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# Evaluation of a Middle School Positive Behavior Intervention Support Program

Tracie Michelle Grogan  
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2016

Abstract

Evaluation of a Middle School Positive Behavior Intervention Support Program

by

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EdS, Mercer University

MA, Fort Valley State University

BS, University of Georgia

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Curriculum Instruction and Assessment

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## Abstract

School leaders at a middle school in a rural school district in Georgia were looking for ways to reduce poor student behavior. Judicious Discipline, a program based on Kohlberg's six stages of moral development, Bandura's social learning theory, and constitutional rights were implemented at the school by a group of 8<sup>th</sup> grade teachers. Since no evaluation had been conducted to examine the efficacy of this program, the purpose of this doctoral study was to examine the program's strengths, weaknesses, and impact on student behavior as well to recommend any needed changes. A mixed methods design was utilized including a formative and a summative evaluation component. Data for the formative component were collected and analyzed using descriptive statistics for teacher surveys ( $n = 9$ ) and open coding for individual teacher interviews ( $n = 3$ ). Data for the summative component were collected and analyzed using a Chi-Square Test of Independence to examine the change in the distribution (pre to post program), of students participating in JD ( $n=148$ ) along the Kohlberg levels of social development scale. This instrument consist of forced-choice items designed to measure the extent to which the student has reached a level of full autonomy so they are intrinsically motivated to abide by the rules without the guidance of a teacher. Findings revealed that the intervention had a positive impact on student behavior, both from the teacher perspective and from evidence of student growth on the social development scale. Implications for positive social change that should follow program reform included: (a) improved student behaviors, and (b) fewer behavioral referrals. The findings along with recommendations for change were presented to school leaders in the form of an executive summary.

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## Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my grandparents, Adam and Pearl Tanner. Thank you for believing in me, loving me unconditionally and always making me feel welcome and safe in your home. Although you are no longer here with me, you will forever be in my heart.

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## Section 1: The Problem

### **Introduction**

Teachers face many behavioral challenges in their classrooms. Educational research demonstrates that poor student behaviors are increasingly becoming a challenge to school districts. For example, a 2005 national survey found that 44% of teachers who left the profession cited student behavior as a reason for leaving (Cregor, 2008). A 2012 study of teacher attrition indicated that teachers tend to leave the profession as a result of a lack of confidence in their ability to handle classroom management issues that may arise (Swanson, 2012). Many schools struggle with a high rate of disciplinary referrals, suspensions, and expulsions (Martens, 2013). Poor behavior choices generate obstacles that may interfere with a positive school climate and a productive learning environment (Sugai, 2009). Disciplinary actions often result in classroom disruptions that keep teachers from teaching and students from learning (Georgia Department of Education, 2012).

The learning environment is disrupted when poor behaviors are displayed in the classroom. Teachers become frustrated when classroom time is interrupted by inappropriate behaviors (Sugai, 2008). Research by Marzano and Pickering (2003) supports the idea that teachers have the responsibility of creating and maintaining an environment that supports student learning. Discipline procedures are designed to deter all students from making poor choices; the punishment, however, often does not place emphasis on the behavior or encourage positive behavior (Smith, 2009).

### **Definition of the Problem**

For this project study, I conducted a program evaluation of a behavior intervention program at a middle school located in central Georgia. Smith Middle School had no evaluation plan in place to determine if a behavior intervention program was working to improve student behavior. No measures were in place to assess the progress of student behavior or consult teachers on their perceptions of the program. Without an improvement in student behaviors, the school faced a continued negative impact on the school climate score of the College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) measurement of accountability.

Starting in the 2012-2013 school year, the CCRPI replaced Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in the state of Georgia (Georgia Department of Education, 2013). The CCRPI indicators include measures of academic performance, student attendance and stakeholder perceptions of the school climate. Specifically, CCRPI holds schools accountable for creating a positive learning environment where a positive behavior plan is in place. Schools are awarded points based on the positive behavior intervention programs that they have in place. Because the school climate category was recently added as a measure of progress, many school systems in Georgia are in the process of searching for a positive behavior intervention program that meets their specific needs. The data suggest that Georgia schools are in need of a behavior program that works to improve student behavior. Results from the most recent data from the Georgia Student Health Survey indicate that 28% of Georgia students in grades 6-12 somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with the statement: “The behaviors in my classroom allow the teacher

to teach so I can learn” (Georgia Department of Education, 2012), The same survey found that 23% of Georgia students in grades 6-12 somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with the statement: “School is a place at which I feel safe”(Georgia Department of Education, 2012). These results indicate that poor student behavior is a problem in Georgia schools.

