their students to assist them better with choices they made during the school day (Robert, 2020). Teachers and administrators do not share the same beliefs with the methodology of discipline strategies.

Teachers are mandated to implement programs and strategies, and this causes resistance because without knowing the outcomes of these interventions and not being included in the process cause teachers to believe the implementation of interventions programs and strategies are unproductive to garner the outcomes desired from students. Some teachers believe that programs that praise behaviors that are minimally acceptable for student behavior creates unrealistic expectations for students when they interact in social settings outside of the school walls. Other teachers believe that interventions such as SWPBIS do not promote the critical thinking secondary students need to be able to transfer over into life after high school. Contrary to what teacher beliefs were, administrators believed that PBIS provided the much-needed interpersonal skills to build relationships with students. There were differences in beliefs about which types of interventions work best for students, especially students in secondary grades by both teachers and administrators and these differences affect the foundational structure of intervention implementation as outlined in the PBIS framework.

Implementation Process and Progress Monitoring

Implementing interventions early is critical to support the needs of students (Majeika et al., 2021). One size fits all approaches to intervening is insufficient for providing support to individual student behavior in a tiered approach (Brann et al., 2021).

Implementation of interventions, such as PBIS, should include student voice in the form of the implementation process and progress monitoring (Center on PBIS, 2022). Implementation process includes the steps taken to implement interventions and progress monitoring reflects how the intervention is monitored by implementers (teacher or administrator) and the receiver (student) of the implementation.

In a study using the Good Behavior Game (GBG) intervention, Dart et al. (2020) evaluated whether teachers and students could accurately gather data to monitor the implementation process of the intervention. Their exploratory study was conducted with four students receiving general education services and used a pre-existing checklist for intervention progress monitoring (Dart et al., 2020). Results of their study found that both teachers and students could accurately gather data to reflect accurate progress monitoring coupled with training on the implementation process of the intervention. Similarly with respect to student engagement of a student on the autism spectrum, Riden et al. (2020) changing criterion design found that a self-created daily behavior report card (DBRC) intervention designed by the special educator, with student engagement in the implementation process, yielded success for the student. Likewise, Thayer et al. (2018) reported the implementation process of Wise Feedback for students transitioning into high school, reduced indicators in the early warning signs established for each student's past data. Early warning signs/ indicators are provided to school districts to help school leaders use tools to screen and identify students in risk of failing, and or forecasted to drop out of school (Thayer et al., 2018). This experimental single case study took place with 35 high schoolers in the third year of implementation of PBIS in the school (Thayer

et al., 2018.). Even though each study design differed, these studies incorporated student input and engagement and proved to show positive behavior change of both general education students and one student on the autism spectrum post-intervention.

Dart et al. (2020); Riden et al. (2020); and Thayer et al. (2018), included training sessions for participants of the study, however parent engagement in Riden et al., consisted of written consent for their child to participate. Dart et al., held a 3-day training for the participating student - teacher, student and parent that entailed an overview of the intervention, the daily behavior report card (DBRC), procedures, rationale, definitions, and time for questions to be asked and answered about the intervention, all conducted by the special educator. During the parent training, home strategies were discussed and agreed on by both the special educator and parent, and the training portion for the student provided positive language to let the student know, they were trying this intervention to help her become successful as she matures in life and specifically conveyed that the intervention was not being done because of her being in some type of trouble (Riden et al., 2020). Starkly different from Dart et al.; and Thayer et al.; Riden et al., training consisted of 20-minute individualized meetings with each participant and the research assistant using the seven-component checklist. Both studies determined that all participants were procedurally trained at 100% fidelity. Thayer et al., provide a 90-minute training conducted by the second author of the study, one school psychologist, and a consulting and training, licensed psychologist with over a decade of experience conducting research, and employing best practices for positive behavior outcomes of students. The training consisted of the following:

(a) conceptual underpinnings of the intervention (20 min),

(b) model of how to deliver the wise feedback message in different contexts (15 min),

(c) comprehension checks and questions to ensure understanding of the main hypothesized active ingredients of the intervention (15 min),

(d) opportunities for independent practice generating a wise feedback message and delivering it to a colleague (35 min), and

(e) review of the lesson (5 min). (p. 280)

Moreover, staff identified as having achieved 100% fidelity, received detailed scripts and an outline plan for the implementation process. The outlined plan included the following:

(a) a positive greeting to the student,

(b) a statement indicating the purpose of the conversation,

(c) the wise statement,

(d) the content of the academic feedback, and

(e) a positive, open-ended question (e.g., "What can we do to create a better experience

for you in school?"). (p.280)

Dart et al. (2020), study concluded with only two dyads completing, and results indicated that secondary teachers could self-report the implementation of the intervention accurately and secondary students could accurately record their teacher's implementation of interventions. It is important to note that feedback assessing implementation of the

intervention in Dart et al., was not provided to students; yet feedback was given to both the student and parent in Riden et al., study. Specifically, the parent was provided feedback on the decrease in her child's problematic targeted behaviors post intervention via classroom observations, and the parent gave feedback about how targeted behaviors decreased at home as well, as recommended and decided upon by both the parent and special educator (Riden et al., 2020). Sufficient reductions in the early warning indicators were noticed with all 35 students (Thayer et al., 2018). It is important to note that students in this study received 3 wise feedback sessions daily from a teacher, a counselor, and an administrator, separately over the course of one week. Noticeable changes in student behavior were consistent with the positive relational messages received by implementers of the intervention (Thayer et al.). Dart et al.; Riden et al.; and Thayer et al., are three examples of studies in which training in the intervention for teachers and students and other school staff that worked directly with students was held.

In the case where training or engagement did not occur for students, parents or staff implementing Behavior Management Charts (BMC) intervention, there was no evidence to support a decrease in targeted problematic behaviors of students. Krach et al. (2016) exploratory, descriptive statistics study examined the types of BMCs used in a title one PBIS school in the Southeastern US. Their study included 169 students in grades K-5 and 10 teachers. While principals provided teachers with a behavior log to use, researchers found that teachers used a combination of teacher-created BMCs and computer programs to track student behavior. Researchers also noted that two teachers used no tracking system at all; whereas one teacher used more than one BMC to track

student behavior. Results of this study concluded that all 10 teachers had a different idea of BMC and their purpose; moreover, their description of BMC revealed why the BMCs teachers selected to use, differed amongst them. Due to the types of teacher-created BMCs some teachers tracked only negative behavior, an element inconsistent with PBIS (Krach) and the BMCs teachers used were determined to not meet guidelines to be described as empirically sound progress monitoring tools.

While the research is limited in the effectiveness of progress monitoring tools for use by teachers in tracking student behavior effectively, there are examples of how teachers have found success with varied approaches to monitor progress of student behavior (Riggleman, 2020). Approaches for progress monitoring that entailed training on the intervention being used with students, teachers and parents proved successful in decreasing negative targeted student behaviors. Additionally, there is evidence to suggest that both general education and students on the autism spectrum can provide input for interventions used to target their behavior, successfully. As interventions such as PBIS are used in school districts to reinforce positive behaviors of students, it is critical that progress monitoring tools for behavior are easily understood by students, teachers and parents; input is provided as an opportunity for students to have voice in the intervention; and students, teacher, parents and any other school staff member charged with educationally supporting the student, is well-trained at the fidelity threshold needed for proper implementation and monitoring of intervention(s) being used. Like (Krach et al., 2016) there is inconsistent implementation of interventions in the state of Maryland for student behaviors (Maryland State Department of Education, 2023). This inconsistency

may be the result of interventions being suggested for use by the guidelines in the state of
Maryland, the student outcomes desired by teachers and administrators, types of
interventions available for use in each school district, training, data collection and
monitoring of intervention progress, or a combination of these identified systems and
others not stated.

Implications

The expected research findings may lead to implications for resolving challenges
in implementing the recommended interventions listed in the code of conduct for School
District A. Educators in the local School District A are expected to adhere to the district's
code of conduct, within the Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook. Educators
need to feel confident in their ability to implement the discipline policy, as well as to be
supported in their roles. Consistency in implementing interventions will help reduce
incidents of student misbehavior and disruption, allow for students to remain in schools
to access their academic programs, limit interactions with school security and law-
enforcement housed in schools, and help students learn appropriate ways to deal with
conflict by building their developmental and cognitive abilities to effectively problem-
solve in difficult situations. The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of
teachers and administrators about the challenges of implementing discipline policy
interventions and the support needed to increase implementation effectiveness. The
potential direction for the project study was a detailed policy with recommendations
(policy paper) with intent to inform the local school of School District A on the
challenges that what teachers and administrators face in implementing interventions and

the supports needed to implement interventions effectively. The policy may also close

gaps in current practices and knowledge base for school staff that may not realize there

could be components of an intervention that are not being tended to, as required.

Summary

Section one examined the local problem in School District A, pertaining to

teacher and administrator's perceptions of implementing interventions per the discipline

policy. This section included the rationale for the study, a definition of terms used, the

study's significance, and the research questions that will guide the study. This section

also included the conceptual framework that will guide the study with the literature

review that identified the current research within this area of education. Section two of

this proposal includes the methodology, research design and approach, participants, data

collection, and data analysis.

Section 2: The Methodology

Qualitative Research Design and Approach

I conducted this study to gather the perceptions of teachers' and administrators' and according to (Merriam & Tisdell, 2017) a basic qualitative approach is best suited to gather opinions and beliefs, manifested through individual's experiences using non-numerical data. The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of teachers and administrators about the challenges of implementing discipline policy interventions and the support needed to increase implementation effectiveness. To explore the perceptions of teachers and administrators about the challenges of implementing discipline policy interventions and the support needed to increase implementation effectiveness, I collected information through semistructured interviews about participants' experiences with managing student misbehavior.

Relationship of the Research Design to the Problem

Qualitative research is the use of words as data that are collected and analyzed in a variety of ways, to contextualize how people interpret, perceive, and make meaning of their experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2017). For this study, I collected and information, using semistructured interviews to explicate participants' perceptions of the challenges faced when implementing interventions in the discipline policy code of conduct, listed with the Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook for an urban, suburban, and rural school district on the east coast of the United States, as well as their perceptions of the support and resources needed to increase effectiveness of implementing interventions. The background literature supported my understanding of the participants' perspectives.

Justification for Research Design

I explored an open single focus of a phenomenon. Creswell (2009) defined open single focused phenomenon as patterns, themes, and categories that emerge from the use of the basic qualitative research approach. Additionally, the use of a basic qualitative design allowed participants in School District A to provide their challenges with implementing interventions and the support needed for implementation of interventions to be effective. Other qualitative designs I considered were grounded theory and ethnography theory. A grounded theory allows a researcher to derive a general interaction or abstract theory of process grounded in the views of participants, through multiple stages of data collection (Creswell, 2009). Grounded theory was not the best choice for this specific study, as I was not trying to develop a new theory by collecting data on teacher and administrator challenges to implementing interventions. After reviewing an ethnography study, I determined that type of study would not the best choice for this study because School District A was not bounded by a particular culture of the participants or students (Merriam & Tisdell, 2017). I used a basic qualitative research design. Exploring the participants' perceptions allowed me to gain insight into their experiences in managing student misbehavior.

Relationship of the Research Design to the Research Questions

The basic qualitative research design I used was appropriate to address the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the teachers' and administrators' perceptions of the challenges

faced when implementing interventions in the discipline policy code of conduct,

listed with the Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook?

RQ2: What are teachers' and administrators 'perceptions of the support and

resources they need to increase effectiveness of implementing interventions?

My previous experiences and view of the world, as well as current literature about

the research were the basis for how the research questions were created. I designed the

research questions to gain an understanding of participants' perceptions of the challenges

they face with implementing interventions and the support and, or resources they

believed was needed for them to implementing interventions more effectively in the local

study site. I used the qualitative research design to collect in-depth and rich information

from the participants to understand the phenomenon under study.

Participants

In this subsection, I provide an overview of the demographics of participants,

geography of the study, the criteria for the selection of participants, and the procedures

for gaining access to the participants. Additionally, the process I used to establish

research-participant relationship is explained. Lastly, this section includes the protections

established for the participants in the local study.

Participant Demographics

The participants of the study were teachers and administrators who worked in one

of the three high schools with the top three highest numbers of discipline infractions

within the urban region of the School District A and who have familiarity with the Code

of Student Conduct within the Student's Rights and Responsibilities Handbook. Teachers and administrators who met the criteria were important to study because they provided firsthand knowledge of the challenges faced when implementing interventions within the discipline policy.

To maximize the potential for receiving rich and descriptive information, I used a purposeful sampling method to gather in-depth detailed perceptions from teachers and administrators that were familiar with this topic. Using purposeful sampling, I ended the sample selection once I obtained participants who had relevant knowledge about the phenomenon, as well as no new emerging trends and patterns in the data being collected. The initial targeted sample for this study was 15 teachers and three administrators. The targeted sample of the study resulted to 12 teachers and one administrator from the one of the three high schools with the top three highest numbers of discipline infractions within the urban region of the School District A. The targeted sample of the study were educators that had familiarity with the Code of Student Conduct within the Student's Rights and Responsibilities Handbook.

Geography and Population

The high school under study is located on the east coast of the United States. In 2020 through 2021, the demographic makeup of the students was 54% identified as Black, 40% identified as Hispanic, 3% identified as Asian, and 2% identified as White; with a population of 2, 206 students and a teacher: student ratio of 18:1. Additionally, 57% of students qualified as eligible for free lunch and 11% of students qualified for

reduced lunch. This study was conducted in one high school out of the targeted three high schools. I was able to gain access to participants in one site.

Criteria for Selection

The criteria required for participation were participants had to be either an administrator or classroom teacher in the preselected and approved to study high schools in an urban, suburban, and rural school district on the east coast of the United States, as indicated by School District A research department. Participants had to have any experience with student discipline, and that each participant had to be at least 18 years of age. I used snowball, purposeful sampling to select participants. Purposeful sampling was used to include those participants that had experience with implementing interventions in the discipline policy in the Student's Rights and Responsibilities code of conduct.

Justification for the Number of Participants

The teacher population of the high schools in School District A range between 250 and 300 and the administrators range between 10 and 20 (National Center for Education Statistics); therefore, beginning with a minimum of 15 teachers and three administrators was sufficient for sampling. To maximize the potential for rich and descriptive information as well as data saturation, I chose 12 teachers and one administrator to participate in the study. To meet the requirements of an in-depth quality study (Lodico, et al., 2010), I concluded the study after 13 interviews.

Procedures for Gaining Access to Participants

Before conducting the study, I followed the steps to contact administrators, per an urban, suburban, and rural school district on the east coast of the United States (School

District A) research department's protocol for external doctoral studies. This department serves as the school's system review board and the initial gatekeeper to study sites. I also completed the research application for Walden University and received approval from the Walden University Institutional Research Board (IRB; Approval # 05-27-22-0169026). The IRB approval number was shared with School District A's external research department. I then inquired as to the exact documentation that school system would require of participants via email. The school system's review board replied via email that a copy of the signed consent form provided electronically was acceptable, to which I replied to the email with all signed consent forms of participants.

After approval to conduct the study by both Walden University and the school system's review board, I emailed the 'Principal Permission to Conduct Research Study' form as provided by the school system's review board. Permission was granted from the three principals of the schools identified by the school system's review board. Each principal signed and selected the permission granted box in the form and I forwarded the three forms to the research and evaluation department. I then followed the directive of the responsive principal's method for contacting staff, using the invitation to participate form (Appendix B). Although I received permission from all three of the principals to have the research conducted in their schools, two of three principals were unresponsive to my emails inquiring of next steps post permission granted. I was able to conduct interviews with teachers and an administrator of one of the school sites.

Establishing Researcher-Participant Relationship

I initially established a relationship when I met with one of the principals that granted permission to conduct the study in her school. After realizing that this principal and I had a pre-existing working relationship, she then extended an invitation for me to attend the staff meeting and placed me on the agenda to share about my study and recruit participants. The principial also embedded the consent form into the agenda for the meeting, which all staff members have access to. My research participant relationship consisted of sharing about the problem of the study with staff members during the staff meeting, providing the staff members with the consent form which included all the interview questions, and my contact information, in the event they had further questions about the study. I also used the staff meeting as an opportunity to establish trust amongst the staff by sharing why this study was important to me and how their experiences would be used to advocate for positive changes in implementing interventions that could potentially empower them, as teachers and administrators.

I used the process of reflective journaling (Lodico et al., 2010) to familiarize myself with the response data captured from participant responses. This process of reflective journaling was also Phase One of Braun and Clarke's Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Probing/clarification questions were asked of participants, as needed, as recommended in phase two of Braun and Clarke's Thematic Analysis. I used probing questions to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon from the participants vantage point. I acquired and maintained trust from the participants by providing step by step information in the invitation to participate, obtaining consent from

the school principal, sending the Zoom link and consent form, as promised once they scheduled their interview date and time using the Calendly link, conducting their interview, and member checking. I built trust with the participants by interacting with them during the staff meeting. My interactions with participants in the staff meeting contributed to the credibility of the data collected in each participant's interview.

Protections of Participants and Informed Consent

After I obtained approval to conduct the study and consent to contact teachers, I used the staff meeting I was invited to by the principal as my first point of contact for potential participants. I used the consent form from Walden University's recommended consent form template. I chose to use this consent form for the study to ensure all components of the consent were included. The consent form explained the purpose of the study, the criteria to participate, any risk involved for participants, participants rights and a confidentiality statement indicating their participation would remain confidential. Participants were also made aware that School District A's department of research and evaluation would receive a copy of their signed consent form, as part of their process and their confidentiality as participants would remain confidential and not affect their employment with School District A. Teachers and administrators are referred to as participants in this study to further protect the identity of participants.

I sent the consent form to the principal, as we both agreed, and they embedded the consent form into the agenda for the meeting. Meeting agendas for the school are accessible to all staff members. During the staff meeting I explained the problem of the study and provided them with the consent form which included all the interview

questions, as well as my contact information, in the event they had further questions about the study. I also shared why this study was important to me and how their experiences would be used to advocate for positive changes in implementing interventions that could potentially empower them, as teachers and administrators.

Before each interview I emailed participants their personal Zoom link, the consent form, and asked that they email me stating "I confirm." Upon realizing that I had emails with this statement I quickly sent another email to all participants, asking them to send another email stating "I consent" and apologized for the oversight in wording. Before each interview I checked to ensure I had their signed consent form and in cases in which I was not in receipt of the consent form, I asked that they forward it to me. There were a couple of instances in which I assisted them with emailing the signed consent form back to me because some were not certain with how to do so without the option of scanning and emailing, a process that many were familiar with but did not have immediate access to technology that would allow them to use this option. I began each interview with revisiting my role, assigning them a pseudonym (Merriam & Tisdell, 2017) in which I stated that I would not tell them their pseudonym to ensure confidentiality and protect their identity. Before the interview began, I asked that each participant to turn their camera off and shared with them that because I was seeking to understand their experiences, I did not want to deter from them being able to express themselves fully i.e.: facial expressions etc. I began each interview with a warm-up question asking participants to share with me their general experience with the code of conduct in the Student's Rights and Responsibilities Handbook, as noted in the interview protocol. As

indicated in the consent form, participants were informed that there would be no monetary compensation for participation and the minimal risks involved in participating in the study.

I used pseudonyms maintain confidentiality of participants throughout the data collection, analyzing and reporting of the findings. Data and any identifying factors of participants were stored on an external password protected hard drive that would be stored in a locked file cabinet in my home office for at least five years before I destroyed the data, as required by Walden University. Participants were informed that they would receive a copy of their raw data from the interviews and the themes and trends in their data, as a form of member checking in the upcoming weeks. Participants were told the results of the study would be made available to them, post publication of the study.

Confidentiality

Participants were informed that the information they provided would be confidential and their names would not be used in the study. They were informed that they each would receive a pseudonym that would not be shared with them to protect their confidentiality. The signed consent form included a confidentiality clause and served as their memorandum of understanding of the terms of their agreement to volunteer as participants. Additionally, I informed participants that all typed, handwritten notes and any identifying factors would be stored on an external password protected hard drive that would be stored in a locked file cabinet in my home office for at least five years before I destroyed the data, as required by Walden University.

Data Collection

I used a qualitative study to explore the perceptions of 13 participants implementing interventions, per the code of conduct with students of Grade 9-12 in School District A. I used semistructured, one-on-one interviews to get in-depth responses of their challenges faced with implementing interventions and the supports and resources they felt were needed to implement interventions more effectively. Additionally, online, one-on-one interviews were selected versus face to face because I was more comfortable with online interviews in a post-COVID 19 environment as well as the capability of conducting online interviews met the time requirements for conducting the study as approved by the study site. Additionally, I asked that each participant to turn their camera off and shared with them that because I was seeking to understand their experiences, I did not want to deter from them being able to express themselves fully i.e.: facial expressions etc. Qualitative data were presented using direct quotes from participants about their experiences, opinions, and knowledge of the phenomenon of study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2017).