For the years 2010-2013, Smith Middle School has had the highest number of discipline referrals that result in hearings in their school district (Georgia Department of Education, 2013). For the past four years a minimum of 24% of the school’s population has received at least one office referral (Georgia Department of Education, 2013). Ninety-four percent of the referrals fall under the category of section 1 violations. Section one violations are not violent or aggressive; yet they still interfere with the learning environment (Georgia Department of Education, 2013). Referrals in the category of theft, a section 2 violation, have tripled in the last four years at this site (Georgia Department of Education, 2013).

During this study, the Central Georgia Middle School had two behavior plans in place. One plan is reactive, and the second, Judicious Discipline (JD), is proactive. For the reactive plan, students progress through a four-step process before an office referral is submitted. Step one is defined as a warning. Students are asked to sign a behavior form to acknowledge they have received a step for a violating school rules. When students are issued a second step, they are asked to sign a behavior form acknowledging they have violated school rules, and a parent or guardian is contacted by e-mail or by phone. After step three, students are again asked to sign a behavior form of acknowledgement, and



parents are requested to attend a conference with teachers and their child. After a fourth and final step is applied, students are, again, asked to sign a form acknowledging they violated school rules, and once again, the parent or guardian is contacted by e-mail or by phone. Finally an office referral is written, and a school administrator disciplines the student in the way the administration sees fit. The school has followed this reactive punishment plan since it opened in 2009.

The punishment the administrators assign after teachers apply the four-step behavior plan usually results in an in-school suspension (ISS). While in ISS, students sit quietly for the entire school day in cubicles in which they are expected to complete classroom work. The students are not allowed to have contact with anyone but the ISS teacher. The solitary environment of ISS is designed to be an unpleasant experience that students do not want to repeat. ISS is reactive punishment to motivate students to correct their behavior. The four-step plan has been in place for 5 years, but a program evaluation has not been conducted to determine if the plan is working to deter poor behavior. The four-step plan is not considered a positive behavior reinforcement program, which Georgia requires for their school accountability program.

As required by the CCRPI measurement of accountability, a portion of Smith Middle School began piloting JD, a positive behavior program, at the beginning of the 2013-2014 school year. JD is considered a positive behavior reinforcement program, and qualifies the school for points under the Georgia CCRPI measurement of accountability program (Gathercoal, 2004). The teachers were granted permission from the school's principal to continue with professional development in an effort to implement the

program. Nine eighth grade teachers read the book *JD* by Forrest Gathercoal to gain knowledge on the theoretical foundations and practices of the program. JD is proactive, in contrast to the reactive four-step program the school has used for the past five years (Gathercoal, 2004). JD is a democratic classroom management style in which teachers educate students to respect the rights of others. JD is based on the United States Bill of Rights and is designed to prevent poor student behavior by teaching students that they have specific rights and responsibilities. Part of their responsibilities is to be a member of a school environment in which all students feel safe and have an opportunity to learn. The simple question, “Is this the right time, right place, right manner?” is often used by teachers to encourage students to think about their actions. This simple question is a part of the program as well as a reminder that their behaviors are infringing on the rights of other students. If the question does not redirect the student behavior, the teacher has a short one-on-one conference with the student to remind them of their rights and their responsibilities to their fellow students/citizens.

This style of classroom management is proactive as it places responsibility directly on the student and gives them a chance to redirect poor behavior before it results in punishment. Students are taken through teacher-guided lessons for JD before it starts so they have a clear understanding of the structure, expectations, and purpose of the program.

The specific problem that this project study addressed was that Smith Middle School had no evaluation plan in place to determine if JD was working to improve student behavior. If the program was not working, student behavior may not improve and

the school may have scored poorly on the school climate section of the CCRPI measurement of accountability.

The stakeholders in the behavior program did not have an efficient method in place for gathering, analyzing, and applying new data; hence, the behavior team was lacking data to guide them in making changes as the JD program progressed. According to Creswell (2012), the purpose of a program evaluation is to collect data to identify strengths and weaknesses in program and to determine the overall effectiveness in meeting program goals and objectives.

### **Rationale**

#### **Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level**

The purpose of this project study was to conduct a program evaluation to collect data and to help determine what components of JD were working to improve student behavior and what changes were needed. In addition to the issues stated above, the Georgia Department of Education Student Health Survey indicated that 15% of the middle school students in the district disagreed with the statement “My school sets clear rules for behaviors” and 43% disagreed that “Students are frequently recognized for their good behavior” (Georgia Department of Education, 2012). The percentage of students who disagree with the above statements is higher at the district level than at the state level which indicates that the district has a greater problem with behavior issues than the overall state does. The data are evidence that the targeted middle school has a higher number of discipline problems than other middle schools within the district and state.