Description of Data Collected

Qualitative data for this study were collected through the interview process. The data collected through the interview protocol allowed me to gather in-depth knowledge about the participants' perspective of the phenomenon. The ability to ask follow-up questions and probing questions added to the richness of the data. The semistructured interviews provided an opportunity to gain first-hand knowledge from participants about

the phenomenon therefore, collecting data through interviews was the most appropriate

way to understand the phenomenon from the participants' perspectives.

Justification of Data Chosen

Semi-structured interviews worked best for gathering in-depth and rich

information about participants' perceptions to answer the research questions. According

to Merriam and Tisdell (2017) interviewing is one way to gather perceptions, opinions

and experiences that could provide rich knowledge of the phenomenon being studied.

Additionally, the authors suggested that when the researcher asks the same set of

interview questions, saturation can be reached more successfully. Lodico et al. (2010)

stated that interviewing allows for the researcher to collect data through probing to clarify

responses. Collecting data, using interviews, was most appropriate for the study.

Collection Instrument

The primary data collection tool used in the study was an interview protocol that

contained 10 questions (Appendix C). The interview protocol was designed to gather data

about teacher's and administrator's perceptions of the challenges they faced when

implementing interventions in the discipline policy and the supports needed to increase

implementation effectiveness for students at the study at the school under study. All the

interview questions were open-ended and inductively developed from the research

questions, to maximize the opportunity for participants to expand upon their experiences

and perspectives. Merriam and Tisdell (2017) stated that open-ended question assists in

the construction of new ideas for researchers. Probing was used to expand on detailed

information more in depth, which enhanced the study. The interview questions were

aligned with one of the research questions. Interview questions one – six were created to answer RQ1 and interview questions seven – 10 were created to answer RQ2. To answer RQ1 What are the teacher's and administrator's perceptions of the challenges faced. when implementing interventions in the discipline policy code of conduct, listed with the Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook? Participants were asked to answer the following questions: (a) What are the current systems in place for implementing interventions? School? Classroom? (b) How do you use data to inform your selection of intervention to implement? Describe the process. For example, is there a list of interventions you choose from, or a checklist provided or created by you or someone else to guide the selection of interventions for behavior and to what extent is this checklist used? (c)What is/are the process(es) for implementing an intervention? (d) How often have you used the code of conduct with your students/ with students in your school? Please describe your answer. (e)Do you find using the code of conduct with your students/with student in your school to be effective? Why or why not? (f) What challenges do you face (if any) with implementing interventions in the code of conduct? Please explain why or why not. If yes, how does the/those challenge(s) affect your implementation of the discipline policy? If no, please explain why you do not face challenges with implementing interventions in the Code of Student Conduct. To answer RQ2 What are teachers' perceptions of the support and resources they need to increase effectiveness of implementing interventions? Participants were asked to answer the following questions: (a)What resources or supports are available to you now to increase the effectiveness of implementing interventions? Are they any challenges to gaining

access to the resources or supports? If so, what are these challenges? Why do you see

this as a challenge? (b) What resources or supports do you need to increase the

effectiveness of implementing interventions? Are they any challenges to gaining access

to the resources or supports? If so, what are these challenges? Why do you see this as a

challenge? (c) Are resources or supports readily accessible to you to help increase

effectiveness of implementing interventions? If so, what are these resources or supports?

How are they accessible? All participants were asked to answer the last question: (a) Is

there anything you else you would like to provide that was not expressed that you feel is

beneficial for this interview or this study?

To ensure that the validity and quality of the interview protocol the committee

chair and second member reviewed the interview protocol during the proposal stage,

there were no revisions suggested. The use of online, one-on-one interviews were

selected versus face to face because I was more comfortable with online interviews in a

post-COVID 19 environment as well as the capability of conducting online interviews

met the time requirements for conducting the study as approved by the study site.

Additionally, I asked that each participant to turn their camera off and shared with them

that because I was seeking to understand their experiences, I did not want to deter from

them being able to express themselves fully i.e.: facial expressions etc.

Collection Instrument Relationship to Research Questions

The interview protocol was sufficient to answer both RQ1 and RQ2. The

interview questions were developed to retrieve information about the challenges

participants faced with implementing interventions, per the code of conduct; as well as

the resources or supports needed to implement interventions more effectively. Follow-up questions were asked of participants when clarification was needed. Probing questions were asked to give participants the opportunity to expand on their thinking, as well as clarify responses made. Participant responses revealed the various challenges they faced as well as the probable solutions for resources and supports needed to remedy the problem.

Process for Generating, Gathering, and Recording Data

The 13 participants that participated in the study had experience with the code of conduct and implementing interventions in the code of conduct to students in grades 9-12. Data were generated through semistructured interviews that lasted from 30 minutes to 2 hours. All interviews were recorded using the audio recording component of Zoom. All participants gave consent to be recorded. All participants gave consent to be interviewed for at least 60 minutes, and participants whose interviews went beyond 60 minutes did not object to the time through the process. The audio recording of the Zoom interviews was uploaded into Otteri.ai, a free online software application (Voice meeting notes & real-time transcription, 2022). Otteri.ai generated a transcription of the Zoom audio recording for each interview. The generated transcriptions were gathered from Otteri.ai and recorded into google sheets. Each participants' response was copied and pasted into the column aligned to the interview question.

Data Tracking Process

Using google sheets I created a sheet for each interview question and inserted the participant pseudonyms in the first column, a note section for the second column, the

question being asked in the third column, the participants response in the fourth column

which was also noted as phase 1 of Braun and Clarke's Thematic Analysis,

probing/clarification questions I asked of participants were typed in the fifth column, and

bits of data that could answer the research question, phase 2 of Braun and Clarke's TA,

were typed in the 6th column. I used Otteri.ai to transcribe the data, I then read the

transcribed data while listening to the recorded interviews, inserting inaudible notes and

interjections to differentiate between probing and clarification questions asked of

participants by me (Voice meeting notes & real-time transcription 2022). I then identified

phase 2 of Braun and Clarke's Thematic Analysis to isolate data that was relevant to

answering the research questions and then I reviewed the first three interviews for

relevancy. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2017) a review of data after the first three

interviews can be completed to review for relevance of the research question, ideas that

have emerged regarding the aim of the study and judge whether the information gathered

provides new information for the gap to practice. The first three interviews took place in

less than 24 hours of each other. Two of the interviews lasted 1.5 hours and the third

interview lasted 1 hour and 45 minutes. I reviewed data after the first three interviews and

concluded the information gathered provided new information for the gap to practice,

therefore, I did not adjust the interview questions.

Role of Researcher

At the time of the study, I was a central office based, itinerant mentor teacher;

assigned specifically to work with participants of grades K-8. The participants in the

study were some colleagues I mentored, facilitated professional learning sessions for or

may have interacted with during countywide workshops or within the local participants'
association. Moreover, my role in the school district could have made participants
apprehensive about participating; however, this was not the case. As the researcher, I
knew the importance of conducting both a valid and reliable study. To ensure the study
was both valid and reliable I focused on the participants verbatim responses throughout
the study. I had access to the study site because this was granted by the principal, and I
held no supervisory role over them.

I worked in Prince George's County for 21 years as an educator of grades fifth
through eighth grade and then as an itinerant mentor teacher. To have participants
comfortable with participating in the study I shared about my role in the county as a
mentor teacher and my purpose for conducting this study. With my experience working
with students who exhibited misbehaviors and my bias of noticing how the consequences
associated with the misbehavior did not always get to the root cause of the misbehavior
was the catalyst for this research study. The interview questions were structured to
minimize the effect of this bias in the study.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is the process of making sense out of the data through condensing,
coding, finding trends and patterns to make meaning from the data (Merriam & Tisdell,
2017). I used Braun and Clarke (2006) six-phase thematic analysis (TA), the process by
which codes and themes were derived from an inductive approach. I began the process by
transcribing the data. Using Otteri.ai, a free online software application (Voice meeting
notes & real-time transcription 2022) to transcribe recorded interviews into a

transcription, I transcribed the data and copied the transcript of each interview question into the spreadsheet for all participants. I conducted phase two of TA by re-reading the transcript of the interview questions and notating "bits of data" that occurred as relevant to answering the research questions. Braun and Clarke (2006) suggested initial coding begins with the researcher becoming familiar with the data by asking questions such as: (a) what is interesting about this data? (b) what are my feelings and thoughts about this data? Engaging in this process of questioning, I re-read the transcript for the purposes of experiencing what it was like for each participant regarding the phenomenon of the study. I began initial coding of data, using an inductive approach and the codes that emerged were put into column six (see Figure 1). Note: the participant (Tammy) response as noted in the figure was as follows:

I think that the descriptions, I feel like the job descriptions like need to change. You know, if you're going to have counselors on, you should have dedicated people that are just going to be dealing with scheduling, and dedicated people who are going to be working, you know, it was one on one with students and whether you, you switch it by the day, like, I just feel like every I feel like every counselor can't do every single job responsibility every single day. There has to be some lessening of the workload, whether it's less students, whether it's, you know, again, like we're just going to take all of the responsibility's counselors have to do and we're going to sort of how people specialize in some of those specialties. So that they're, they're not going a mile wide and an inch deep on everything. I think a lot of it is, like I said, it just that they're busy, you know, it's

not like they don't want to help. It's not like they're purposely trying to blow me off every, you know, when I call them. And in fact, many of the time, you know, what I do call in for these interventions, you know, they will try to bend over backwards. But that can't be every time and I do feel like, you know, they may address the problem immediately. But like, sometimes the follow through kind of falls apart, you know, depending on the person and their workload and their work style, because I mean, you have to be kind of organized to constantly be dealing with a new crisis, as well as following up on all the old ones and doing, you know, everything else that you're assigned to do.

Figure 1

Inductive Approach to Coding Data

Interview Question: What resources or supports do you need to increase the effectiveness of implementing interventions? Are they any challenges to gaining access to the resources or support? If so, what are these challenges? Why do you see this as a challenge?					
Participant (Pseudonym)	What is interesting about this data? What are my feelings and thoughts about this data?	Participant Response	Probing	Bits of Data (data that can answer the research questions)	Initial Codes (data that seem relevant to answering the research questions, identify patterns/themes).
Tammy	I visualize counselors, in particular, trying to complete multiple tasks on a daily basis, both related and unrelated to their job description. Counselors are responsible for scheduling, counseling, meeting with students and being on-call to handle crises. Counselors can be tasked with a number of unknown variables daily, even though there is a constant delivery of responsibilities daily (i.e.: set schedule for when they can see students or assist staff in need).	(see block quote above)	N/A	☐ Workload of counselors is too much for one person to do their job well.	☐ Counselors exist on paper but can't do their jobs fully.

A total of 89 codes emerged from the bits of data gathered in phase two and each code was listed one-89 (Appendix D). I transferred the numbered codes into a word document, re-read the transcribed data from phase two, and reviewed the codes against the dataset. It was important for me to determine the thickness of the themes that would emerge from the codes, so I began to group similar codes. The grouped codes were highlighted different colors to identify preliminary patterns and trends that emerged from the data. These highlighted categories became initial themes, phase four of TA (Appendix E). To explore the relationships between the themes to see how the themes worked together to answer the research questions I reviewed the themes and checked the themes

against the data to see if there was a natural relationship that was clearly noticeable. As

recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006) I asked the following key questions:

- Is this a theme (it could be just a code)? And if it is,

- What is the quality of this theme (does it tell me something useful about the

  dataset, and my research question)?

- What are the boundaries of this theme (what does it include and exclude)?

- Are there enough (meaningful) data to support this theme (is the theme 'thin' or

  'thick')?

- Are the data too diverse and wide-ranging (does the theme lack coherence)? (p.9)

Responses to these questions against the initial themes allowed me an opportunity to

separate similar themes to get an accurate sense of the story of the codes. This process

resulted in a total of 116 codes. The second part of this fourth phase involved checking

the themes against the entire dataset to ensure the themes intentionally captured the entire

dataset. During this part of the fourth phase I removed the themes that did not fit well

enough to answer the research questions. Phase five of Braun and Clarke's TA consisted

of defining and naming the themes (Appendix E). In this phase I looked for the themes to

tell a story that answered the research question and to conduct this phase I used the

recommended steps of identifying if the theme had a singular focus, wasn't repetitive,

and answered research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This phase entailed looking for

the preponderance of data that would be interpreted in the analysis as it connected to the

research questions. As proposed, I asked myself *so what?* about the data as far as being

useful to answering the research question (Braun & Clarke). This process of asking the

question so what? was used for each of the themes. Following this I named the themes by thinking of ways to describe the data in an informative and succinct way. Braun and Clarke suggested the naming of themes be deliberately informative and, in some cases, include participant language.

Evidence of Quality of the Data

Credibility was important to establish in this study and to do this I implemented a strategy recommended by Lodico et al. (2010) to ensure I accurately captured participant responses and their feelings, thoughts and emotions associated with their responses. Qualitative data are collected to understand how people construct meaning of the world and their experiences therefore, to validate both the findings of study and to minimize for bias and increase the trustworthiness of the study I used member checking and quotes of participants (Lodico et al., 2010) to enhance the quality of the study.

Member Checking

To ensure the data captured was accurate and credible I emailed each participant a copy of their raw data and the final themes that emerged from their interview. I asked that participants review the data sent and confirm the accuracy of their responses reflected in the themes to ensure I captured their perceptions accurately within two days of being in receipt of the email. Additionally, the emails specifically stated that they did not need to respond back if they agreed the data provided represented their thoughts, opinions, and experiences. I also sent a text message to members that I had a phone number for, as retrieved during the recruitment phase, informing them of the email I sent. I received seven of the 13 participants responses stating that my analysis of their interviews was

captured accurately. I also allowed participants an opportunity to offer any suggestions to ensure their perceptions were captured accurately so changes could be made to capture their perspectives. I did not receive any suggestions from the seven participants that responded. This process of member-checking ensured the internal validity of my data analysis (Merriam & Tisdell, 2017).

Quotes

I used quotes from participants in the narrative of the study to increase the integrity and validity of the study. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2017) quotes access one's construction of reality for how they make sense of understanding the world and their experiences. The narratives in the final study will show the consistency in quotes of participants and how participants experiences aligned with one another to repeat similar experiences. I utilized member checking as a process first before including quotes in the study. The use of quotes decreased the possibility of my internal biases about the phenomenon of study.

Discrepant Cases

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2017), discrepant data are data that do not fit the emerging themes. In cases of discrepant data, they will be included in the results section of the study to help validate alternative viewpoints, ensuring my study was holistic and credible (Lodico et al., 2010). The inclusion of discrepant data increases the credibility of the study. This study was focused on exploring teacher's and administrator's perceptions of the discipline policies and the effectiveness of these policies in their respective school settings, therefore; the results of this study will only be

generalizable to other teachers or administrators that read the study and determine that the results of this study are applicable to them.

In this study, there were two discrepant cases within the data. The first discrepant case applied to Theme 3 regarding intervention implementation. One participant agreed that while there were no set procedures for implementing interventions, they found that processes used by the nineth grade academy supported with implementing interventions for students. This participant stated how students are arranged in color-coded cohorts within the ninth-grade academy and the colors represent the degree to which students struggled in their academics and behavior, coming from middle school. This participant described the process as such:

> So those are the students that we just want to keep our eyes on, because this can help ensure that students are able to successfully pass the ninth grade the first time and have a greater chance of graduating on time, so we are really looking to helping them transition in high school and go through that first year successfully. We use color coded green, red, yellow, while keeping an eye on our yellow and our red students and not forgetting about our green students, because sometimes they get here and get a little wild and turn into red students… all of the students have a color, and our focus is primarily on those students that are coded red; however we're also looking to see if there's any changes in the other groups as well. Initially students are coded based on all their tests GPAs, coming out of eighth grade, then once we see their grades beginning to drop, we look at suspensions, ISS visits, any incidents the students may have had, as well as

attendance data. We talk to other teachers of students to see if they've

experienced similar issues or noticed the same things that are cause for concern.

Teacher notes in school max help clarify situations that may be going on with the

student, such as a suspension…mental health crisis, or even a death in the family.

We keep these lines of communication open so we can intervene early.

This discrepant case was important to note because it explains the inconsistency in

implementing interventions, school wide. Although several participants spoke of various

forms of implementing interventions, this case supports the need for consistent

implementation of interventions.

The other discrepant case applied to Theme 5 where one participant stated that

they felt their administration was readily accessible to help increase the effectiveness of

interventions. The participant specifically said that they did not want to go into detail

about their claim, yet they stated that they "believed administration were accessible" to

them. The participant added that administration was there if they needed anything or had

something happening that they need support with. This discrepant case was important to

note because it revealed that one educator believed the administration of the school was

accessible as a resource of support, whereas most participants reported the lack of clear

communication from administration as a challenge. This discrepant case helped to

explain the need for consistent communication from administration to participants.

Project Deliverable

Based upon the analysis of data and findings of the study the project deliverable

was a detailed policy recommendation (policy paper) was an appropriate project genre for

this project based on secondary educators need for support with implementing interventions. Supplying an urban, suburban, and rural school district on the east coast of the United States with the results of the study highlighting the critical issues secondary educators face with implementing interventions effectively can help bring positive outcomes for educators, administrators, and students. A list of recommendations, supported with research-based evidence can help guide educators and administrators with implementing interventions from a lens of best practices. This basic qualitative project study gathered perceptions of the challenges teachers and administrators faced when implementing interventions, per the code of conduct in the Student's Rights and Responsibilities Handbook provided in School District A and the support teachers and administrators felt the need to effectively implement interventions effectively. School District A is a school district in the state of Maryland located in on the east coast of the United States. The findings of this study indicated that for teachers and administrators (educators) to implement interventions effectively they would need support in specific areas addressed in the study. These specific areas included (a) the code of conduct (b) access and accessing resources (c) guidance and support (d) administrator discretion (e) staffing (f) professional learning, and (g) alternative methods to discipline.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

This basic qualitative project study gathered perceptions of the challenges teachers and administrators faced when implementing interventions, per the code of conduct in the Student's Rights and Responsibilities Handbook. The code of conduct is provided by an urban, suburban, and rural school district on the east coast of the United States and one of the purposes is to support teachers and administrators with implementing interventions for student misbehavior. an urban, suburban, and rural school district on the east coast of the United States. The findings of this study indicated that for teachers and administrators to implement interventions effectively they would need support in specific areas. These specific areas included (a) the code of conduct (b) access and accessing resources (c) guidance and support (d) administrator discretion (e) staffing (f) professional learning, and (g) alternative methods to discipline.

Section 3 of the study includes a rationale of the project genre, review of literature, project description of the policy paper, project evaluation plan, and project implications. As a result of the findings of the study I developed a policy paper (Appendix A) that identifies a list of problems for School District A and includes recommendations to the problems. Psichas et al. (2019) defined policy papers as documents used to present a problem on complex issues for the sole purpose of making recommendation based on research and or evidenced-based research; therefore, I selected a policy paper as the genre of project with purposes of making recommendations to the School District A Board of Education.

Rationale

The findings from the study revealed that participants expressed similar perceptions about the support they felt they needed to implement interventions in the code of conduct more effectively. Therefore, a policy paper (policy paper) to include the findings of the study with recommendations was appropriate to present to the school district. A policy paper is a persuasive paper written with the intent of presenting a problem or complex issues) combined with solutions based on research and, or evidence-based research (Psichas et al., 2019). I created this policy paper to present information related to the problem with probable solutions in an effective way for the school district. The recommendations presented in this policy paper can be used to support the district with research-based solutions to abetment the current practices in place.

This policy paper is not intended to replace what the school district currently utilizes for implementing interventions. This policy paper is intended to identify gaps in knowledge and practices that have been revealed by teachers and administrators from the study, with regards to the challenges they experienced with implementing interventions effectively. This policy paper provides several recommendations based on the findings in the study.

To gain an understanding of the challenges faced by teachers and administrators with implementing interventions, I chose to conduct 13 semistructured, one-on-one interviews with secondary educators that had experience with implementing interventions per the code of conduct for School District A. According to Katz-Buonincontro (2022) interviews allow for individuals to share their experiences and are considered to be the

most common form of data collection in which interactions between the researcher/interviewer and interviewee allow for the researcher/interviewer to capture both what was said, and the experience or feelings associated with what was being communicated by the interviewee. I chose a policy paper as a suitable project genre to inform the school district of the findings from the study, secondary teachers, and administrators' perceptions of school discipline practices.

Review of the Literature

I conducted a review of the literature for this project genre through the Walden Library (online), ERIC, Sage, ProQuest Central, Taylor and Francis, and Google Scholar. I used the following search terms for this review: position paper, policy paper, white paper, origin of white paper, DE "position papers" and in policy, rulemaking, education policy, school discipline policy, how to write policy, policies, laws, and guidelines. I also used the Brookings Institution and the United States Department of Education website to search for policy paper related creation, analysis, and implementation. Additionally, search terms included themes that emerged from the results of the study: *code of conduct, resources, support, professional development,* and *alternative approaches*. Keywords for the search included: *code of conduct in schools, discipline, counselors in public schools, overworked counselors, teacher shortage, teacher support, principal guidance, working conditions, workload and caseload, practitioners, behavior management, job-embedded, social emotional learning (SEL),* and *challenges with PBIS in high schools.* I also reviewed the Prince George's County Student's Rights and Responsibilities, code of conduct section. The second literature review includes information about (a) the context

of policy papers, (b) what policy papers are used for, (c) the consequences of policy papers, (d) the importance of policy papers, and (e) best practice (collaboration) of policy papers. Additionally, the second literature review includes information on (f) policy implementation with codes of conduct, (g) resources needed for effective intervention implementation, (h) support needed for effective intervention implementation, (i) professional development needed for effective intervention implementation, and (j) alternative approaches for intervention implementation.

Project Genre: Detailed Policy with Recommendations (Policy Paper)

Policy recommendations, sometimes referred to as policy or white papers, can be used as a stimulus for change (Gu et al., 2018). During this study I learned that secondary educators have a need for change in how they are directed to implement interventions for student misbehavior. There is a need to prepare educators on how to implement interventions effectively Cherng & Davis (2017); therefore, a policy paper was the most appropriate genre to address the challenges faced by secondary educators with implementing interventions effectively.

Context

A policy paper is a brief document in which the results and recommendations of an issue are presented to a nonspecialized audience, written in a persuasive manner. Policy papers consist of a public problem, context of the problem and recommendations to address the problem (Gu et al., 2018). In the case of Lindstrom et al. (2019) action research conducted to address problems with the production of operational technologies (OT) found that there was a way to have the OT function more securely with *improved*

monitoring for IT departments. Lindstrom concluded that using an OT policy, risk-management levels with fixing problems faster with OT would benefit the bottom-line of top-management. Lindstrom's result identified the problem, the context in which the problem was occurring and a recommendation for how the problem could be resolved.

Uses

Policy papers are used as a tool to raise awareness and advocate for changes by exposing a problem and providing a recommendation (Gu et al., 2018). The stability of a nation's economy in a competitive marketplace has been directly linked to the policy making, drafting and adoption in the United States. Since economic downfalls beginning in 1970's all United States presidents, to present, have used the collapse of the United States economics to drive both economic and education agendas in the United States. Carpenter (2018) found policy storylines as the means in which government officials purposely targeted and advocated for change by connecting economic vulnerability to educational reform. Results of these policy storylines were directly responsible for the creation of the National Commission on Excellence in 1983 which was designed to ensure students were given educational opportunities to develop beyond their potential through high standards which in turn led to the commission's report: *A Nation at Risk*. Government officials used concerns of a depreciating economy to reform the United States' educational agenda. Through building awareness of the economic downfall within a global economy, government officials devised plans to reform education in response and as a recommendation to reversing the downward spiral effect of the falling economy.

Policy papers present a problem in a convincing manner to bring forth recommendations for improvement and positive social change for the betterment of a society.

An effective policy paper is written in a persuasive manner, either focusing on the ineffectiveness of a previous policy or the critical need for a policy to be adopted (Pautz and Gauder, 2018). The Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994 was policy created to target weapons in schools with an automatic expulsion for any student that brought a weapon to school (Mittleman, 2018). While this policy had been widely criticized, as the definition of a weapon was being interpreted generally as a student in possession of a pen, pencil; the passage of the Gun-Free Schools Act (GFSA) of 1994 led to an increase in state governments adopting mandatory expulsions (ME) as critical to keeping schools safe (Curran, 2017). While some states already had mandatory expulsion policies in place, the GFSA prompted more national attention to the federal legislation, and in turn districts began to adopt ME policies as well. The widespread national attention given to keeping schools safe resulted in zero tolerance (ZT) discipline across the nation's schools (Williams III et al., 2018).

Koyoma and Cheng (2019) cited policy papers as both official yet limited. Policy papers are used as advocacy tools to engage and persuade larger audiences to take specific action on issues through persuasive messaging.

Consequences

There are both advantages and disadvantages to policy papers. An analysis of Hajer's policy storylines by Diem (2018) revealed how policy papers have been used to provoke reforms of social issues as initial crises beginning at the federal level. In the

arena of discipline reform, ZT policies in education were initially designed as policy

papers, across United States local school districts, to reform discipline in schools and

deter students from engaging in acts of school violence (Schlesinger & Schmits-Earley,

2020). The enforcement of ZT policies increased in US local school districts following

the Gun-Free Schools Act (GFSA) of 1994, the 1999 Columbine shooting (Cornell et al.,

2018), as well as the War on Drugs (Hanushek et al., 2020). While the initial intention of

the GFSA of 1994 was to ban assault weapons throughout the United States, the passage

of the GFSA of 1994 resulted in ZT policies throughout the United States local school

districts under various states' subjective guidelines (Curran, 2017). The War on Drugs led

to some of the United States' multifaceted approaches to closing gaps in education

achievement. The introduction of several federal programs from desegregation of

schools, post 1954's Supreme Court ruling to No Child Left Behind, to date, have not

been found to support the narrowing of the SES-achievement gap, within the social

context the federal mandate the War on Drugs had been declared to positively support

(Hanushek et al., 2020).

Like the disadvantages of the GFSA of 1994, the National Commission on

Excellence in 1983 was designed to ensure students were given educational opportunities

to develop beyond their potential through high standards (Carpenter, 2018). The report of

the commission: *A Nation at Risk*, found the heightened mandates focused on

examination of high stakes standardized assessment, educator outputs, and school district

accountability led to decreased measures of equity within Every Student Succeed Act

(ESSA) and Title I (Carpenter, 2018). As suggested by Weymann (2019) education

policy was created to ensure investments in human capital (students) would ultimately benefit the economic needs of society. Weymann's statement supported Carpenter's analysis of how education reform would serve as the nation's response to the global economic crisis of survival post the Cold-War Era.

A critical analysis of the role of gentrification in school communities was explained as increased segregation in three United States cities' local school districts adopted diversity policies (Diem, 2018b). Albeit the intention of the policy papers crafted by local school boards of these three cities' diversity policies were crafted to increase options for parents of the school community, the outcome led to decreased enrollment in schools throughout the city which furthered funding disparities amongst schools. As noted by Tang and Falola (2018), gentrification does not benefit all members of a community.

Cornell et al. (2018), Curran (2017), Carpenter (2018), and Weymann (2019) illustrated how the rulemaking (United States Department of Education, 2020) of policy papers drafted and established into law could address and create social issues, simultaneously. Weymann's critical analysis of post-Cold-War Era policy creation went a little further to highlight the persuasiveness of policy creation from an economic viewpoint, which garnered widespread support for education reform. Diem's (2018a) critical analysis of the effect gentrification had on three United States local school board districts furthered the notion of how policy creation and adoption led to both intended and unintended consequences for members of society. While it is in the best interest of policymakers, within a democratic government, to draft policy papers that meet the needs

of the public, there are competing social theories that support why policy papers have focused more on large scale issues that affect the economy of society (Burstein, 2020).

Importance

Writers of policy papers and the adoption of these papers are integral to how policy implementation affects the functions of a society. Local boards of school districts throughout the United States are occupied by individuals well connected in local politics in their respective geographies, with no prior experience in education (Young et al., 2019). It is important that writers of policy papers are knowledgeable about the policies they seek to amend, and or the social issues that lead them to advocate for policies.

In an examination of education policy implemented at the state-level, Sampson (2019) found that responsiveness to a state mandated declaration to support English Learners (ELs) with $50 million allocated specifically to EL—specific educational programs failed to support the exact population of students it was created and intended as prerequisites to access the curriculum were unmet by students. Sampson discovered that for students to access the EL programs, they first needed academic support in development of the English language (EL). The lack of strong academic support in EL coupled with exhausted funding mechanisms to acquire EL resources rendered a negative outcome for EL students, in the initial drafting of this policy paper. In a similar way, a critical analysis of the implementation of past policy papers to increase the number of college preparatory graduation standards for African American (AA) students with disabilities failed to meet that goal of the Texas Top 10% Plan (TTPP) (Tabron and Ramlackhan, 2018). The Texas Top 10% Plan was a race-neutral strategy to increase the

number of eligible AA students for a college preparatory diploma. Tabron and

Ramlackhan found that eligibility of high school students with disabilities to receive a

college preparatory diploma was drastically limited because less than 64% of students

with disabilities were enrolled in Advanced Placement courses and subjected to non-

rigorous coursework. The access students with disabilities had to rigorous coursework

drastically limited their opportunity for eligibility of a college preparatory diploma. Cruz

and Rodl (2018).

Responding to large scale issues through policy papers can have both a

detrimental and beneficial effect on individuals that the policy paper was intended to

assist.

Best Practices. Collaboration of policy papers by professionals with expertise in

particular areas of focus for policy creation was suggested as best practice in a study

conducted by Raina (2019). Raina found that poorer communities in India experienced

less quality medical care. This social issue led to the formation of over 100 medical

professionals, whose focus on medicine ranged in areas of study, to combat a rabies

epidemic plaguing poorer community. Through their collaboration, the medical

community drafted a policy paper presented during the seventh annual conference to

combat rabies and the policy paper was unanimously adopted by the conference panel. To

illustrate the need for collaboration of experts in fields of social issues, Franco's (2022)

historical exploration of the United States (US) anti-immigration policies found that

social work professionals were indispensable to policy amendments and creation. To

rectify the negative outcomes of policies such as the Bracero program which ended in

1964, to the 2018 Trump administration's termination of the Temporary Protection Status (TPS) Franco suggested that social work professionals be more involved in social organizations that draft policy papers within policy making groups. Notably, varied degrees of loci of controls conducive to educators' view of education policy illustrated the need for collaboration with policy papers before implementation of adopted policies happened. In their comparison of educators in India and the state of Iowa in the US Gillespie and Fairbairn (2019) found that the degree to which educator's felt they had a voice in the implementation of policy papers was determined by their geographies. Moreover, it was concluded that although educators in the US resisted, yet complied, while educators in India welcomed and took ownership of the implementation of policy papers, a need for collaboration with policy papers was strongly voiced by the 14 participants in the study to unify implementers of the policy paper once adopted. A comparative historical analysis conducted by Focacci and Perez (2022) found that the best policy was drafted in collaboration with experts in the field of the content of the policy. The outcomes of Raina, Franco, Gillespie, and Fairbairn lend support to Focacci and Perez's analysis of the need for collaboration in policy papers across varying areas of a society.

Policy Implementation. Secondary teachers and administrators (educators) faced challenges with implementing effective discipline policy interventions to manage student misbehavior in an urban, suburban, and rural school district on the east coast of the United States. Specifically, some challenges included teachers not receiving ample support from principals with how to implement interventions, educators not having

enough time in the day to stay the course of their work schedule, and ensure interventions are being implemented as needed and designed, implementation of interventions being misinterpreted by staff, lack of or limited knowledge about interventions and or discipline policy (Bal et al., 2018).

It is important that interventions are implemented effectively if positive student outcomes in the form of behavior are to be actualized (Bruhn et al., 2022). Moreover, positive student behavior has been associated with positive school climate and higher levels of teacher satisfaction in teaching and learning (Bal et al., 2018). When interventions are not implemented effectively, school climate and morale diminish (Estrapala, 2021), trust amongst colleagues deteriorates and student misbehavior continues (Bruhn et al., 2022). The potential harm caused by not implementing interventions effectively include yet are not limited to a lack of school connectedness, bullying, violence, and victimization amongst youth in schools (Acosta, 2019).

To solve the issue and increase the effectiveness of intervention implementation amongst educators it was important to understand their reasons why implementing interventions effectively is challenging. Thirteen educators in one high school in School District A participated in the study, and their responses indicate a variety of reasons why it is challenging to implement interventions, per the discipline policy, effectively.

Code of conduct. School District A's Students Rights and Responsibilities Handbook houses the code of conduct and according for section 7:

School District A is committed to providing a safe and orderly learning environment conducive to rigorous instruction. Students must maintain

appropriate behaviors at all times whether face-to-face or in an approved online instruction. Escalated or repeated behaviors may result in further responses according to the student code of conduct. The student will receive due process, beginning with referral to the administrator with written documentation by the referring adult, contact to parent/guardian, and an opportunity to present what happened. If the administrator finds the student responsible for the violation, he/she will determine the appropriate response within the student code of conduct (School District A's student rights & responsibilities).

It was this description of the code of conduct along with the disciplinary response levels, interventions and consequences provided in section 7 those participants in this study described as ambiguous and contradictory. In a document analysis to interpret content and make meaning of it, Caldera (2019) provided several recommendations regarding codes of conduct in schools. Aligned to participants' descriptions of the confusing nature of the code of conduct, Caldera's study suggested that school districts revise their codes of conduct to make expectations "clear, specific, and bias-free." Participants of the study admitted that they had skimmed through the code of conduct and reviewed portions of it as directed by their administrators. Moreover, participants expressed that the school-wide review of the code of conduct occurred as a formality and more procedural in nature, with no emphasis placed by administrators for staff to review the code of conduct in its entirety.

Experiencing a thorough review of the code of conduct was not formality as indicated by participants of the study. According to several participants, the review of the

code of conduct occurred to them as a 'cover yourself' type of formality. An examination

of the conduct by one participant noted they felt it was peculiar that educators were not

required to review the code of conduct in detail because it was something that students

were expected to know and abide by. A review of guidelines in a study conducted by

Reyneke (2019) designed to highlight the importance of updating codes of conducts for

learners, revealed that the educators should be provided with a specific document of the

code of conduct separate from students, that distinctly guides educators on how to

implement codes of conduct.

The code of conduct in School District A lists both reactive and proactive

interventions for implementation when students misbehave. Participants of the study

mentioned that intervention implementation of the code of conduct for student

misbehavior would cause further harm than good and not get to the root cause of the

misbehavior, rather than just punish students for misbehaving. Given this interpretation

of the code of conduct, several participants in the study were resolved to introduce and

utilize alternative methods to disciplining students in their classroom. Participants

recognized that the code of conduct, in it's confusing nature, tended to contradict itself

when it came to implementing interventions for student misbehavior, similar to

Schlesinger and Schmits-Earley (2020) study that found revised codes throughout schools

districts in the United States, were redesigned to balance punitive with supportive

interventions however many districts through the revision processes of their codes of

conducts may not have fully cross examined the effect punitive interventions have on the

proactive interventions from the vantage point of those educators charged with

implementing interventions. Like participants of the study described, there seemed to be a gap between educators being able to incorporate interventions as listed in the code of conduct without causing further harm to their students that displayed misbehavior.

Resources Needed for Effective Intervention Implementation

Access to resources was critical to educators when dealing with student misbehavior. Shortages in resources in the form of human resources (i.e.: counselors, support staff, mental health professionals etc.…) leads to burdensome caseloads of other staff, primarily lead teachers, and or department chairpersons that are not teacher of records for students and counselors.

In their case study of an evaluation of a school-community partnership Swick and Power (2018) found using a multisystemic partnership defined as schools and community mental health agencies working in tandem to meet the needs of students that are unable to meet with specialists in their school buildings due to limited resources in those areas. Participants of the study unanimously expressed that while they had several specialists listed on the staff roster for example: counselors, mental health, school psychologists, and peer mediators; the reality of these resources merely existed on paper. Specifically, participants described their challenges with gaining access to these resources, for students in need, as being the result of these human resources being continuously assigned to other duties that inadvertently took time from their primary role and function in the school. Participants in the study mentioned one resource and while each participant could not state the exact role this person held, they all agreed on the belief that her work with students had saved many lives. Radez et al. (2019) mentioned that almost 70% of

aversion for mental health supports comes from students' inability to see an individual as confidential. In the case of this study, this one individual was the resource that was greatly needed, yet the challenge was that she was the staff member in that role of providing mental health support.

According to Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2019) working conditions that include a lack of school resources can influence how educators are able to do their job effectively. Most participants in the study highlighted that finding resources was difficult due to the time constraints they had during their duty day. These time constraints narrowed down to having increased workloads and, or a lack of knowledge with how to utilize specific forms pertaining to documenting student misbehavior. According to Bhatnager (2021) assertive educators are comfortable with finding resources online. Participants in the study assisted peers that confided in them about being less comfortable with searching online for resources. Therefore, the utilization of a guidebook would increase both the effectiveness of intervention implementation, by minimizing various interpretations of how to implement interventions, as well as intervention selection for educators who were less confident in finding appropriate interventions online.

Access to resources that increase the effective implementation of an intervention was critical to the role of educators. Human resources such as counselors, mental health specialists, and the like are necessary resources whose services are needed to support students, daily and it is important that services be provided without interruption by being assigned to other duties beyond their specific roles on their duty day. The utilization of a guidebook, with steps for how to implement interventions procedurally, would benefit

educators while limiting various interpretations of the implementation process for interventions.

Guidance and Support for Effective Intervention Implementation

Participants in the study reflected on moments of feeling frustrated and resigned due to the lack of guidance and support they felt they received with navigating the processes for implementing interventions. In their examination of the interactions between job satisfaction and effective classroom practices Bottani et al. (2019) found effective teacher practices were associated with low demands (i.e.: workloads) and high organizational resources and support to assist the implementation process of interventions. To add, Pressley (2021) conducted a convenience and snowball electronic survey (N = 359) of K–12 teachers across the United States for purposes of addressing challenging environments and results of their study found that administrative support was needed from school administrators to ease anxiety of educators. Mason-Williams et al. (2018) noted that in school district collaboration to leverage resources and expertise of educators, new teachers could get the necessary support needed to effectively achieve outcomes such as implementing interventions. As one participant in the study mentioned, new teachers to the building are not necessarily supported and most times these new teachers are given students with problematic behaviors. Holmes et al. (2019) expanded on Mason-William's study outcome and stated that the level of support teachers receive from their principal was determined by the level of effectiveness an administrator possesses.

Like Janzen and Schwartz (2019) participants of the study felt that it was important to separate student misbehavior and view the student as a person exhibiting misbehavior. Janzen and Schwartz found that when educators did not interrogate the misbehavior separated from the student, they would objectify students rather than find appropriate ways to intervene problematic behavior with interventions. Participants of the study voiced positive outcomes in implementing interventions grounded in being related to their students and their needs rather than assuming the reasons for the misbehavior being exhibited.

Administrator Discretion

Administrator support can have lasting effects on educator practice. Participants of the study indicated that the lack of feedback with disciplining students decreased morale and left them frustrated with implementing interventions to manage student misbehavior. According to Olson and Huang (2018) job satisfaction of educators was aligned to their perception of administrator support. In their expiration of principal support, the results of their study suggest administrator support determined educator cooperation. In the current study, participants reported their resignation to receiving support from administrators which led to them not enforcing rules as consistently as they once did. While Liebowitz and Porter (2019) suggested that principal behavior pertaining to skills and leadership resulted in their ability to effectively support educators with implementing interventions such as instructional strategies, participants of the study stated administrators in their building support specific educators as a "privilege thing," and elaborated on this concept by describing how administrators selected particular

educators to support with implementing interventions, while de-selecting educators to support. The participant further explained that if an administrator liked you then you would receive guidance from them when it came to managing student misbehavior like how novice teachers reported their observation of principals in a metaphorical analysis conducted by Kozikoglu (2018). Participants like teachers in Kozikoglu's study felt it challenging to implement interventions effectively with no guidance from administrators.

Staff Adjustments

Participants of the study suggested adjustments with staff assignments and roles as needed to implement interventions effectively. More specifically, participants cited the rigorous caseloads of specialty service providers and counselors as a concern for them being able to do their job effectively.

To support specialty staff in situations such as this, participants believed an increase in staff that offered specialty services, as well as adjustments to other duties assigned for current staff, would increase the success of intervention implementation. In an investigator-developed web-based survey of school practitioners across the US, Seruya and Garfinkel (2020) explored workloads and service delivery models of school practitioners and found that a change in their workload model would help them meet the demands of their caseload. Moreover, Seruya and Garfinkel's study concluded that for school practitioners to meet the diverse needs of their student population, while being assigned to other duties outside the scope of their role, school administration would need to adopt proposed workload models counselors and school practitioners felt would decrease barriers to implementing interventions. Like Seruya and Garfinkel, Corely et al.

(2021) found that workload approaches for specialists and other staff members implementing specific interventions with students as the best way to meet the demands of their roles in buildings while having a positive effect on student outcomes from intervention implementation. They also suggested that a workload model versus caseload model would provide time for them to work with teachers regarding intervention implementation.

Participants of the study noted that counselors were charged with too many responsibilities to be effective within their roles. Specifically, one participant mentioned that upon recommending a student see their counselor for support, the student responded negatively to that option, citing past experiences with counselors as not being beneficial. Blake (2020) suggested that the overwhelming tasks that counselors complete daily left school staff and students confused about their actual role. Moreover, Blake's study described counselor's time as being "monopolized" by the overwhelming tasks directed by administrators in their school building (p.327). Overall, counselors in Blake's study believed they would be more effective in their role if they were not pulled in different directions that took their focus off serving students. Additionally, counselors voiced their awareness of student concerns about their role, as their burdensome other duties as assigned, negatively impacted their relationships with students. With regards to how counselors in Blake's study felt about their role in schools, participants in the current study suggested the creation of a Dean of Students or Discipline to lessen the load of counselors.