The goal of Smith Middle School was to improve student behavior while fostering a positive learning environment. The approach that Smith Middle School used to reach this goal is JD. This school lacked an evaluation method to determine if JD was working to improve student behavior. Program evaluations provide school leaders with the knowledge they need to determine if program goals are being met (Scriven, 1967).

The JD program was implemented to improve student behavior as well as assist schools in scoring favorably on the school climate section of the CCRPI measurement of accountability. This study was developed to provide school leaders with the knowledge they needed to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the program and determine if the program was working to help the school achieve its goals for improved student behavior. The program evaluation was implemented to provide data to help determine if the program was working to improve student behavior. The implementation of a program evaluation at Smith Middle School served as an example to other schools in the district that were searching for a method to measure the impact of various intervention programs.

The program evaluation provided school administrators with the data and feedback they needed to make changes in components that were not working to foster positive student behavior. Making improvements to a program is one step administrators can take to ensure their students and faculty have the support they need to make a program function to reach the established goals. Based on the findings from this evaluation study, an executive summary report was created with recommendations to guide school leaders in making adjustments to reach their goal of improved student behavior.

### **Evidence of the Problem from the Professional Literature**

Program evaluations are used to evaluate programs, to diagnose their value, and to make suggestions for changes that lead to improvements and desired results (Lodico, Spalding & Voegtle, 2010). Researchers agree that program evaluation is necessary for schools that strive to improve through the implementation of new as well as existing initiatives (Creswell, 2012; Wiles, 2009). Program evaluations examine the effectiveness of the program's strategies for the target population to determine if they are working for for the target population (Gurau & Drillon, 2009).

Due to the growing list of accountability measures for schools, and the increasing demands to meet the needs of a diverse student population, program evaluations are more necessary than ever (Slavin, 2008). For this study, a program evaluation was necessary to determine if the newly implemented interventions were working to improve student behavior. Teachers, administrators, and district personal all agree that data- driven program evaluations are needed to guide school improvement plans (Love, 2009).

Many schools continue to make decisions and change their school improvement plan without utilizing program evaluations (Chatterji, 2008; Slavin, 2008). Research shows that program initiatives without evaluation measures often produce unfavorable results (Slavin, 2008). If no evaluation system is in place, stakeholders must rely solely on quantitative data such as the number of office referrals to determine if a program is effective (Fretheling-Westat, 2010). While the number of office referrals is helpful in comparing year-to-year progress, it does not provide any information for the overall value of the program (United States General Accounting Office, 1998). The qualitative

measurements used in program evaluations can help program administrators understand why the initiative is or is not working. Evaluations provide specific information that program administrators need to guide changes in the program.

Researchers suggest several reasons why program evaluations are not utilized. Schools at the local level often do not have the time or resources to conduct evaluations (Creswell, 2012). In addition, some schools lack the resources needed to collect and analyze data as well as lack staff members who know how to conduct program evaluations (Wiles, 2009). When schools fail to embrace program evaluations to guide their decision making, they often fail to meet the goals of their school improvement plan (Love, 2009).

Schools that properly utilize program evaluations often reach the goals in their school improvement plan (Ross, 2010). The program evaluations provide data that drives policy and helps the school administrators and leadership teams make informed decisions to revise the school improvement plan when needed (Marzano, Pickering & Pollock, 2001). In the case of the local site, without a program evaluation plan in place for JD, the school will not know if the program is improving student behavior. Teachers will lack the data needed to guide changes to the program. As a result, the initiative to improve student behavior is at risk of failing.

### **Definitions**

*Behavior Form:* A pre-made fill in the blank document that staff members fill out and a student signs to acknowledge inappropriate behavior has taken place.

*College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI):* A comprehensive school improvement, accountability, and communication platform for all educational stakeholders that will promote college and career readiness for all Georgia public school students (Georgia Department of Education, 2013).

*Disruptive behavior:* Behavior that interferes with the learning environment.

*Georgia Criterion Referenced Competency Test (GCRCT)* is a mandated test that measures student mastery in the state content standards in reading, English/language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies (Georgia Department of Education 2013).

*Impact:* A significant strong influence or effect.

*Judicious Discipline (JD):* JD program is aimed to improve student behavior. It is a classroom management approach that teachers use; JD is based on the combined practices of professional ethics, educational commitment, and student constitutional rights and responsibilities. JD is designed to decrease the number of classroom disruptions and office referrals, improve the relationship between teachers and students, and increase student awareness about their rights and responsibilities for living and learning in a democratic society (Gathercoal, 2004).