Practical Professional Development for Effective Intervention Implementation

Job-embedded professional development that was practical in addressing the needs of educators in real-time were the sentiments of most participants in the current study. Bakhshaei et al. (2020) examined and explored attributes that contributed to the effectiveness of coaching, as reported by educators, and found that educators in their study suggest coaching in the form of professional development and learning was best received when it was embedded in the job, with access to live coaching for direct feedback. Educators of Bakhshaei's study reported that this method of professional development and learning allowed for authentic communication and real-time adjustments in implementation of interventions and practices such that educators receiving the coaching could experience what success looked like when interventions were implemented effectively. Participants of the current study had similar beliefs, as most of them supported the need for on-the-job training, especially during their duty day. Like the report of Parkhouse (2019) participants of the current study agreed that when educators' preferred ways of receiving professional development were taken into consideration, the likelihood of the professional development being deemed successful increased. Participants explained that attending professional learning during their workdays was preferred over having to attend sessions during their personal time. Moreover, educators explained that an unspoken forced agreement of doing whatever it took as a teacher to learn, grow, and develop professionally was unacceptable. Parkhouse et al. (2019) highlighted that when educators receive professional learning in ways, they deemed practical to their individual professional needs in contexts preferred by them,

engagement in the professional developmental learning increased amongst educators. This belief of professional development being practical was supported by Beasley and Bernadowski's (2019) instrumental case study focused on the effects of using a simulation to train reading specialists candidates on ways to implement behavioral management strategies when working with students that exhibited reading problems. Beasley and Bernadowski found that participants in that study felt that with simulation training, they experienced increased levels of confidence in their ability to implement behavioral management strategies. The simulation teaching approach and design as described in Beasley and Bernadowski's findings reflect similar traits of job-embedded professional learning with components of lecture, real-time coaching, and evaluation.

Project Description

Resources Required

The Board of Education for School District A would be responsible for approving any new policies and ensuring that the suggested policies changes or creation be in alignment with the vision, mission, and core values of School District A. I would ask for a presentation, through the Board Chair, to the board of education to address the findings of the study. These findings would include the themes of the study findings (a) code of conduct, (b) resources, (c) support and guidance, (d) administrator discretion, (e) staffing, (f) professional development, and (g) alternatives to traditional discipline; as well as proposed solutions to address the findings of the study, as supported through evidence-based research. The Board of Education (BOE) would be responsible for assigning the policy recommendations to respective parties (i.e., CEO, and department heads) and the

BOE would indicate the next steps for implementation of these strategies within the school district.

Existing Supports

Leadership in School District A can be accessed through central office personnel, school-based sites, and the educator's association. Central office personnel within the employee performance department, professional development department, Restorative Practices Program Coordinator with the Office of Student Services, and the National Board-Certified Teachers Program Coordinator for the School District All have varying degrees of expertise in intervention implementation for effective student outcomes. School-based personnel throughout the county staff hundreds of National Board-Certified Teachers and teacher leaders with expertise in utilizing alternatives to traditional discipline to effectively support student misbehavior. The local educators' association, Prince George's Educators' association has numerous teacher leaders that have expertise in implementing interventions effectively to reduce student misbehavior. Each of these entities brings value to supporting the policy recommendations proposed in this project. Inclusivity in policy creation and adoption was key to effective implementation.

Potential Barriers to Implementing Change

Three potential barriers to the suggested policies would be funding for the creation of the workgroup, professional development for administrators, and pushback regarding the selection of workgroup participants. The formation of a code of conduct

workgroup with the suggested parameters may see positive feedback amongst all stakeholders. The BOE may see this as an unnecessary creation.

Potential Solutions to Barriers

Solutions to the potential barriers would be to offer emoluments to participants of the workgroup for participation. The school system can acquire grants to fund this workgroup, under its non-profit status to defray any costs over budget. As for the professional development for administrators, the school system could utilize the online training component that houses all self-paced training for administrators to complete during the school year. School climate and staff morale are indicators (s) in administrator evaluation, so it was important that administrators at least have knowledge of how their actions affect their staff's implementation of the code of conduct. The creation of an application process for interested teachers and administrators to serve on the workgroup will create a transparent selection process and ensures that individuals selected came from a body of interested applicants to help bring positive social change to the lives of students, teachers, and administrators.

Proposal for Implementation with Timetable

The policy suggestions would be implemented over a 3-month period beginning after the presentation to the Board of Education (BOE). The goal would be to have the new policies in place before the start of the next academic school year. The goal of the policy recommendation for the code of conduct Workgroup would be for all interested stakeholders within the school system to apply and selection be based on the level of successful implementation, research-based knowledge on the subject matter of codes of

conduct, and alternatives to traditional forms of discipline and student

behavior. Selection of participants would be based upon board approval, and or its

designee(s) with input from the local educators' association, School District A's teachers'

association, and both the Restorative Practices Coordinator and National Board-Certified

Teachers Coordinator in School District A. Membership of the workgroup should

include, yet not be limited to teachers, pupil personnel workers (PPWs), school

psychologists, National Board-Certified Teachers and Principals, Professional School

Counselors, administrators, and the Restorative Practices Coordinator(s). The goal of the

audit policy is to include the employee performance department. This office is

responsible for all staff evaluations; therefore, institutional knowledge of staff and job

descriptions may be able to be made readily accessible for an audit of each school. The

purpose of the audit would be to identify the needs of staff in counseling, and discipline

to reallocate staff, as needed by a ratio that is suitable for positive student outcomes. The

purpose of the professional learning for administrators' policy would be to inform

administrators of the unintended outcomes that their actions or inactions have on their

staff under their direction as it relates to school climate, staff morale, and possibly teacher

turnover. The timeline for implementing the suggested policies spans over the course of

1–2. The first two policies months have a suggested timeline of two months for

implementation and the last policy has a suggested timeline of one month for

implementations. The three policies for implementation are as follows:

- Code of conduct Workgroup for purposes of creating a guidebook for

  implementing interventions within the code of conduct. Inclusive of

teacher leaders with expertise in implementing alternative traditions to student discipline. Inclusive of diverse members of the teacher workforce

- Conduct an audit/needs assessment for staff/job descriptions needed per school, to reallocate staff as needed; for purposes of overloading counselors with other duties as assigned.

- Create professional learning for administrators on the effects discretion in the workplace has on staff morale.

Implementation of interventions in the code of conduct was seen as challenging for secondary educators. The findings within my study reflected specific gaps in practices; thereby insinuating the need to move swiftly ahead with implementation of the recommended policies to alleviate the challenges perceived by teachers and administrators with implementing interventions, to bring positive change to student behavior, more effectively.

Roles and Responsibilities

The project will require some roles and responsibilities from leadership in School District A for the recommended policies to be implemented. The following roles are being suggested: (a) Board of Education (BOE) and the teachers' association for School District A will manage the selection process for the Code of conduct Workgroup, inclusive of interested educators in School District A; (b) employee performance department will manage the auditing of staff/job descriptions; and (c) professional development department will manage professional development for administrators. Table 3 highlights the roles of each so the project can be implemented.

Table 1

Roles and Responsibilities of School District A Leadership

Participant(s)	Roles and Responsibility
BOE or its designee(s) Teachers' association for School District A Restorative Practices Coordinator National Board-Certified Teacher Coordinator	Conduct process for all interested stakeholders within the school system to apply and be selected be based upon a level of successful implementation, research-based knowledge on the subject matter of codes of conduct, alternatives to traditional forms of discipline and student behavior. Membership of the workgroup should include, yet not be limited to teachers, pupil personnel workers (PPWs), school psychologists, National Board-Certified Teachers and Principals, Professional School Counselors, administrators, and the Restorative Practices Coordinator(s).
Employee performance department	Identify the needs of staff in counseling, and discipline to reallocate staff, as needed by a ratio that is suitable for positive student outcomes.
Professional development department	Manage the delivery of professional development for administrators on the unintended outcomes that administrator discretion has on their staff in relation to school climate, staff morale, and possibly teacher turnover in their schools.

Upon BOE approval of this project, the leadership recommended in Table 3 can be adjusted as needed. Department/ office leadership for each participating entity would have ownership in utilizing other departments, offices, and individuals to fulfill the outcomes listed in the roles and responsibilities section.

Project Evaluation Plan

A goals-based evaluation plan will be used to evaluate this project. Within this section, I include the project goals, justification for this type of evaluation, the overall goals for the evaluation, and a description of the key stakeholders. A goals-based evaluation will support each participating office/department in measuring progress

towards targets identified by each entity to meet the outcome of the overall goals of this policy recommendation. More specifically, the Plan, Do Study, Act (PDSA) Cycle of Improvement Approach, a process used for continuous improvement (Alexander et al., 2018) will be utilized as the project evaluation plan for the overall project.

Project Goals

The suggested policy recommendations in this report are based on the themes derived from the findings of the study. There are a total of three suggested policy recommendations to address the challenges identified in the study. Table 4 highlights the alignment between the policy recommendation and themes from the findings of the study.

Table 2

Policy Recommendation and themes from the findings alignment

Policy Recommendations	Themes from Study Findings
Code of conduct Workgroup for purposes of creating a guidebook for implementing interventions within the code of conduct • Inclusive of teacher leaders with expertise in implementing alternative traditions to student discipline. • Inclusive of diverse members of the teacher workforce.	Theme 1: Participants Perceived the code of conduct as an Ineffective Tool for Implementing Interventions Theme 3: Participants believed that a lack of support and guidance for implementing interventions existed. Theme 6: Participants perceived practical professional development could increase effectiveness with implementing interventions. Theme 7: Participants perceived the use of alternatives to traditional discipline could increase effectiveness with implementing interventions.
Conduct an audit/needs assessment for staff/job descriptions needed in per school, to reallocate staff as needed; for purposes of overloading counselors with other duties as assigned.	Theme 2: Participants believed that already existing resources were difficult to access and insufficient. Theme 5: Participants perceived staffing adjustments could increase effectiveness with implementing interventions.
Create professional learning for administrators on the effects discretion in the workplace has on staff morale.	Theme 4: Participants attributed challenges in implementing interventions to administrator discretion.

Justification for Goal-Based Evaluation

Each policy recommendation was based on the themes from the study findings. There are a total of three policy recommendations that solve the challenges presented in the study findings. The Plan, Do, Study Act (PDSA) Improvement Approach (Alexander et al., 2018) was explained as follows:

- Plan - design or revise process components to improve results.

- Do - implement the plan and measure progress.

- Study - assess the measurements and report results.

- Act - decide on changes needed to improve the process.

Code of conduct Policy

The goal-based evaluation of the code of conduct policy is for educators to learn about the importance of the code of conduct, receive support and guidance for implementing interventions within the code of conduct, receive on-going practical professional development implementing interventions within the code of conduct, and to utilize alternatives to traditional discipline as listed within the code of conduct to implementing interventions more effectively. Findings from the study indicated participants' perceptions of the code of conduct as an ineffective tool for implementing interventions because the individual interpretations of words and phrasing occur as confusing. The findings of the study also indicated that the creation and utilization of a guidebook, with procedural steps for how to implement interventions, would benefit educators while limiting various interpretations of the implementation process for interventions. Findings from participants of the study explained that attending professional learning during their workdays was preferred over having to attend sessions during their personal time. Moreover, educators explained that an unspoken forced agreement of doing whatever it took as a teacher to learn, grow, and develop professionally was unacceptable. Job-embedded professional development that is practical in addressing the needs of educators in real-time were the sentiments of most

participants in the current study. Bakhshaei et al. (2020) examined and explored attributes that contributed to the effectiveness of coaching, as reported by educators, and found that educators in their study suggest coaching in the form of professional development and learning was best received when it was embedded in the job, with access to live coaching for direct feedback. Findings also highlighted that most participants believed that the use of alternative methods to traditional discipline would increase the effectiveness of implementing interventions. This theme emerged with most participants throughout the interview process. The code of conduct policy encompasses addressing the challenges within the themes identified in Table 4.

Staff/Job Descriptions Audit/Needs Assessment Policy

The goal-based evaluation of the staff/job description audit/needs assessment policy is for careful attention and possible reallocation of staff to areas (schools) where they are needed the most. Findings from the study highlighted those participants reported that the parent liaison, guidance counselors, peer mediator, social worker, psychologists, and pupil personnel worker were resources they had "on paper" but the reality was that accessibility to these resources was not as it appeared. The diversity of the students, both in culture and language, and social and emotional adversities were considered by participants as too prevalent to address the needs of the student population in need of the already existing social service resources listed "on paper" in the school. Through the implementation of the staff/job descriptions audit/needs assessment policy careful attention to identifying services and providers, as well as staff members duplicating services can be reallocated to high-needs areas to increase intervention implementation

more effectively. The staff/job description audit/needs assessment policy encompasses addressing the challenges within the themes identified in Table 4.

Professional Development in Discretion for Administrators Policy

The goal-based evaluation of the professional development in discretion for administrators' policy is designed to address inconsistent messaging from administrators with implementing interventions in the code of conduct. Findings from the study indicated that participants described discretion in administrator communications and the varying degrees to which communication was given or not, as problematic to implementing interventions effectively. All participants of the study reported that when they or a peer completed a PS-74 or referral for SIT for a student, they rarely received follow-up communication from their administrator. Overall, participants found that when they implemented interventions as noted in the code of conduct and then observed administrators not enforcing the code of conduct in a manner that was consistent with how educators were told to enforce it, participants experienced frustration with implementing interventions. As indicated by another participant, the disconnect between filing a PS-74, contacting the parent, and the lack of communication and follow-up from the administrator about the outcome, resulted in the educator's reluctance to even engage in the process of filling out forms like a PS-74. Strikingly, participants reported having knowledge that certain participants were ignored by administrators when they reached out for support with implementing interventions. One participant described this as a "privilege thing" in which those participants that had good working relationships with administrators seemed to get support from them when they implemented interventions

however, those that did not have a good repertoire with their administrator tended to not receive support, feedback, and or were questioned about the interventions they selected to implement with students, even though they are followed the steps in the code of conduct. The professional development in discretion for administrators' policy encompasses addressing the challenges within the themes identified in Table 4.

Overall Goals for the Evaluation

The overall goal for evaluating this project is goal-based. A goal-based approach for evaluating focuses on supporting each participating office/department in measuring progress towards targets identified by each entity to meet the outcome of the overall goals of this policy recommendation. More specifically, the Plan, Do Study, Act (PDSA) Cycle of Improvement Approach, a process used for continuous improvement (Alexander et al., 2018) will be utilized as the project evaluation plan for the overall project.

The goal of this project is for positive change to be actualized through the implementation of the recommended policies. Implementation of the recommended policies, as written, will increase the likelihood that educators that are having trouble with implementing interventions in the code of conduct for School District A will get the much-needed support, guidance, and instruction on how to implement interventions effectively, increasing student outcomes in behavior and possibly academics. Each department/office charged with implementing each policy will have full autonomy in executing the PDSA Cycle of Improvement to address the challenges highlights in the study findings.

Description of the Key Stakeholders

Key stakeholders of this project are as follows:

- The Board of Education (BOE) or its designee(s), the teacher's association for School District A, the Restorative Practices Coordinator and National Board-Certified Teachers Coordinator of School District A.

- The employee performance department. This office is responsible for all staff evaluations; therefore, institutional knowledge of staff and job descriptions may be able to be made readily accessible for an audit of each school.

- The professional development department. This office is responsible for the professional development of staff in School District A.

Project Implications

There were seven themes identified in the study as problems that could be addressed by creating policy recommendations. The policy recommendations would help bring about positive social change in student behavior and possibly academics. Moreover, the recommended policies would provide educators accountable for implementing the code of conduct with the much-desired clarity, support, and guidance that has been expressed as non-existent.

Positive Social Change Implications

The code of conduct policy is beneficial in addressing the importance of the code of conduct for School District A and how educators can receive support and guidance for implementing interventions within the code of conduct. Additionally, the code of conduct policy will ensure that educators are in receipt of the necessary ongoing practical

professional development needed to implement interventions and alternatives to traditional forms of discipline as cited throughout the more effectively. The Staff/Job Descriptions Audit/Needs Assessment Policy will identify overlap and redundancy in services and providers, as well as staff members duplicating services in the same school building to reallocate to high-needs areas. The Professional Development in Discretion for Administrators Policy will address inconsistent messaging from administrators in implementing interventions in the code of conduct and in turn increase staff morale and unity amongst educators in school buildings.

Importance of the Project to Local Stakeholders

This project is beneficial for all educator stakeholders in School District A. The findings of the study explored the perceptions of teachers and administrators about the challenges of implementing discipline policy interventions and the support needed to increase implementation effectiveness. The project highlighted the study findings and the recommended three policies that can lead to implications for resolving challenges in implementing the recommended interventions listed in the code of conduct for School District A. This project can empower educators at School District A to feel confident in their ability to implement the discipline policy, as well as to be supported in their roles. Consistency in implementing interventions will help reduce incidents of student misbehavior and disruption, allow students to remain in schools to access their academic programs, limit interactions with school security and law enforcement housed in schools, and help students learn appropriate ways to deal with conflict by building their developmental and cognitive abilities to effectively problem-solve in difficult situations.

The project may also close gaps in current practices and knowledge base for school staff that may not realize there could be components of an intervention that are not being tended to, as required, or needed.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

In this section, I include the strengths and limitations of this capstone project in addressing the problem of the study. This section also includes recommendations for alternative approaches and scholarship project development and leadership and change. I reflect on the importance of the work and describe implications, applications, and directions for future research.

Project Strengths and Limitations

In this section, I explain strengths after assessing the project deliverable, through appropriate literature. I also explain the limitations after assessing the project deliverable, through appropriate literature.

Project Strengths

Recommended solutions highlighted the need for collaboration of experts in areas of education relative to the intended recommendations for policy creation and implementation. This includes an improved working relationship between School District A and the teachers' association for School District A leadership. Furthermore, the project allows for School District A leadership to engage in a continuous inquiry of learning about the social problems with students, management problems with staffing in schools and find solutions to identified problems, which can lead to reduction in student misbehavior and enhance the implementation of interventions to support student behavior, as well as their academics.

Guidance and Support for Educators

Findings from the study indicated that educators felt they did not receive ample support from principals with how to implement interventions, given to effectively implement interventions, adjustments in staffing needed to be addressed. Educators reported that there was not enough time in the day for them to stay the course of their work schedule, and ensure interventions were being implemented as needed and designed. Additionally, findings indicated that staff felt they lacked appropriate knowledge about interventions and or the discipline policy to implement interventions effectively. Creating opportunities for educators to learn about the importance of the code of conduct, receive support and guidance for implementing interventions within the code of conduct, receive on-going practical professional development implementing interventions within the code of conduct, and opportunities to utilize alternatives to traditional discipline as listed within the code of conduct to implement interventions more effectively; could enhance the quality of work of educators. This policy would further reinforce educator best practices in professional collaboration to enhance positive outcomes in student behaviors. Any school district could also follow these polices for effective intervention implementation.

Enhanced Staffing Adjustments

Educators reported shortages of resources in the form of staff (i.e.: counselors, support staff, mental health professionals etc.) leading to burdensome caseloads of other staff, lead teachers, and or department chairpersons that were not teachers of record for students and counselors. The purpose of the staff/job description audit/needs assessment

would be to identify the needs of staff in counseling, and discipline to reallocate staff, by a ratio that is manageable by specific staff. Through ongoing examination and identification of high-needs schools for specific staff, School District A leadership can adjust staffing as needed to meet the diverse student population more effectively. All school districts can use this approach to ensure availability of specialized staff are available to address the needs of a diverse student body.

Administrator Discretion

The suggested policy implementation for administrator training in the affects discretion in the workplace have on staff can have a positive effect on the culture and climate in schools. Administrators trained in discretion can have various perspectives and insight into how their actions and inactions affect the morale of staff under their supervision. Findings from the study showed that educators who have experienced administrator behaviors towards themselves or peers as unsupportive expressed how these feelings had a ripple effect on workability of staff with implementing interventions. Furthermore, educators that have experienced feelings of being unsupported by administrators with implementing interventions were candid in describing how these affect their working conditions. Administrators trained on the impact discretion in the workplace can help to educate, enhance, and improve the quality of working conditions for all staff, especially those held accountable to enforce rules and regulations of the school district.

Project Limitations

Upon review of project deliverables, I became aware of certain limitations. In this section I address the limitations of the project in relation to achieving the outcomes anticipated. Limitations involve noncompliance with the recommended formation of the code of conduct Task Force with inclusion of the teacher's association for School District A as a driving member of the task force, pushback from school principals with staff/job description audit/needs assessment, and resentment from school principals with recommended training in discretion.

Guidance and Support for Educators

The suggested policy goals are for educators to learn the importance of the code of conduct, receive support and guidance for implementing interventions within the code of conduct, receive on-going practical professional development on implementing interventions within the code of conduct, and to utilize alternatives to traditional discipline as listed within the code of conduct. School District A's Board of Education, however, may not follow this policy and choose to continue with the current format in which the code of conduct is implemented during the first week of schools. Findings from the study indicated that educators felt they did not receive ample support from principals with how to implement interventions. Findings from the study indicated that participants felt the code of conduct was reviewed superficially in the beginning of the year and not "referenced throughout the year in a meaningful way." Study findings also found an absence of value in disciplining students as directed by the code of conduct suggesting it would cause more trauma than help. One participant, Thomas, stated that

subduing students into submission was not the way to help students that already came from less than pleasant home environments. Additionally, mostly all participants suggested that practical professional learning could increase the effectiveness of implementing interventions and the creation and implementation of a step-by-step guidebook specific to the code of conduct that provided procedures for how to implement interventions could increase the effectiveness of implementing interventions. One participant described the need for this guidebook as such:

If we have a different interpretation, as opposed to what was intended, then we might be actually implementing the intervention in a counterproductive way, as opposed to like, improving the child, we're actually, you know, regressing the child, because we're trying to implement it in a different way.

It is probable that reluctance on part of School District A Leadership to implementing the policy as recommended, will likely see no improvement in these critical areas of need for educators, as described by educators.

Enhanced Staffing Adjustments

Policy recommendations for the staff/job description audit/needs assessment may receive pushback form school principals that may not want to lose specific staff members that have had positive effects on student behavior. Findings from the study indicated the need to have someone dedicated and specialized in the additional roles that counselors had taken on. One educator specifically described this situation as such:

You know, if you're going to have counselors, you should have dedicated people that are just going to be dealing with scheduling, and dedicated people who are

going to be working…one on one with students and whether you, you switch it by

the day, like, I just feel like every counselor can't do every single job

responsibility every single day. There has to be some lessening of the workload,

whether it's less students, whether it's, you know, again, like we're just going to

take all the responsibility's counselors have to do and we're going to sort out how

people specialize in some of those specialties. So that they are not going a mile

wide and an inch deep on everything.

Through identifying the needs of staff in counseling and discipline school

leadership may find themselves in fear of losing specific staff to other schools with

higher needs.

Administrator Discretion

Administrators may be reluctant to attend professional development as suggested

in the policy recommendation for administrator training on discretion in the workplace.

Administrators can learn various perspectives and insight into how their actions and

inactions affect the morale of staff under their supervision, indirectly affecting overall

climate of the school environment, through training opportunities. Findings from the

study reported participants having knowledge that certain participants were ignored by

administrators when they reached out for support with implementing interventions. One

participant described this as a "privilege thing" in which those participants that had good

working relationships with administrators seemed to get support from them when they

implemented interventions however, those that did not have a good repertoire with their

administrator tended to not receive support, feedback, and or were questioned about the

interventions they selected to implement with students, even though they are followed the steps in the code of conduct. School administrators may view this additional professional development as unimportant for them and not attend at a level of engagement needed to implement new learnings provided.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the perceptions of teachers and administrators about the challenges of implementing discipline policy interventions and the support needed to increase implementation effectiveness. The project focus was a policy recommendation to enhance problems identified in the findings of the study. The inclusion of counselors, social workers, and pupil personnel works (PPWs) could be a useful policy to add perceptions to challenges with implementing interventions effectively, as these staff members work with the same population of students that educators work with.

One alternative method to address the problem differently would be the inclusion of counselors, social workers, and PPWs as an outside -of-study-site participant pool. The inclusion of counselors, social workers and PPWs could lead to an increase in varied perspectives that were not captured from educators on implementing interventions with students, as well as student outcomes with interventions being implemented. The perspectives ascertained from the inclusion of counselors, social workers, and PPWs could provide insight into how interventions are being implemented by educators and received by students through their area of expertise in working with students within their varied capacities. This outside-of-study-site participant pool could also provide details

on interactions between educators and students when interventions are being implemented. The findings from this study could be useful in finding solutions for how educators implement interventions and offer suggestions to improve effectiveness of implementing interventions.

Another alternative approach to this study would be a phenomenological approach where I would focus on educator's emotions of implementing interventions with students. More specifically, this approach could help narrow in to understand educator's perceptions of why they engage in certain interventions to implement over others as suggested in the code of conduct (Merriam & Tisdell, 2017). The study would be solely focused on how educators, counselors, social workers and PPWs support one another with implementing interventions to bring about positive outcomes in student behaviors. The findings of the study suggested that the role of counselors and other staff members as underutilized for their actual accountabilities per their job descriptions. This approach could also identify emotions counselors and other staff members have regarding feeling supported with added duties as assigned, in their current roles, to meet the needs of school leadership in times of staffing challenges.

Scholarship, Project Development and Evaluation, and Leadership and Change

In the following sections I identify how my doctoral study has taken me through phases of being a student, scholar, practitioner, and a project developer. I discuss my growth in understanding project development and offer details about the enhancement of my leadership skills to promote positive social change in education.

Students, Scholar, Practitioner

When I began my journey as a doctoral student, I remembered hearing that this was going to be a life altering process for some and at the time I let that comment go in one ear and out the other. I came to the program with knowing that I had always been successful in writing and completing assignments, and to my surprise, I experienced an unsettled sense of self when COVID-19 was discovered in the United States. I was diagnosed with several mental health conditions, and as a result I was forced to terminate my tenure as an educator of 21 years in the school district I grew up in as a child, participated in my secondary school years and worked as a classroom teacher and itinerant mentor teacher. My confidence as a stellar student diminished and the more and this feeling persisted. My second chair, Dr. Robb, was both patient and caring with me and as much as I wanted to give up, she was my absolute cheerleader. I had begun relearning comprehending what I was reading, identifying new strategies for organizing my thoughts, and towards the end of my journey I ultimately gained the courage to remove all distractions in my life. Using the skills, strategies, and self-determination I was assigned a third chair: Dr. Cale. Dr. Robb retired before my journey in this process of being a doctoral student completed. Under the tutelage of Dr. Cale, I completed sections three and four within the first 2 months of my last semester. I began to know myself as the scholar I once knew myself to be.

The phase of scholar to practitioner became evident when I would find myself researching everything, I needed to complete specific tasks, whereas in the past, I would rely on someone to tell me how to do it, what to do and where to get it from to complete

something. Researching to find the preponderance of evidence gave me a great sense of joy and invigorated confidence in being able to effectively address claims and interrogate information I found relative to my research and other important topics of interest to me. This new sense of confidence was actualized in the creation of the project for this study.

Project Developer

At the completion of this project, I would have spent eight years of my life in my doctoral journey. As previously mentioned, the struggle in my program was real for me when COVID-19 gave birth to the world. I thought I was going to use this doctoral program to obliterate suspensions and expulsions in schools throughout the nation. I was unpleasantly surprised when I finally got that suspensions were not a problem or the problem. I couldn't understand how suspensions were not a problem but what took three years to really get was that suspensions are not the problem. Finding evidence to support the claim that suspensions were a problem was in direct conflict to my personal morals but after speaking with friends in the realm of education about what a problem was for them in discipline, I learned that many of my peers felt that it was the processes of how interventions were being implemented as a concern for them. After trying to force the case that suspensions were a problem for three to five years, I finally got for myself the problem of this study and moved forward with the literature review about implementing interventions to promote positive outcomes for students.

After I passed my oral conference and attained IRB approval my study took off and I enjoyed every moment of it. I learned a lot from interviews and discovered that the concerns being brought up by my peers was debilitating for many of them. The project

allowed me to take what I learned from their interviews and craft a blueprint to not only

help solve this problem but solve similar issues other school districts are experiencing

throughout the nation. I know how to collect, analyze, and synthesize data to find

solutions to problems and with these skills I look forward to engaging in further studies

with other like-minded researchers committed to transforming discipline in schools

across the nation.

Leadership

My goals are to take this blueprint to school districts across the nation that are

experiencing similar concerns with implementing interventions to address student

misbehavior. Additionally, I will also use my research and acquired skills and abilities to

expand my educational consulting business to cater to school districts, schools, and

communities with issues that plague them to bring positive outcomes for stakeholders in

those various entities. As a coach, consultant, trainer, and facilitator in this area of

education, I plan to ensure that every educator with a desire to impact the lives of

children in a positive way can gain new strategies to bring their desire to fruition.

I plan to continue enacting positive change in the lives of others through my awareness,

and abilities to creating sustaining positive relationships with people.

Reflection on Importance of the Work

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the perceptions of teachers

and administrators about the challenges of implementing discipline policy interventions

and the support needed to increase implementation effectiveness. My study began with

identifying a problem with educators implementing interventions, per the school district's

code of conduct. I was an employee of school district during the time of the study.

Educators in School District A indicated that issues with implementing interventions per

the code of conduct during union meetings and in staff meetings I participated in. After

interviewing teachers and administrators (educators), I was able to identify codes and

themes. Once themes were identified, using inductive reasoning, I was able to make

policy recommendations to address the problems identified in the study findings.

Educators in School District A originally perceived the code of conduct as

confusing in what it was trying to communicate to the various stakeholders in the school

system. Study findings indicated that educators were very concerned with their ability

and the ability of their peers to implement interventions in the code of conduct

effectively, given constraints brought on by time, resources, administrator discretion, and

the way in which the code of conduct provided interventions to implement. The policies

I suggest in the project of this study ensure that educators receive professional learning

on the code of conduct for School District A and are supported with implementing

interventions in the code of conduct. Moreover, the policies I suggest here address

staffing of specific personnel to ensure student needs can be met without duplication of

services amongst other staff in the same buildings, ultimately addressing burdensome

caseloads of staff members. The policies also ensure administrators are fully trained and

or, retrained on the affect discretion plays in the workplace with staff under their

supervision. The possibility that exists with this professional learning for administrators

is that they can see new ways of being and acting with staff to increase, enhance or create

a positive school climate culture.

The project addresses one of the problems identified by educators in School District A, yet other programs and services within the school district could implement the recommendations of the project and its evaluation plan, to bring forth positive outcomes for students.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

In this project I offer recommendations for policies grounded in evidence to implement interventions more effectively for positive student outcomes related to behavior. In this section I describe the project implication, applications, and directions for future research.

Implications

It is important that interventions are implemented effectively if positive student outcomes in the form of behavior are to be actualized (Bruhn et al., 2022). Moreover, positive student behavior has been associated with positive school climate and higher levels of teacher satisfaction in teaching and learning (Bal et al., 2018). When interventions are not implemented effectively, school climate and morale diminish (Estrapala, 2021), trust amongst colleagues deteriorates and student misbehavior continues (Bruhn et al., 2022). The potential harm caused by not implementing interventions effectively include yet are not limited to a lack of school connectedness, bullying, violence, and victimization amongst youth in schools (Acosta, 2019). Study findings indicated that there were issues with implementing interventions effectively to bring about positive student outcomes. The changes I have proposed in the recommended policies will result in improved support for educators with implementing

interventions, and a reduction in burdensome caseloads of specific staff accountable to supporting students with misbehavior. The implications, as stated above, present solutions that may guide future implementation of interventions to improve student behavior and ensure educators receive the guidance they need to implement interventions more effectively.

Applications

Educators in School District A originally indicated that they needed support and guidance with implementing interventions in the code of conduct. Findings from the study indicated that seven themes need to be addressed in School District A to solve the issues identified. The stakeholders associated with the study site can benefit from implementing the recommended policies. Other school districts can benefit from implementing the recommended policies, as applicable to their School District And culture. The recommended policies will better support and guide educators with processes to address policies related to school discipline practices, ensure that staff are properly allocated in areas where their expertise can benefit the population more effectively, and inform and expand administrators' knowledge base on how their actions towards staff under supervision affect the overall policy implementation in their respective sites and departments.

Directions for Future Research

Study findings indicated that enhancements to existing policies in School District A could be made to improve implementing interventions in the code of conduct more effectively. Policy recommendations were developed from the codes and themes of the

study data. Codes and themes were created and identified to address the gaps in practice of the study. Support and guidance for educators accountable to implementing interventions were suggested for effective intervention implementation. Future research should examine whether additional education staff such as counselors, social workers, and pupil personnel works (PPWs) should be included to gather additional perspectives on the problem. A future qualitative study could be used to examine the perceptions of counselors, social workers, and pupil personnel works (PPWs) on the effectiveness of intervention implementation to improve student behavior.

Conclusion

Teachers and administrators (educators) are mandated to implement interventions to garner positive outcomes for students. Implementing interventions early is critical to support the needs of students (Majeika et al., 2021) and one size fits all approaches to intervening is insufficient for providing support to individual students. It is imperative that educators receive the necessary training needed to implement interventions effectively. Moreover, clear guidelines for how to implement interventions can ensure interventions are implemented effectively.

I identified a problem within in School District A. I conducted an extensive literature review which indicated implementing interventions for teachers as being critical to the success of students, yet difficult for educators to do effectively. Solutions through policy creation were recommended as part of the project for this capstone. Collecting, analyzing, and synthesizing data has helped me to develop new insights as a leader in the field of education.

The research found in the literature review indicated the need for educators to be supported with implementing interventions effectively. Additionally, the research provided insight into how educators are made to follow and implement policy, yet this is usually done without their input, inclusion of their expertise and with minimal professional development and support from administrators. The recommended policies will enhance educator's abilities to implement interventions more effectively, lessen overloaded caseloads of specific staff accountable to supporting students with misbehaviors, and enhance administrator knowledge base on how their interactions with staff can be improved. Addressing discipline in schools to improve school climate, as well as current discipline policies and practices is critical in bringing forth positive outcomes for students.

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Appendix A: The Project

Amity Pope

Doctoral Candidate, Walden University

School District A Board of Education,

This study is an opportunity for authentic social change. The title of my topic is *Secondary Teachers and Administrators' Perceptions of Challenges to Implementing Interventions*. The goal is to support teachers and administrators in managing student behavior through the implementation of interventions. Findings from my study identified specific problems at the study site that can be solved with updated policy recommendations. I would like to thank those associated with the study site for their assistance and guidance, as this policy recommendation report was developed through their support.

The policy recommendations are based upon the findings within this qualitative study to improve and enhance issues identified within implementing interventions and offer scholarly literature-reviewed proposals to the problems. I am available to present the findings and proposed solutions from the study and explain how the policies can enhance implementing interventions for behavior.

I look forward to presenting my policy recommendations to all involved within the school system.

In service and support,

Amity Pope

Policy Recommendation Report

Detailed Policy Recommendations for Implementing Interventions
By
Amity C. Pope

Executive Summary

The purpose of this policy recommendation report was to address problems identified within the study regarding implementing interventions at the study site in School District A. The suggested policies are recommendations that were created to help mitigate identified issues presented by teachers and administrators (educators) charged with implementing interventions to increase positive student behavior. Moreover, this report offers solutions to correct the ongoing problems teachers and administrators face when implementing interventions.

Teachers and administrators at the study site in School District A stated there were many challenges that impeded their ability to implement interventions, per the code of conduct in the Student's Rights and Responsibilities Handbook. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the perceptions of teachers and administrators about the challenges of implementing discipline policy interventions and the support needed to increase implementation effectiveness. There is a need for educators to feel confident in their ability to implement interventions effectively when managing student misbehavior, yet the expectations in the code of conduct are unclear (Caldera, 2019), leaving educators confused about knowing the appropriate steps to take when enforcing it.

There was a total of 13 participants that participated in the study who had experience with the code of conduct and implementing interventions in the code of

conduct to students in grades 9-12. Data were generated through semistructured interviews that lasted from 30 minutes to 2 hours. The interviews led to study findings of seven themes: (a) the code of conduct (b) access and accessing resources (c) guidance and support (d) administrator discretion (e) staffing (f) professional learning, and (g) alternative methods to discipline. The suggested policies created were as follows: (a) Participants Perceived the code of conduct as an Ineffective Tool for Implementing Interventions; (b) Participants believed that already existing resources were difficult to access and insufficient; (c) Participants believed that a lack of support and guidance for implementing interventions existed; (d) Participants attributed challenges in implementing interventions to administrator discretion; (e) Participants perceived staffing adjustments could increase effectiveness with implementing interventions; (f) Participants perceived practical professional development could increase effectiveness with implementing interventions; and (g) Participants perceived the use of alternatives to traditional discipline could increase effectiveness with implementing interventions.

Introduction

This project was based on study findings about the phenomenon of implementing interventions, per the code of conduct in the Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook for School District A. I interviewed a total of 13 participants that had experience with the code of conduct and implementing interventions in the code of conduct with students in grades 9-12. Based on the study findings, I created seven policy recommendations that aligned with the codes and themes from the data analysis of the study. This study was an opportunity for authentic social change and may enhance

positive change by providing policy recommendations that alleviate the constraints of educators in the current code of conduct.

Rationale

This policy recommendation report aims to support educators in implementing interventions, per the code of conduct, by providing solutions to problems identified in the study. The suggested policies include strategies grounded within the scholarly literature. The conceptual framework used within the study was the Positive Behavior Intervention & Supports (PBIS) Framework to establish the importance of how data, systems, and practices of interventions are integrated to improve student outcomes.

In this policy recommendation report, I have provided a rationale behind the policy, the goals of the project, and how the problem will be addressed through the project. The suggested policy recommendations will enhance the effectiveness of intervention implementation, as listed in the code of conduct for educators in School District A.

Project Focus

This policy recommendation report has the potential to create lasting positive change by implementing interventions to address student discipline and misbehavior. The project aligns with the vision, mission, and core values of School District A and implementation of the project can be done without incurring additional financial costs to the school system. Findings within the study indicated that the code of conduct is an ineffective tool for implementing interventions, pre-existing resources are difficult to access and insufficient to meet the needs of teachers, there is a lack of support

and guidance for implementing interventions, challenges in implementing interventions due to administrator discretion affects staff morale and unity with enforcing the code of conduct; staffing adjustments, practical professional development, as well as the use of alternatives to traditional discipline could increase effectiveness with implementing interventions.

Major Evidence from Literature and Research

The literature review reflected there was a need for increasing the effectiveness of intervention implementation if a positive change in student behavior was to be actualized (Bruhn et al., 2022). The literature review reflected on the implementation of the code of conduct in School District A, resources and supports needed for effective intervention implementation, ways in which administrator discretion affects the implementation of the code of conduct, the need for staffing adjustments and the need for practical professional development to increase the effectiveness of implementing interventions in the code of conduct. The literature review for this policy recommendation report aligned with the needs of participants of the study brought forth as ways to ensure interventions within the code of conduct could be implemented more effectively.

Policy Implementation of the code of conduct in School District A.

Secondary teachers and administrators (educators) faced challenges with implementing effective discipline policy interventions to manage student misbehavior in School District A. Specifically, some challenges included teachers not receiving ample support from principals with how to implement interventions, educators not having enough time in the day to stay the course of their work schedule and ensure interventions

are being implemented as needed and designed, implementation of interventions being

misinterpreted by staff, lack of or limited knowledge about interventions and or discipline

policy (Bal et al., 2018).

It is important that interventions are implemented effectively if positive student

outcomes in the form of behavior are to be actualized (Bruhn et al., 2022). Moreover,

positive student behavior has been associated with a positive school climate and higher

levels of teacher satisfaction in teaching and learning (Bal et al., 2018). When

interventions are not implemented effectively, school climate and morale diminish

(Estrapala, 2021), trust among colleagues deteriorates and student misbehavior continues

(Bruhn et al., 2022). The potential harm caused by not implementing interventions

effectively include yet is not limited to a lack of school connectedness, bullying,

violence, and victimization among youth in schools (Acosta, 2019).

To solve the issue and increase the effectiveness of intervention implementation

amongst educators it is important to understand the reasons why implementing

interventions effectively is challenging. Thirteen educators in one high school in School

District A participated in the study, and their responses indicate a variety of reasons why

it is challenging to implement interventions, per the discipline policy, effectively.

Code of conduct

School District A's Students Rights and Responsibilities Handbook houses the

code of conduct and according to section 7:

School District A is committed to providing a safe and orderly learning

environment conducive to rigorous instruction. Students must maintain

appropriate behaviors at all times whether face-to-face or in an approved online instruction. Escalated or repeated behaviors may result in further responses according to the student code of conduct. The student will receive due process, beginning with referral to the administrator with written documentation by the referring adult, contact to parent/guardian, and an opportunity to present what happened. If the administrator finds the student responsible for the violation, he/she will determine the appropriate response within the student code of conduct (School District A's student rights & responsibilities).

It was this description of the code of conduct along with the disciplinary response levels, interventions, and consequences provided in section 7 that those participants in this study are described as ambiguous and contradictory. In a document analysis to interpret content and make meaning of it, Caldera (2019) provided several recommendations regarding codes of conduct in schools. Aligned with participants' descriptions of the confusing nature of the code of conduct, Caldera's study suggested that school districts revise their codes of conduct to make expectations "clear, specific, and bias-free." Participants of the study admitted that they had skimmed through the code of conduct and reviewed portions of it as directed by their administrators. Moreover, participants expressed that the school-wide review of the code of conduct occurred as a formality and more procedural in nature, with no emphasis placed by administrators for staff to review the code of conduct in its entirety.

Experiencing a thorough review of the code of conduct was not formality as indicated by participants of the study. According to several participants, the review of the

code of conduct occurred to them as a 'cover yourself' type of formality. An examination

of the conduct by one participant noted they felt it was peculiar that educators were not

required to review the code of conduct in detail because it was something that students

were expected to know and abide by. A review of guidelines in a study conducted by

Reyneke (2019) designed to highlight the importance of updating codes of conducts for

learners, revealed that educators should be provided with a specific document of the code

of conduct separate from students, that distinctly guide educators on how to implement

codes of conduct.

The code of conduct in School District A lists both reactive and proactive

interventions for implementation when students misbehave. Participants of the study

mentioned that intervention implementation of the code of conduct for student

misbehavior would cause further harm than good and not get to the root cause of the

misbehavior, rather than just punish students for misbehaving. Given this interpretation

of the code of conduct, several participants in the study resolved to introduce and utilize

alternative methods for disciplining students in their classrooms. Participants recognized

that the code of conduct, in its confusing nature, tended to contradict itself when it came

to implementing interventions for student misbehavior, similar to Schlesinger and

Schmits-Earley (2020) study that found revised codes throughout schools districts in the

United States, were redesigned to balance punitive with supportive interventions however

many districts through the revision processes of their codes of conducts may not have

fully cross-examined the effect punitive interventions have on the proactive interventions

from the vantage point of those educators charged with implementing interventions. As

participants of the study described, there seemed to be a gap between educators being able to incorporate interventions as listed in the code of conduct without causing further harm to their students that displayed misbehavior.

Resources Needed for Effective Intervention Implementation

Access to resources is critical to educators when dealing with student misbehavior. Shortages in resources in the form of human resources (i.e.: counselors, support staff, mental health professionals, etc.…) lead to burdensome caseloads of other staff, primarily lead teachers, and or department chairpersons that are not the teacher of records for students and counselors.

In their case study of an evaluation of a school-community partnership Swick and Power (2018) found using a multisystemic partnership defined as schools and community mental health agencies working in tandem to meet the needs of students that are unable to meet with specialists in their school buildings due to limited resources in those areas. Participants of the study unanimously expressed that while they had several specialists listed on the staff roster for example counselors, mental health, school psychologists, and peer mediators; the reality of these resources merely existed on paper. Specifically, participants described their challenges with gaining access to these resources, for students in need, as being the result of these human resources being continuously assigned to other duties that inadvertently took time from their primary role and function in the school. Participants in the study mentioned one resource and while each participant could not state the exact role this person held, they all agreed on the belief that her work with students had saved many lives. Radez et al. (2019) mentioned that almost 70% of

aversion to mental health supports comes from students' inability to see an individual as confidential. In the case of this study, this one individual was the resource that was greatly needed, yet the challenge was that she was the staff member in that role of providing mental health support.

According to Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2019), working conditions that include a lack of school resources can influence how educators are able to do their job effectively. Most participants in the study highlighted that finding resources was difficult due to the time constraints they had during their duty day. These time constraints narrowed down to having increased workloads and, or a lack of knowledge of how to utilize specific forms pertaining to documenting student misbehavior. According to Bhatnager (2021), assertive educators are comfortable with finding resources online. Participants in the study assisted peers that confided in them about being less comfortable with searching online for resources. Therefore, the utilization of a guidebook would increase both the effectiveness of intervention implementation, by minimizing various interpretations of how to implement interventions, as well as intervention selection for educators who were less confident in finding appropriate interventions online.

Access to resources that increase the effective implementation of an intervention is critical to the role of educators. Human resources such as counselors, mental health specialists, and the like are necessary resources whose services are needed to support students, daily and it is important that services can be provided without interruption by being assigned to other duties beyond their specific roles on their duty day. The utilization of a guidebook, with steps for how to implement interventions procedurally,

would benefit educators while limiting various interpretations of the implementation process for interventions.

Guidance and support for effective intervention implementation

Participants in the study reflected on moments of feeling frustrated and resigned due to the lack of guidance and support they felt they received with navigating the processes for implementing interventions. In their examination of the interactions between job satisfaction and effective classroom practices, Bottani et al. (2019) found effective teacher practices were associated with low demands (i.e.: workloads) and high organizational resources and support to assist the implementation process of interventions. To add, Pressley (2021) conducted a convenience and snowball electronic survey (N = 359) of K–12 teachers across the United States for purposes of addressing challenging environments and the results of their study found that administrative support was needed from school administrators to ease the anxiety of educators. Mason-Williams et al. (2018) noted that in school district collaboration to leverage the resources and expertise of educators, new teachers could get the necessary support needed to effectively achieve outcomes such as implementing interventions. As one participant in the study mentioned, new teachers to the building are not necessarily supported and most times these new teachers are given to students with problematic behaviors. Holmes et al. (2019) expanded on Mason-William's study outcome and stated that the level of support teachers receive from their principal was determined by the level of effectiveness an administrator possesses.

Like Janzen and Schwartz (2019) participants of the study felt that it was important to separate student misbehavior and view the student as a person exhibiting misbehavior. Janzen and Schwartz found that when educators did not interrogate the misbehavior separated from the student, they would objectify students rather than find appropriate ways to intervene in problematic behavior with interventions. Participants of the study voiced positive outcomes in implementing interventions grounded in being related to their students and their needs rather than assuming the reasons for the misbehavior being exhibited.

Administrator Discretion

Administrator support can have lasting effects on educator practice. Participants of the study indicated that the lack of feedback with disciplining students decreased morale and left them frustrated with implementing interventions to manage student misbehavior. According to Olson and Huang (2018), the job satisfaction of educators was aligned with their perception of administrator support. In their expiration of principal support, the results of their study suggest administrator support determined educator cooperation. In the current study, participants reported their resignation to receive support from administrators which led to them not enforcing rules as consistently as they once did. While Liebowitz and Porter (2019) suggested that principal behavior pertaining to skills and leadership resulted in their ability to effectively support educators with implementing interventions such as instructional strategies, participants of the study stated administrators in their building support specific educators as a "privilege thing," and elaborated on this concept by describing how administrators selected particular

educators to support with implementing interventions, while de-selecting educators to support. The participant further explained that if an administrator liked you then you would receive guidance from them when it came to managing student misbehavior like how novice teachers reported their observation of principals in a metaphorical analysis conducted by Kozikoglu (2018). Participants like teachers in Kozikoglu's study felt it challenging to implement interventions effectively with no guidance from administrators.

Staff Adjustments

Participants of the study suggested adjustments with staff assignments and roles as needed to implement interventions effectively. More specifically, participants cited the rigorous caseloads of specialty service providers and counselors as a concern for counselors being able to do their job effectively. To support specialty staff in situations such as this, participants believed an increase in staff that offered specialty services, as well as adjustments to other duties assigned to current staff, would increase the success of intervention implementation. In an investigator-developed web-based survey of school practitioners across the US, Seruya and Garfinkel (2020) explored workloads and service delivery models of school practitioners and found that a change in their workload model would help them meet the demands of their caseload. Moreover, Seruya and Garfinkel's study concluded that for school practitioners to meet the diverse needs of their student population, while being assigned to other duties outside the scope of their role, the school administration would need to adopt proposed workload models counselors and school practitioners felt would decrease barriers to implementing interventions.

Like Seruya and Garfinkel (2020), Corely et al. (2021) found that workload approaches

for specialists and other staff members implementing specific interventions with students

as the best way to meet the demands of their roles in buildings while having a positive

effect on student outcomes from intervention implementation. They also suggested that a

workload model versus a caseload model would provide time for them to work with

teachers regarding intervention implementation.

Participants of the study noted that counselors were charged with too many

responsibilities to be effective within their roles. Specifically, one participant mentioned

that upon recommending a student see their counselor for support, the student responded

negatively to that option, citing past experiences with counselors as not being beneficial.

Blake (2020) suggested that the overwhelming tasks that counselors complete daily left

school staff and students confused about their actual role. Moreover, Blake's study

described counselors' time as being "monopolized" by the overwhelming tasks directed

by administrators in their school building (p.327). Overall, counselors in Blake's study

believed they would be more effective in their role if they were not pulled in different

directions that took their focus off serving students. Additionally, counselors voiced their

awareness of student concerns about their role, as their burdensome other duties as

assigned, negatively impacted their relationships with students. With regards to how

counselors in Blake's study felt about their role in schools, participants in the current

study suggested the creation of a Dean of Students or Discipline to lessen the load of

counselors.

Practical Professional Development for Effective Intervention Implementation

Job-embedded professional development that is practical in addressing the needs of educators in real-time was the sentiment of most participants in the current study. Bakhshaei et al. (2020) examined and explored attributes that contributed to the effectiveness of coaching, as reported by educators, and found that educators in their study suggest coaching in the form of professional development and learning was best received when it was embedded in the job, with access to live coaching for direct feedback. Educators of Bakhshaei's study reported that this method of professional development and learning allowed for authentic communication and real-time adjustments in the implementation of interventions and practices such that educators receiving the coaching could experience what success looked like when interventions were implemented effectively. Participants of the current study had similar beliefs, as most of them supported the need for on-the-job training, especially during their duty day. Like the report of Parkhouse et al. (2019) participants of the current study agreed that when educators' preferred ways of receiving professional development were taken into consideration, the likelihood of the professional development being deemed successfully increased. Participants explained that attending professional learning during their workdays was preferred over having to attend sessions during their personal time. Moreover, educators explained that an unspoken forced agreement of doing whatever it took as a teacher to learn, grow, and develop professionally was unacceptable. Parkhouse et al. highlighted that when educators receive professional learning in ways, they deemed practical to their individual professional needs in contexts preferred by them, engagement

in professional developmental learning increases amongst educators. This belief of professional development being practical was supported by Beasley and Bernadowski (2019) instrumental case study focused on the effects of using a simulation to train reading specialist candidates on ways to implement behavioral management strategies when working with students that exhibited reading problems. Beasley and Bernadowski found that participants in that study felt that with simulation training, they experienced increased levels of confidence in their ability to implement behavioral management strategies. The simulation teaching approach and design as described in Beasley and Bernadowski's findings reflect similar traits of job-embedded professional learning with components of lecture, real-time coaching, and evaluation.

Project Description

In this section I present the needed resources, existing supports, potential barriers, and potential solution to barriers for the project. The proposal for implementation with timetable and roles and responsibilities of those identified to be involved in the project are also included in this section.

Resources Required

The Board of Education for School District A would be responsible for approving any new policies and ensuring that the suggested policies changes or creation be in alignment with the vision, mission, and core values of School District A. I would ask for a presentation, through the Board Chair, to the board of education to address the findings of the study. These findings would include the themes of the study findings (a) code of conduct, (b) resources, (c) support and guidance, (d) administrator discretion, (e) staffing,

(f) professional development, and (g) alternatives to traditional discipline; as well as proposed solutions to address the findings of the study, as supported through evidence-based research. The Board of Education (BOE) would be responsible for assigning the policy recommendations to respective parties (i.e., CEO, and department heads) and the BOE would indicate the next steps for implementation of these strategies within the school district.

Existing Supports

Leadership in School District A can be accessed through central office personnel, school-based sites, and the educator's association. Central office personnel within the employee performance department, professional development department, Restorative Practices Program Coordinator with the Office of Student Services, and the National Board-Certified Teachers Program Coordinator for the School District A all have varying degrees of expertise in intervention implementation for effective student outcomes. School-based personnel throughout the county staff hundreds of National Board-Certified Teachers and teacher leaders with expertise in utilizing alternatives to traditional discipline to effectively support student misbehavior. School District A's teachers' association has numerous teacher leaders that have expertise in implementing interventions effectively to reduce student misbehavior. Each of these entities brings value to supporting the policy recommendations proposed in this project. Inclusivity in policy creation and adoption was key to effective implementation.

Potential Barriers to Implementing Change

Three potential barriers to the suggested policies would be funding for the creation of the workgroup, professional development for administrators, and pushback regarding the selection of workgroup participants. The formation of a code of conduct workgroup with the suggested parameters may see positive feedback amongst all stakeholders. The BOE may see this as an unnecessary creation.

Potential Solutions to Barriers

Solutions to the potential barriers would be to offer emoluments to participants of the workgroup for participation. The school system can acquire grants to fund this workgroup, under its non-profit status to defray any costs over budget. As for the professional development for administrators, the school system could utilize the online training component that houses all self-paced training for administrators to complete during the school year. School climate and staff morale are indicators (s) in administrator evaluation, so it is important that administrators at least have knowledge of how their actions affect their staff's implementation of the code of conduct. The creation of an application process for interested teachers and administrators to serve on the workgroup will create a transparent selection process and ensures that individuals selected came from a body of interested applicants to help bring positive social change to the lives of students, teachers, and administrators.

Proposal for Implementation with Timetable:

The policy suggestions would be implemented over a 3-month period beginning after the presentation to the Board of Education (BOE). The goal would be to have the

new policies in place before the start of the next academic school year. The goal of the

policy recommendation for the code of conduct Workgroup would be for all interested

stakeholders within the school system to apply and selection be based on the level of

successful implementation, research-based knowledge on the subject matter of codes of

conduct, and alternatives to traditional forms of discipline and student

behavior. Selection of participants would be based upon board approval, and or its

designee(s) with input from the local educators' association, School District A's teachers'

association, and both the Restorative Practices Coordinator and National Board-Certified

Teachers Coordinator in School District A. Membership of the workgroup should

include, yet not be limited to teachers, pupil personnel workers (PPWs), school

psychologists, National Board-Certified Teachers and Principals, Professional School

Counselors, administrators, and the Restorative Practices Coordinator(s). The goal of the

audit policy is to include the employee performance department. This office is

responsible for all staff evaluations; therefore, institutional knowledge of staff and job

descriptions may be able to be made readily accessible for an audit of each school. The

purpose of the audit would be to identify the needs of staff in counseling, and discipline

to reallocate staff, as needed by a ratio that is suitable for positive student outcomes. The

purpose of the professional learning for administrators' policy would be to inform

administrators of the unintended outcomes that their actions or inactions have on their

staff under their direction as it relates to school climate, staff morale, and possibly teacher

turnover. Table 1 indicates the timeline for implementing the suggested policies.

Figure 2

Proposal for Implementation Timetable

Policy to be Implemented	Suggested Timetable
Code of conduct Workgroup for purposes of creating a guidebook for implementing interventions within the code of conduct • Inclusive of teacher leaders with expertise in implementing alternative traditions to student discipline. • Inclusive of diverse members of the teacher workforce.	2 months
Conduct an audit/needs assessment for staff/job descriptions needed per school, to reallocate staff as needed; for purposes of overloading counselors with other duties as assigned.	2 months
Create professional learning for administrators on the effects discretion in the workplace has on staff morale.	1-month

Implementation of interventions in the code of conduct was seen as challenging for secondary educators. The findings within my study reflected specific gaps in practices; thereby insinuating the need to move swiftly ahead with implementation of the recommended policies to alleviate the challenges perceived by teachers and administrators with implementing interventions, to bring positive change to student behavior, more effectively.

Roles and Responsibilities

The project will require some roles and responsibilities from leadership in School District A for the recommended policies to be implemented. The following roles are

being suggested: (a) Board of Education (BOE) and the teachers' association for School

District A will manage the selection process for the Code of conduct Workgroup,

inclusive of interested educators in School District A; (b) employee performance

department will manage the auditing of staff/job descriptions; and (c) professional

development department will manage professional development for

administrators. Table 2 highlights the roles of each so the project can be implemented.

Figure 3

Roles and Responsibilities of School District A Leadership

Participant(s)	Roles and Responsibility
BOE or its designee(s) Teachers' association for School District A Restorative Practices Coordinator National Board-Certified Teacher Coordinator	Conduct process for all interested stakeholders within the school system to apply and be selected be based upon a level of successful implementation, research-based knowledge on the subject matter of codes of conduct, alternatives to traditional forms of discipline and student behavior. Membership of the workgroup should include, yet not be limited to teachers, pupil personnel workers (PPWs), school psychologists, National Board-Certified Teachers and Principals, Professional School Counselors, administrators, and the Restorative Practices Coordinator(s).
Employee performance department	Identify the needs of particular staff in the area of counseling, and discipline to reallocate staff, as needed by a ratio that is suitable for positive student outcomes.
Professional development department	Manage the delivery of professional development for administrators on the unintended outcomes that administrator discretion has on their staff in relation to school climate, staff morale, and possibly teacher turnover in their schools.

Upon BOE approval of this project, the leadership recommended in Table 2 can be adjusted as needed. Department/ office leadership for each participating entity would have ownership in utilizing other departments, offices, and individuals to fulfill the outcomes listed in the roles and responsibilities section.

Project Evaluation Plan

A goals-based evaluation plan will be used to evaluate this project. Within this section, I include the project goals, justification for this type of evaluation, the overall goals for the evaluation, and a description of the key stakeholders. A goals-based evaluation will support each participating office/department in measuring progress towards targets identified by each entity to meet the outcome of the overall goals of this policy recommendation. More specifically, the Plan, Do Study, Act (PDSA) Cycle of Improvement Approach, a process used for continuous improvement (Alexander et al., 2018) will be utilized as the project evaluation plan for the overall project.

Project Goals

The suggested policy recommendations in this report are based on the themes derived from the findings of the study. There are a total of three suggested policy recommendations to address the challenges identified in the study. Table 3 highlights the alignment between the policy recommendation and themes from the findings of the study.

Figure 4

Policy Recommendation and Themes from the Findings Alignment

Policy Recommendations	Themes from Study Findings
Code of conduct Workgroup for purposes of creating a guidebook for implementing interventions within the code of conduct • Inclusive of teacher leaders with expertise in implementing alternative traditions to student discipline. • Inclusive of diverse members of the teacher workforce.	Theme 1: Participants Perceived the code of conduct as an Ineffective Tool for Implementing Interventions Theme 3: Participants believed that a lack of support and guidance for implementing interventions existed. Theme 6: Participants perceived practical professional development could increase effectiveness with implementing interventions. Theme 7: Participants perceived the use of alternatives to traditional discipline could increase effectiveness with implementing interventions.
Conduct an audit/needs assessment for staff/job descriptions needed in per school, to reallocate staff as needed; for purposes of overloading counselors with other duties as assigned.	Theme 2: Participants believed that already existing resources were difficult to access and insufficient. Theme 5: Participants perceived staffing adjustments could increase effectiveness with implementing interventions.
Create professional learning for administrators on the effects discretion in the workplace has on staff morale.	Theme 4: Participants attributed challenges in implementing

	interventions to administrator discretion.

Justification for Goal-Based Evaluation

Each policy recommendation was based on the themes from the study

findings. There are a total of three policy recommendations that solve the challenges

presented in the study findings. The Plan, Do, Study Act (PDSA) Improvement

Approach (Alexander et al., 2018) was explained as follows:

- Plan - design or revise process components to improve results.

- Do - implement the plan and measure progress.

- Study - assess the measurements and report results.

- Act - decide on changes needed to improve the process.

Code of conduct Policy

The goal-based evaluation of the code of conduct policy is for educators to learn

about the importance of the code of conduct, receive support and guidance for

implementing interventions within the code of conduct, receive on-going practical

professional development implementing interventions within the code of conduct, and to

utilize alternatives to traditional discipline as listed within the code of conduct to

implementing interventions more effectively. Findings from the study indicated

participants' perceptions of the code of conduct as an effective tool for implementing

interventions because the individual interpretations of words and phrasing occur as

confusing. The findings of the study also indicated that the creation and utilization of a

guidebook, with procedural steps for how to implement interventions, would benefit

educators while limiting various interpretations of the implementation process for interventions. Findings from participants of the study explained that attending professional learning during their workdays was preferred over having to attend sessions during their personal time. Moreover, educators explained that an unspoken forced agreement of doing whatever it took as a teacher to learn, grow, and develop professionally was unacceptable. Job-embedded professional development that was practical in addressing the needs of educators in real-time were the sentiments of most participants in the current study. Bakhshaei et al. (2020) examined and explored attributes that contributed to the effectiveness of coaching, as reported by educators, and found that educators in their study suggested coaching in the form of professional development and learning was best received when it was embedded in the job, with access to live coaching for direct feedback. Findings also highlighted that most participants believed that the use of alternative methods to traditional discipline would increase the effectiveness of implementing interventions. This theme emerged with most participants throughout the interview process. The Code of conduct policy encompasses addressing the challenges within the themes identified in Table 3.

Staff/Job Descriptions Audit/Needs Assessment Policy

The goal-based evaluation of the staff/job description audit/needs assessment policy is for careful attention and possible reallocation of staff to areas (schools) where they are needed the most. Findings from the study highlighted participants who reported that the parent liaison, guidance counselors, peer mediator, social worker, psychologists, and pupil personnel worker were resources they had "on paper" but the reality was that

accessibility to these resources was not as it appeared. The diversity of the students, both in culture and language, and social and emotional adversities were considered by participants as too prevalent to address the needs of the student population in need of the already existing social service resources listed "on paper" in the school. Through the implementation of the staff/job descriptions audit/needs assessment policy careful attention to identifying services and providers, as well as staff members duplicating services can be reallocated to high-needs areas to increase intervention implementation more effectively. The staff/job description audit/needs assessment policy encompasses addressing the challenges within the themes identified in Table 3.

Professional Development in Discretion for Administrators Policy

The goal-based evaluation of the professional development in discretion for administrators' policy is designed to address inconsistent messaging from administrators with implementing interventions in the code of conduct. Findings from the study indicated that participants described discretion in administrator communications and the varying degrees to which communication was given or not, as problematic to implementing interventions effectively. All participants of the study reported that when they or a peer completed a PS-74 or referral for SIT for a student, they rarely received follow-up communication from their administrator. Overall, participants found that when they implemented interventions as noted in the code of conduct and then observed administrators not enforcing the code of conduct in a manner that was consistent with how educators were told to enforce it, participants experienced frustration with implementing interventions. As indicated by another participant, the disconnect between

filing a PS-74, contacting the parent, and the lack of communication and follow-up from the administrator about the outcome, resulted in the educator's reluctance to even engage in the process of filling out forms like a PS-74. Strikingly, participants reported having knowledge that certain participants were ignored by administrators when they reached out for support with implementing interventions. One participant described this as a "privilege thing" in which those participants that had good working relationships with administrators seemed to get support from them when they implemented interventions however, those that did not have a good repertoire with their administrator tended to not receive support, feedback, and or were questioned about the interventions they selected to implement with students, even though they are followed the steps in the code of conduct. The professional development in discretion for administrators' policy encompasses addressing the challenges within the themes identified in Table 3.

Overall Goals for the Evaluation

The overall goal for evaluating this project is goal-based. A goal-based approach for evaluating focuses on supporting each participating office/department in measuring progress towards targets identified by each entity to meet the outcome of the overall goals of this policy recommendation. More specifically, the Plan, Do Study, Act (PDSA) Cycle of Improvement Approach, a process used for continuous improvement (Alexander et al., 2018) will be utilized as the project evaluation plan for the overall project.

The goal of this project is for positive change to be actualized through the implementation of the recommended policies. Implementation of the recommended policies, as written, will increase the likelihood that educators that are having trouble

with implementing interventions in the code of conduct for School District A will get the much-needed support, guidance, and instruction on how to implement interventions effectively, increasing student outcomes in behavior and possibly academics. Each department/office charged with implementing each policy will have full autonomy in executing the PDSA Cycle of Improvement to address the challenges highlights in the study findings.

Description of the Key Stakeholders

Key stakeholders of this project are as follows:

- The Board of Education (BOE) or its designee(s), School District A's teachers' association, the Restorative Practices Coordinator and National Board-Certified Teachers Coordinator of School District A.

- The employee performance department. This office is responsible for all staff evaluations; therefore, institutional knowledge of staff and job descriptions may be able to be made readily accessible for an audit of each school.

- The professional development department. This office is responsible for the professional development of staff in School District A.

<div align="center">

Project Implications

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There were seven themes identified in the study as problems that could be addressed by creating policy recommendations. The policy recommendations would help bring about positive social change in student behavior and possibly academics. Moreover, the recommended policies would provide educators accountable

for implementing the code of conduct with the much-desired clarity, support, and guidance that has been expressed as non-existent.

Positive social change implications

The code of conduct policy is beneficial in addressing the importance of the code of conduct for School District A and how educators can receive support and guidance for implementing interventions within the code of conduct. Additionally, the code of conduct policy will ensure that educators are in receipt of the necessary ongoing practical professional development needed to implement interventions and alternatives to traditional forms of discipline as cited throughout the more effectively. The Staff/Job Descriptions Audit/Needs Assessment Policy will identify overlap and redundancy in services and providers, as well as staff members duplicating services in the same school building to reallocate to high-needs areas. The Professional Development in Discretion for Administrators Policy will address inconsistent messaging from administrators in implementing interventions in the code of conduct and in turn increase staff morale and unity amongst educators in school buildings.

Importance of the project to local stakeholders

This project is beneficial for all educator stakeholders in School District A. The findings of the study explored the perceptions of teachers and administrators about the challenges of implementing discipline policy interventions and the support needed to increase implementation effectiveness. The project highlighted the study findings and the recommended three policies that can lead to implications for resolving challenges in implementing the recommended interventions listed in the code of conduct for School

District A. This project can empower educators at School District A to feel confident in

their ability to implement the discipline policy, as well as to be supported in their roles.

Consistency in implementing interventions will help reduce incidents of student

misbehavior and disruption, allow students to remain in schools to access their academic

programs, limit interactions with school security and law enforcement housed in schools,

and help students learn appropriate ways to deal with conflict by building their

developmental and cognitive abilities to effectively problem-solve in difficult situations.

The project may also close gaps in current practices and knowledge base for school staff

that may not realize there could be components of an intervention that are not being

tended to, as required, or needed.

Appendix B: Invitation to Participants

Dear Teacher or Administrator:

I invite you to participate in a research study conducted by Amity C Pope, a student in the Walden University: Administrator Leadership for Teaching and Learning Doctoral Program. My faculty advisor is Dr. Marilyn Robb, Walden University. The purpose of this study is to explore the perceptions of teachers and administrators about the challenges of implementing discipline policy interventions and the support needed to increase implementation effectiveness. You are eligible to participate in this study if you are an administrator or classroom teacher at this high school in School District A, MD and have had any experience with student discipline. Participants must be at least 18 to volunteer in this study. You will be invited into a one-on-one interview to be recorded via Zoom, which should take approximately 60 minutes at a convenient time for you. This interview will begin with a question about discipline policy implementation in your school. All responses will be confidential and your participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you choose to participate in this study, you will be invited to review the raw data and themes to have you confirm the accuracy of your responses reflected in the themes ensuring I have captured your perceptions accurately, as well as control for any biases I may have interpreted. Please know that during this time you will be able to offer any suggestions to ensure your perceptions are captured accurately and make changes that capture their perspectives, if needed. This process will take at least 30 minutes, but the calendar invitation will be set for an hour just in case we need more time. Your response as indicated in the consent form, will communicate to me your

willingness to participate in this study. Feel free to contact me or 240-705-2106 if you have any questions about this study. **NOTE**: Any participant can be disqualified from participating in this study ONLY when the researcher has good reasons to exclude them based on theoretical or empirical support provided to the researcher**.**

Yours in service,

Amity Pope
Researcher & Doctoral Candidate

Appendix C: Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol

Pre-Interview Script:

Before the start of the interview, I will introduce myself and thank them for agreeing to

participate. I will state the purpose of the study, their confidentiality, and their protection

from harm. I will also state the Conflict-of-Interest Disclaimer from the consent form.

I will say: You might already know the researcher as a mentor teacher in the professional

development department or as chair of the Government Relations Committee, and or

Endorsement Council Chair in the teachers' association for School District A, but this

study is separate from those roles.

I will say: I am Amity Pope, a doctoral candidate with Walden University. The purpose

of this study is to explore the perceptions of teachers and administrators about the

challenges of implementing discipline policy interventions and the support needed to

increase implementation effectiveness. To protect you from harm and to keep your

interview confidential I will copy all handwritten, typed, and transcribed notes; and

recordings of the interviews, via Zoom onto a password protected external hard drive and

place this hard drive and physical notes in a locked file cabinet, in my home office, for at

least five years before I destroy the data. I will also assign you a pseudonym in the

transcripts and the final study findings.

I will then inform them of the structure for the interview.

I will say: Now I would like to share about the structure for this interview. I will ask you

a question and you will respond. Do not think of the time when respond, just respond

until you feel for yourself that you have fully expressed yourself. If you have any

questions about the question, please ask for clarity. As a reminder this interview will take

approximately 60 minutes.

I will do: Enter the pseudonym in the google sheet.

I will then ask them to provide me what their general experience has been with the code

of conduct in the school district.

I will say: Please share with me your general experience with the code of conduct in the

Student's Rights and Responsibilities' Handbook for the school district?

I will read the title of the study.

I will say: the name of this study is secondary teachers and administrators' perceptions on

school discipline practices.

I will then read the research questions.

I will say: the research questions for this study are as follows:

- What are the teacher's and administrator's perceptions of the challenges faced

  when implementing interventions in the discipline policy code of conduct, listed

  with the Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook?

- What are teachers' perceptions of the support and resources they need to increase

  effectiveness of implementing interventions?

I will then let them know there are a total of 10 interview questions I have prepared to ask

them and remind them to be authentic in their responses.

I will say: There are a total of 10 interview questions designed by myself that when

answered authentically, will help to answer the research questions for this study. Please

answer authentically and to the best of your ability. If there is any question you wish not to respond to, feel free to let me know and remember you can opt out of the interview at any time. Are you ready to begin?

I will wait for a response in the affirmative to begin. When a response in the affirmative has been given, I will begin the interview.

I will say: Thank you for letting me know you are ready to proceed. We will begin with the first question. I will read the first question; you will respond and then we will move on to the next question. If at any time you think of something to add to a question we have already passed, just let me know and we can go back to it. Question number one (I will then read each question in the sequential order as noted below).

1. What are the current systems in place for implementing interventions? School? Classroom?
2. How do you use data to inform your selection of intervention to implement? Describe the process. For example, is there a list of interventions you choose from, or a checklist provided or created by you or someone else to guide the selection of interventions for behavior?
    a. To what extent is this checklist used?
3. What is/are the process(es) for implementing an intervention?
4. How often have you used the code of conduct with your students/ with students in your school? Please describe your answer.
5. Do you find using the code of conduct with your students/with student in your school to be effective? Why or why not?
6. What challenges do you face (if any) with implementing interventions in the code of conduct? Please explain why or why not. If yes, how does the/those challenge(s) affect your implementation of the discipline policy? If no, please explain why you do not face challenges wit implementing interventions in the Code of Student Conduct.
7. What resources or supports are available to you now to increase the effectiveness of implementing interventions? Are they any challenges to gaining access to the resources or supports? If so, what are these challenges? Why do you see this as a challenge?

8. What resources or supports do you need to increase the effectiveness of implementing interventions? Are they any challenges to gaining access to the resources or supports? If so, what are these challenges? Why do you see this as a challenge?
9. Are resources or supports readily accessible to you to help increase effectiveness of implementing interventions? If so, what are these resources or supports? How are they accessible?
10. Is there anything you else you would like to provide that was not expressed that you feel is beneficial for this interview or this study?
   Interview concluding statement.

I will say: Thank you for your time and attention to this very important study. I would like for you know that I will protect your confidentiality copying all handwritten, typed, and transcribed notes; and recordings of the interviews, via Zoom onto an external disk and place this disk and physical notes in a locked file cabinet, in my home office, for at least five years before I destroy the data and remember you have been given a pseudonym to protect your identity. In the next 24-48 hours, I will email you to arrange a time for you to review the raw data and themes to have you confirm the accuracy of your responses reflected in the themes ensuring I have captured your perceptions accurately, as well as control for any biases I may have interpreted. Please know that during this time you will be able to offer any suggestions to ensure your perceptions are captured accurately and make changes that capture their perspectives, if needed. This process will take at least 30 minutes, but the calendar invitation will be set for an hour just in case we need more time.

Appendix D: 89 Codes

1. Need more time to find resources. Need time to implement resources – workload is too high.
2. Takes the initiative to find resources (online/training etc..). Resources are shared when asked of me.
3. Need consistent collaboration with disciplining of students – understand to be successful with this is going to take being flexible, seeing other's point of view in decision making.
4. Need more funding to provide more resources – need for fulltime people.
5. Need SEL – anger & stress management. Need PD on how to talk to people and meet them where they are rather than subduing them into submission. Behavioral intervention PD. De-escalating PD- all of these are needs. Not a fan of how behavioral interventions are implemented- threatening, yelling.
6. Need Community Partnerships. We have a list of community agencies.
7. Need Dean of Behavior. Doesn't have someone in the school that can immediately help with things. A dean of schools maybe a good resource to have. We do not have a dean of students, someone that oversees discipline like other high schools do. Need someone dedicated and specialized in the roles that counselors have had to take on. Discipline is brushed off unless there is a physical altercation.
8. Need activities and games for students (i.e.: field trips) – laxed day for students to get students that may not normally want to come to school or don't come to school to come to school.
9. I do not know what to do with PS74 discipline forms, I do not know who to turn to for help, no one is helping and when they do help it doesn't change the behavior. (Need for steps and procedures of what to do or steps to follow in dealing with discipline). Need mentorship with new teachers because with no support for them, discipline issues increase. Teachers, especially new ones, need to know where things are and how to navigate the system to find what they need or have someone they can turn to for guidance. Teachers do not know what resources are actually available for use.
10. Would like to review the Rights and Responsibilities as a team - don't know much about the code of conduct – get a PD on the code of conduct – how to use in the midst of a situation.
11. We could use restorative practices.
12. Need a program supporting students with time management. 13. There is a lack of accountability from students and their parents in the code of conduct whereas teachers are responsible for everything that happens and doesn't happen when it comes to issuing discipline. Blamed by admin as lacking classroom management – teachers get discouraged and give up with issuing PS74s. Student and parents need to be held accountable whether it be that they must participate in counseling

or therapy to support them with their needs, but everything falls back on the teacher and that is unrealistic.

13. Parents know there is something there but refuse services for the children – that creates problems for the school though. Parents are unresponsive to communications.

14. People seem are resigned to being stuck in their old ways of doing things. Overzealous bureaucracy.

15. Teaching positions change without notice especially for teachers that are doing well with a particular group of students and this leads to frustration with teachers because there is the feeling of being punished for reaching success with students. In these cases, there is no additional assistance provided to teachers that get a group of students with greater needs than those they were just successful with and in most cases the new group of students have an increased number of discipline issues, usually more than the group the teacher was previously successful with.

16. We have a person dedicated to ISS. Administrators assign students to ISS, and this is done at their discretion, no set circumstance. Teachers that administrators either know or believe they have already applied steps to rectify situations, as opposed to someone that calls security anytime something happens, and teachers that get along well with their administrators get this type of support from them when needed. Nepotism with admin and staff that others don't have -privilege thing. Really uncertain if admin has dealt with behavior of students referred w/ PS-74-some teachers have received correspondences – whereas others haven't – admin is inconsistent with letting teachers know what they have done with a student that has been given a PS74.

17. No resources to help increase the effectiveness of implementing discipline interventions.

18. We need a guidebook with specific descriptions to help with implementing interventions because currently implementation of interventions is left to the individual teacher. No one checks very often to see how the intervention is being implemented, so in actuality a teacher can be implementing an intervention incorrectly and this can lead to regressing the child and by the time it has been discovered that the intervention was not being implemented properly, it may be too late. Without a description specific in terms of how to implement an intervention, the reader (in this case the teacher) is forced to interpret the intervention in his or her own way. There is insufficient knowledge of the code of conduct for teachers, students, and parents. Contact/phone list w/extensions (who can help with what).

19. Classroom management strategies through training to provide with teachers with immediate strategies and resources we can put in place when you're in a situation. It's problematic to be in the situation that needs an intervention and just getting information given to us to deal with the issues.

20. Security and administrators should be visible in the halls so students know that every 10 minutes or so, some one of them will be walking pass the door to help in the event a student walks out of the classroom, a teacher needs assistance or if

a class is in need of a substitute teacher. Security takes too long to show up or never come.

21. Admin is a resource that readily accessible to help increase the effectiveness of implementing interventions.

22. We have resources – PBIS is operated as a lottery – students names entered, and a drawing occurs for rewards.

23. Parent liaison is readily accessible as a resource.

24. Guidance counselors are readily accessible as a resource. Not enough w/ 6 of them.

25. Peer mediation is a resource that is readily accessible. Not utilized to their full potential – stuck doing lunch duty – pulled in too many directions to perform the functions of their job w/fidelity. Also booked all the time – too many students that need the resource but can get it.

26. Social worker but not certain - thinks they are inaccessible – on paper they exist. Not enough of them.

27. Psychologists but uncertain – thinks they are inaccessible – on paper they exist. We have this person and they have saved lives.

28. Resources are not truly accessible b/c the population is so high. Those that get signed up early are fine but late bloomers can't b/c there aren't enough people to meet with all that need the support. Call the office but no one answers.

29. Politics, bureaucracy of codes and memos etc.…are the resources. We could use more psychologists – people trained with how to talk to kids' vs beat them into submission. Politics get in the way – if there is student with a parent that is known for suing or taking things out of the school - leniency kicks in and then it becomes about what the teacher isn't doing. Teachers always got to CYA. Teachers are forced to adapt to the 'watered down' approach to discipline over the last 20 years or so. No consequences for students. Code of conduct seems to be tailored to students. Emphasis has been placed on the teachers proving their use of it-students are kind of let off the hook for misbehavior.

30. Children from struggling communicates and environments don't need zero tolerance strategies they need attentive listeners, ppl that care, ppl that will meet them where they are, willing to see the world from their view to help them navigate life.

31. Resources are online and if you aren't proficient in using the internet then you won't have access. Must be tech savvy. There is an assumption that you either are or that training is easy to take off and attend.

32. SIT process must be (pre-work) must be 100% accurate or the teacher must start all over. Teachers must include interventions done prior to the SIT process. (MT: could this be counterproductive/unrealistic if teachers are interpreting interventions differently OR dk what interventions to use or try?) In the SIT mtg discussions about which interventions are more likely to work are brainstormed based on what has been done – some students advocate for themselves whereas others have to be probed – in some cases it is determined that the student cannot stay because of age and they are enrolled in a program where they live on campus

and get their GED etc.---this option is not widely used b/c it hurts the numbers/score w/ MSDE.

33. Funding to have FT psychologist and psychiatrist that can prescribe medication.
34. Insular culture – no one shares resources in the form of information.
35. You are pretty much on your own as a new teacher. If you can't swim, you will sink.
36. Teachers must get permission to attend trainings.
37. Teachers must be on one accord with how discipline is going to be handled. Buy in from teachers with enforcing the code of conduct.
38. Teachers and admin must have the right mindset to realize policing students and not addressing their SEL is the wrong mindset to take.
39. Relationships and rapport are the best way to reach a child. I build R&R with my students, and I don't see classroom disruptions. I show respect to the students and talk to them like they are young adults the way I would speak with my nephews.
40. It would be nice if parents had access to the things, we are using like google classroom or canvas. Resources need to be accessible in languages of our populations – especially for parents.
41. Technology makes implementing interventions easier.
42. It would be nice to get feedback from Admin about interventions or strategies that were used with specific students that return to class form having a PS74 written up on them.
43. Teachers having to always CYA create a bad culture.
44. Peer forward is a resource.
45. We have a CRI person.
46. No feedback from SIT referral.
47. Teacher & parent work as a team to support students is the way this teacher gets students what they need.
48. Teacher refers students to interventions, based on their belief & after speaking with parents. Subjective.
49. Alternative resources are downplayed.
50. 4-step progressive discipline is used and works well.
51. I'm more passive using SEL – hands on approach and the biggest challenge I face is students turning in their work on time.
52. Another teacher does a student conference, to deescalate and get to core problem, then dept chair or other peers for help and then AP.
53. Using communication to speak life into the child as an intervention.
54. Finds out what the root causes are i.e.: students make work late so sleeping in class is not a behavior issue – it's a health concern – sends students to nurse vs writing up and escalating situations- communicating with students helps in these situations.
55. Using schoolmax to tell the story (using attendance, grades etc. As a bridge for communication with the students to get to the root cause of behavior).

56. BIPs for special needs are taken into consideration by one teacher.
57. Parent contact info is old in schoolmax.
58. Unable to communicate with parents b/c interpreter is needed, parents don't speak English.
59. Can find working numbers for parents by reaching out to other teachers or the counselor – I take the initiative to do this.
60. I reach to guidance to schedule PT conference.
61. Resources go unused b/c no one shows teachers that they are in the building and those that know – don't share the information.
62. Student apathy is a big challenge – apathy about any and everything.
63. Initiative to model what behaviors are not appropriate – students do not speak English or aren't from this county – can't be expected to know social norms. Collaborative conversation with students and teacher about what they need to be able to learn – comes up with norms and infractions as a group. Some teacher post rules and expectations.
64. Code of conduct is ineffective with students – teachers don't know enough about it to enforce it – teachers that believe in alternatives to disciplining students by policing don't see the value in disciplining students this way seems they would be causing more trauma than being helpful.
65. I think the code of conduct is effective.
66. Never used the code of conduct.
67. Code of conduct is reviewed twice a year beginning and middle. We do not go through the entire code. Review things you can do and not do. It's documentation to say that we did this thing, and we get signatures to prove it. CYA. It's a procedure /formality required of teachers to review with students.
68. Never used the code of conduct with students.
69. I focus on procedures, so I have no use for code of conduct.
70. The way I use the code of conduct is I go through the code of conduct as mandated by school.
71. I do not use the code of conduct w/ students often – I have informed colleagues of what they can and can't do w/ students though. Inform colleagues when they inquiry and my references are as stated.
72. I use the code of conduct until I see that there is no consistency and then I stop. I implement interventions until admin doesn't address or stops consequences.
73. Process for implementing intervention is fill out PS 74 and contact the teacher. The teacher is then interrogated by admin in terms of what the teacher did about the behavior – after a PS 74 is filled out. Almost as if teachers must prove their point of why they filled out a PS 74.
74. When teachers reach out to parents to help with identifying root causes for misbehavior sometimes doesn't change the behavior.
75. No formal process for implementing interventions – reactionary. No formal data collection steps provided by admin. No checklist given by admin to use for data to inform selection of interventions.
76. PRIM manual used as data to inform interventions.

77. Instinct (basic/personal) are used as data to inform interventions.
78. Previous year scores and interventions listed from previous teachers is used w/caution to inform interventions – b/c who don't know the dispositions/beliefs of the previous teacher – their relationship with the student – the student interactions with them etc.…
79. Process for implementing interventions is unknown.
80. Process for implementing interventions is numerous – progressive discipline started interviewing the student – phone call home – involving counselor – looking for modifications/accommodations, talk with staff PPWs, determine if MH needs tending to until ultimately ISS is recommended. Remedy to everything is call the parent.
81. Deal with implementing interventions on my own.
82. Systems for implementing interventions varies case by case.
83. Not very familiar with the code of conduct.
84. Code of conduct not examined fully with staff.
85. Gone through it as an individual – code of conduct.
86. Code of conduct doesn't seem to be taken seriously – like it is a big thing for all to know about yet there isn't much attention brought to it for teachers to know it like we are to know our curriculum – confusing.
87. Contradictory – the code of conduct – it's trying to protect students, teacher, the district all while hurting the climate of the school.
88. Code of conduct is directed to parents and students.
89. Code of conduct empowers teachers to know what they can and can't do to protect themselves when students and their parents 'come for them'. Saves admin when it comes to suspending or expelling students – general guidance.

Appendix E: Research Questions Aligned to Themes

Research Questions	Code (Participant Language)	Initial Themes	Shared Meaning	Final Theme
RQ1: What are the teachers' and administrators' perceptions of the challenges faced when implementing interventions in the discipline policy code of conduct, listed with the Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook? Zoe Liam Alex Nolan Thomas Tam Anita Pat Izzy Jasper Chloe Theo	Politics, bureaucracy of codes and memos etc....are the resources. Politics get in the way – if there is a student with a parent that is known for suing or taking things out of the school - leniency kicks in and then it becomes about what the teacher isn't doing. Teachers always got to CYA. Teachers are forced to adapt to the 'watered down' approach to discipline over the last 20 years or so. No consequences for students. Code of conduct seems to be tailored to students. Emphasis has been placed on the teachers proving their use of it-students are kind of let off the hook for misbehavior. There is a lack of accountability from students and their parents in the code of conduct whereas teachers are responsible for everything that happens and doesn't happen when it comes to issuing discipline. Blamed by admin as lacking classroom management – teachers get discouraged and give up with issuing PS74s. Students and parents need to be held accountable whether it be that they must participate in counseling or therapy to support them with their needs, but everything falls back on the teacher and that is unrealistic. Parents know there is something there but refuse services for the children – that creates problems for the school though. Parents are unresponsive to communications. People seem resigned to being stuck in their old ways of doing things. Overzealous bureaucracy. Teachers having to always CYA create a bad culture. When teachers reach out to parents to help with identifying root causes for misbehavior sometimes doesn't change the behavior. Contradictory – the code of conduct – it's trying to protect ss, teacher, the district all while hurting the climate of the school.	Politics get in the way of following the steps in the code of conduct. If a teacher follows the steps - admin interferes with decisions made by the teacher if they have history with the parents of the students or have been warned about the parent's dealings with the school system. Admin wants to avoid negative exposure or the likelihood of catching a charge from a parent. Teachers always must cover themselves and are forced to adapt to ways of disciplining that they do not agree with. Code of conduct is tailored to students and parents in such a way that makes the teachers feel as if they must prove and justify their actions before being believed or able to take actions with disciplining students for misbehavior. Teachers unable to enact certain strategies for disciplining students feel belittled and discouraged. There is no accountability for parents and students with behaving appropriately in school. Parents that are aware that their child may need help refuse recommended suggestions. People do what they want to. CYA Parental involvement doesn't mean positive behavior change. Code of conduct is contradictory - only seems to protect the system. Code of conduct is for students and parents.	Implementing the code of conduct. The code of conduct. Diminished sense of professionalism. Trust issues. No trust in one another. Whose best interest is this for?	**Theme #1** **The code of conduct is an ineffective tool for implementing interventions.**

	Code of conduct is directed to parents and students. Code of conduct empowers teachers to know what they can and can't do to protect themselves when ss and their parents 'come for them'. Saves admin when it comes to suspending or expelling students – general guidance. Code of conduct is ineffective with students – teachers don't know enough about it to enforce it – teachers that believe in alternatives to disciplining ss by policing don't see the value in disciplining students this way seems they would be causing more trauma than being helpful. I think the code of conduct is effective. Code of conduct is reviewed twice a year beginning and middle. We do not go through the entire code. Review things you can do and not do. It's documentation to say that we did this thing, and we get signatures to prove it. CYA. It's a procedure /formality required of teachers to review with students. The way I use the code of conduct is I go through the code of conduct as mandated by school. Not very familiar with the code of conduct. Never used the code of conduct. Never used the code of conduct with students. Code of conduct not examined fully with staff. Gone through it as an individual – code of conduct. Code of conduct doesn't seem to be taken seriously – like it is a big thing for all to know about yet there isn't much attention brought to it for teachers to know it like we are to know our curriculum – confusing.	Code of conduct is for teachers and admin. Teachers find it ineffective with students and those that believe in alternative methods to discipline don't use it to address misbehavior. Ineffective Code of conduct is skimmed as staff. Reviewed twice a year in assembly format with egregious offenses highlighted. Formality CYA/ get signatures to say it has been done. Does not use. Not examined fully as a group. A teacher has reviewed it independently of staff requirements. Confusing Not a lot of attention is brought to knowing it like teacher's are required to know the curriculum they teach.		

RQ1: What are the teachers' and administrators' perceptions of the challenges faced when implementing interventions in the discipline policy code of conduct, listed with the Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook? Chloe Alex Anita Zoe Jasper Tam Liam	Insular culture – no one shares resources in the form of information. Takes the initiative to find resources (online/training etc..). Resources are shared when asked of me. Parent liaison is readily accessible as a resource. Admin is a resource that's readily accessible to help increase the effectiveness of implementing interventions. We have a person dedicated to the ISS. Guidance counselors are readily accessible as a resource but it's not enough with 6 of them. Workload of counselors is too much for one person to do their job well. Peer mediation is a resource that is readily accessible. Not utilized to their full potential – stuck doing lunch duty – pulled in too many directions to perform the functions of their job with fidelity. Also booked all the time. Too many students that need the resource but can't get it. We have a social worker; on paper they exist. Not enough of them. I think we have psychologists, again on paper they exist. We have this person and believe they aren't on staff, but they have saved lives. I think they are assigned by the county. We have a CRI person. We have resources – PBIS is operated as a lottery – students names entered, and a drawing occurs for rewards. Resources are not truly accessible b/c the population is so high. Those that get signed up early are fine but late bloomers can't b/c there aren't enough people to meet with all that need the support. Call the office but no one answers. Resources are online and if you aren't proficient in using the internet then you won't have access. Must be tech savvy. Technology makes implementing interventions easier.	Everyone works in silos. Seeks information independently and shares only when asked. Parent liaison is resourceful. Admin is resourceful. There was someone that manages the ISS. Counselors exist on paper but can't do their jobs fully. Peer mediation is a resource that doesn't get to their job fully. Social worker exists on paper but need a lot more - too many students. Psychologists exist on paper. We have a very great resource that has saved students' lives and we could use more of them. We have PBIS but it is not functioning the way it needs to bring about meaningful change in student behaviors. Need more human resources to get students the support needed. Office staff is inaccessible for help. You are on your own with finding resources online. If you can't find what you need you without. Technology makes it hard to find resources. Technology makes it easy to find resources. Resources are underutilized because they can't be accessed. If you do not ask for help in finding resources, you are on your own. Need people available for interpreting for teachers when needed in communicating with parents/guardians. Need updated parent contact info readily accessible.	Everyman for themselves. Some find resources on their own. Resources Accessing resources Accessing and identifying resources Access to resources scare resources for population. Population density Dense population equates to limited resources.	**Theme #2** **Resources are difficult to access and are insufficient.**

| | | Resources go unused b/c no one shows teachers that they are in the building and those that know – don't share the information.

Unable to communicate with parents b/c interpreter is needed, parents don't speak English.

Parent contact info is old in schoolmax.

Can find working numbers for parents by reaching out to other teachers or the counselor – I take the initiative to do this. | | | |

| RQ1: What are the teachers' and administrators' perceptions of the challenges faced when implementing interventions in the discipline policy code of conduct, listed with the Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook?

Anita
Zoe
Liam
Izzy
Olivia
Jasper
Nolan
Alex
Tam
Pat
Theo | No resources to help increase the effectiveness of implementing discipline interventions.

You are pretty much on your own as a new teacher. If you can't swim, you will sink.

No formal process for implementing interventions – everything is reactionary.

No formal data collection steps provided by admin.

No checklist given by admin to use for data to inform selection of interventions.

I do not know what to do with PS74 discipline forms, I do not know who to turn to for help, no one is helping and when they do help it doesn't change the behavior.

Previous year scores and interventions listed from previous teachers is used w/caution to inform interventions – b/c who don't know the dispositions/beliefs of the previous teacher – their relationship with the student – the student interactions with them etc.…

Need consistent collaboration with disciplining of students – understand to be successful with this is going to take being flexible, seeing other's point of view in decision making.

Teachers must be on one accord with how discipline is going to be handled. Buy-in from teachers with enforcing the code of conduct.

PRIM manual used as data to inform interventions.

Instinct (basic/personal) are used as data to inform interventions.

Process for implementing interventions is unknown.
Process for implementing interventions is numerous – progressive discipline started interviewing the student – phone call home – involving counselor – looking for modifications/accommodations, talk with staff PPWs, determining if MH needs tending to until ultimately ISS is recommended. Remedy to everything is call the parent.

Deal with implementing interventions on my own.

Systems for implementing interventions vary case by case.

Initiative to model what behaviors are not appropriate – students do not speak English or aren't from this county – can't be expected to know social norms. Collaborative conversation with students and teachers about what they need to be | There are no resources to help with implementing interventions.

You are on your own, especially if you are new to teaching.

No formalized or uniformed process for implementing or using steps to initiate the implementation of interventions.

Documents given for teacher use come with no directions or procedures for completing them.

Assessments from previous years inform interventions w/ caution because there is uncertainty between the relationship of the student and teacher.
Needs the same messaging for implementing interventions and enforcing the code of conduct.

Consistent messaging and enforcement of code of conduct.

Research-based manual used for implementing interventions based on certain behaviors.

Internal guide is used to inform what type of intervention would work best - comes from years of experience.

Unknown what the process is.

The process varies.

Manages interventions independent of others.

Systems vary.

Case-by case basis.

Models' behavior and engages students in conversations so students can see and hear what the expectations are for behaving appropriately.

Focuses on procedures.

Inform colleagues of what they can and cannot do according to the code of conduct. | Lack of procedural guidance.

Lack of uniformity in implementing interventions.

Lack of formal guidance.

There is no consistent messaging.

Follow-through on consequences stops with one and trickles down to others.

Implementation varies in knowledge base and capacity.

Process is unknown.

There are numerous processes for implementing interventions.

Educators use personal instincts for addressing misbehavior.

Educators rely on their personal opinions, beliefs and or attitudes. | **Theme # 3**

Lack of guidance and support with implementing interventions. |

	able to learn – comes up with norms and infractions as a group. Some teachers post rules and expectations.	Discouragement when others are enforcing it.		
	I focus on procedures, so I have no use for code of conduct.			
	I do not use the code of conduct w/ students often – I have informed colleagues of what they can and can't do with students though. Inform colleagues when they inquiry and my references are as stated.	Completing a PS-74 comes with interrogation.		
	I use the code of conduct until I see that there is no consistency and then I stop.	Teamwork with parents and teachers.		
	I implement interventions until admin doesn't address or stops consequences.			
	Process for implementing intervention is fill out PS 74 and contact the teacher. The teacher is then interrogated by admin in terms of what the teacher did about the behavior – after a PS 74 is filled out. Almost as if teachers must prove their point of why they filled out a PS 74.	Teacher belief/attitude/disposition. Guidance counselor SIT process.		
	Teacher & parent work as a team to support students is the way this teacher gets students what they need.			
	Teacher refers students to interventions, based on their belief & after speaking with parents. Subjective.			
	I reach to guidance to schedule a PT conference.			
	SIT process must be (pre-work) must be 100% accurate or the teacher must start all over. Teachers must include interventions done prior to the SIT process. (MT: could this be counterproductive/unrealistic if teachers are interpreting interventions differently OR dk what interventions to use or try?) In the SIT mtg discussions about which interventions are more likely to work are brainstormed based on what has been done – some ss advocate for themselves whereas others have to be probed – in some cases it is determined that the student cannot stay because of age and they are enrolled in a program where they live on campus and get their GED etc---this option is not widely used b/c it hurts the numbers/score w/ MSDE.	Standard guidebook of how to implement interventions and when to implement them.		
	We need a guidebook with specific descriptions to help with implementing interventions because currently implementation of interventions is left to the individual teacher. No one checks very often to see how the intervention is being implemented, so in actuality a teacher can be implementing an intervention incorrectly and this can lead to regressing the child and by time it has been discovered that the intervention was not being implemented properly, it may be too late. Without			

	a description specific in terms of how to implement an intervention, the reader (in this case the teacher) is forced to interpret the intervention in his or her own way. There is insufficient knowledge of the code of conduct for teachers, students, and parents. Contact/phone list w/extensions (who can help with what).			
RQ1: What are the teachers' and administrators' perceptions of the challenges faced when implementing interventions in the discipline policy code of conduct, listed with the Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook? Tam Anita Zoe Liam Nolan Pat Alex Chloe Izzy	Administrators assign students to ISS, and this is done at their discretion, no set circumstance. Teachers that administrators either know or believe have already applied steps to rectify situations, as opposed to someone that calls security anytime something happens, and teachers that get along well with their administrators get this type of support from them when needed. Nepotism with admin and staff that others don't have -privilege thing. Really uncertain if admin has dealt with behavior of students referred w/ PS-74- Some teachers have received correspondence – whereas others haven't. Admin is inconsistent with letting teachers know what they have done with a student that has been given a PS74. It would be nice to get feedback from Admin about interventions or strategies that were used with	It is believed by educators that admin chooses who gets sent to ISS based on their beliefs of those teachers everyone knows that has completed the steps ro done their due diligence to rectify a situation versus a teacher that calls security for any and everything without intervening first. If you are in w/ admin then you get help from them. Teachers are uncertain if admin has done anything with the PS-74s sent. Some teachers receive feedback from PS-74s, and others don't.	Inconsistent communication. Inconsistent messaging. Lack of communication.	**Theme # 4** **Administrator discretion.**

	specific students that return to class form having a PS74 written up on them. No feedback from SIT referral.			
RQ2: What are teachers' and administrators 'perceptions of the support and resources they need to increase effectiveness of implementing interventions? Liam Chloe Anita Pat Izzy Alex Tam Olivia	Need Dean of Behavior. Doesn't have someone in the school that can immediately help with things. A dean of schools maybe a good resource to have. We do not have a dean of students, someone that oversees discipline like other high schools do. Need someone dedicated and specialized in the roles that counselors have had to take on. Discipline is brushed off unless there is a physical altercation. We could use more psychologists – people trained with how to talk to kids' vs beat them into submission. Need more funding to provide more resources – need for fulltime people. Change job descriptions (i.e.: counselors) Workload of counselors is too much for one person. Additional jobs/roles for tasks assigned to counselors so they are able to focus on students. Need Community Partnerships. We have a list of community agencies. Security and administrators should be visible in the halls so students know that every 10 minutes or so, someone of them will be walking pass the door to help in the event a student walks out of the classroom, a teacher needs assistance or if a class is in need of a substitute teacher. Security takes too long to show up or never come. Funding to have FT psychologist and psychiatrist that can prescribe medication.	Need a dean of behavior. Need staff focused on their roles and accountabilities. Need more social service providers (counselors, psychologists etc.) Counselors exist on paper but can't do their jobs fully. Need authoritative figures in halls during transitions and classes. Need strategic partnerships that can provide additional support for students. Additional funding for full-time staff.	More staff needed. More staff that can focus full time on their job descriptions needed. Need partners in the community to exist in the schools strategically for people in need of additional support. More funding.	**Theme # 5** **Staffing adjustments**.
RQ2: What are teachers' and administrators 'perceptions of the support and resources they need to increase effectiveness of implementing interventions? Zoe Liam Theo Izzy Nolan Pat Anita Alex Tammy Chloe Jasper Tom	Need more time to find resources. Need time to implement resources – workload is too high. Teachers must get permission to attend training. Classroom management strategies through training to provide teachers with immediate strategies and resources we can put in place when you're in a situation. It's problematic to be in the situation that needs an intervention and just getting information given to us to deal with the issues. Would like to review the Rights and Responsibilities as a team - don't know much about the code of conduct – get a PD on the code of conduct – how to use in the midst of a situation. Need mentorship with new teachers because with no support for them, discipline issues increase. Teachers, especially new ones, need to know where things are and how to navigate the system to find	Need more time to find resources. Need training. Practical - job embedded PD. Whole group review of Code of conduct for clarity and understanding of its use and function. Mentoring	Professional Learning. Where are the resources? Job-embedded professional learning Professional development (PD) Need a variety of specific training for staff that models ways to communicate and address misbehavior in positive ways.	**Theme # 6** **Practical Professional Learning**

	what they need or have someone they can turn to for guidance. Teachers do not know what resources are actually available for use. Need SEL – anger & stress management. Need PD on how to talk to people and meet them where they are rather than subduing them into submission. Behavioral intervention PD. Not a fan of how behavioral interventions are implemented- threatening, yelling. Teachers and admin must have the right mindset to realize policing students and not addressing their SEL is the wrong mindset to take. Children from struggling communicates and environments don't need zero tolerance strategies, they need attentive listeners, ppl that care, ppl that will meet them where they are, willing to see the world from their view to help them navigate life.	Knowing where resources are for use. Peer-mentoring Internal assessments of resources. Need PD on SEL Need PD on Anger-management. Need PD on positive communication. Need PD on de-escalating. SEL vs Policing Need to know how Zero-tolerance strategies affect students living in stressed communities.		
RQ2: What are teachers' and administrators 'perceptions of the support and resources they need to increase effectiveness of implementing interventions? Anita Pat Nolan Alex Liam Tammy Zoe Chloe Jasper Tom	Need activities and games for students (i.e.: field trips) – laxed day for students to get students that may not normally want to come to school or don't come to school to come to school. We could use restorative practices (RP). Relationships and rapport are the best way to reach a child. I build R&R with my ss, and I don't see classroom disruptions. I show respect to the students and talk to them like they are young adults the way I would speak with my nephews. Alternative resources are downplayed. 4-step progressive discipline is used and works well. I'm more passive using SEL – hands on approach and the biggest challenge I face is ss turning in their work on time. I use student conference, to de-escalate and get to core problem, then I seek assistance from dept chair or other peers for help if that doesn't work and then AP. Using communication to speak life into the child as an intervention. Finds out what the root causes are i.e.: ss make work late so sleeping in class is not a behavior issue – it's a health concern – sends ss to nurse vs writing up and escalating situations-communicating with ss helps in these situations. Using schoolmax to tell the story (using attendance, grades etc..as a bridge for communication with the ss to get to the root cause of behavior).	Students need an outlet (i.e.: social) RP Relationship and rapport building strategies. Communication. Alternative methods to encourage positive student behavior are not regarded as important or welcomed by many. Some teachers have found plans that work for them and their students that have garnered success with implementing to encourage good behavior. Methods that include student warning and verbal conversations about unwanted behavior are ways several teachers de-escalate problematic behavior. Support from other colleagues and administrators are sought after initial	Alternative methods work better. Alternative methods change misbehavior. Alternative methods are needed. Alternatives to traditional discipline. Teachers that use alternative methods to address misbehavior find them better for addressing student misbehavior.	**Theme # 7** **Alternative methods to de-escalate problematic student behavior.**

		intervention with teachers does not lead to a successful outcome.		
	BIPs for special needs students	Use of data through a school-wide information systems program that tracks grades, attendance and other pertinent information regarding students and their qualifying information has been used by one educator to get a bigger picture of what that student may be possibly going through before intervening with an intervention.		
		One educator mentioned using BIPs with their students of special needs.		