*Office Referral Form:* An office referral is an electronic form that is completed and submitted to an administrator by a school staff member in an effort to describe the inappropriate behavior a student has displayed.

*PBIS:* An informational framework that guides decision making and implementation of the best evidence-based academic and behavioral practices for

improving important academic and behavior outcomes for all students (Oregon Department of Education, 2010).

### **Significance**

This study added to the existing body of research on the effectiveness of program evaluations to measure the impact of a behavior intervention program designed to improve student behavior. Improving disruptive classroom behavior allows teachers to teach and students to learn (Georgia Department of Education, 2012). Finding a program that works to accomplish this task is essential for the creation of safe and successful schools. The findings from this program evaluation gave teachers and administrators the knowledge they needed to refine the newly implemented behavior program so that student behavior will improve and optimal learning can occur.

Only a few schools in the Central Georgia school district have implemented a positive behavior intervention program. At the time of this study, Smith Middle School was the only school to implement JD at the district or state level. A program evaluation provided the data needed to help determine the impact of the JD program on student behavior. The study has resulted in recommendations for changes in the current use of the JD program. The school administrators may opt to share their experience and results of their program evaluation in an attempt to influence positive behavior changes and the use of program evaluations at the district and state levels. JD may be the PBIS program that many schools in the state of Georgia are seeking to help facilitate a positive change in student behaviors and program evaluation may be the method they use to measure the progress of the program. In addition, JD may be instrumental in helping schools meet the



accountability requirements of the CCRPI measurement instrument that is used in the state of Georgia.

### **Evaluation Questions**

One of the major problems that teachers face is teaching students who exhibit poor behavior. For the past three years, Smith Middle School ranked number one in the district for the number of referrals that resulted in hearings. For the past four years, 24% of the school's population received at least one office referral. Most of the office referrals were considered problematic, although most were minor offenses.

This mixed-methods evaluation examined teacher perceptions of student behavior as well as perceptions and satisfaction levels with the newly implemented behavior intervention program in Smith Middle School. This study also examined the extent to which the program influenced students' social development.

The following overarching question was used to guide this study: How and in what ways does the JD program contribute to changes in student behavior? The four sub-questions are given below.

#### **Formative Evaluation Questions**

1. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the program from the teacher's perspective?
2. What are the teacher's recommendations for improving the program?
3. From the teachers' perspective, does JD decrease student discipline problems?

#### **Summative Evaluation Questions**

4. In what ways has the program changed student social development?

Conducting this program evaluation provided program administrators with the strengths and weaknesses of JD as well as ways in which the program can be improved from the teacher's perspective. Further it provided summative results that indicated the extent to which the JD program helped to increase positive student behavior. Results of this study will be used to help the administrative team make improvements and adjustments to JD for the purpose of improving student behavior.

### **Review of the Literature**

A variety of literature was reviewed in an effort to understand the problem of improving student behavior through the use of a positive intervention program and the need to evaluate the effectiveness of that program. I begin the review with the theoretical foundations and the justification for positive behavior interventions. I then move on to synthesize the literature on the behavior challenges that many schools currently face. I continue with an examination of literature on the need for program evaluation in schools and end with a synthesis of the most current research literature on JD and other behavior programs that utilize PBS.

The *ERIC*, *Proquest*, and *EbscoHost* databases were utilized to retrieve resources for this literature review. The search terms that were used included: *JD*, *democratic discipline*, *positive behavior intervention program*, *program evaluation*, *school safety*, *school culture*, *student behavior*, and *middle school*.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Behavior intervention support programs such as JD are based on Kohlberg's (1976) six stages of moral development and Bandura's (1977) social learning theory.

Kohlberg described six stages of moral development which are: Stage 1, punishment; Stage 2, rewards; Stage 3, good boy/ good girl; Stage 4, law and order; Stage 5, social contract theory; and stage 6, universal ethical principles. In Stage 1, rules are strictly obeyed to avoid punishment. Moral action is necessary to avoid punishment. During Stage 2, rules are obeyed for personal gain, like a reward for doing the right thing, rather than focusing on the punishment for committing poor actions. In Stage 3, rules are followed in order to maintain good relationships and to gain the approval of others. The approval of being a good boy/good girl is highly desired. During Stage 4, rules are obeyed to maintain social order; people tend to look at society as a whole for acceptable guidelines for personal behavior. The rules in Stage 4 are viewed as inflexible and unchangeable. Laws are accepted, obeyed, and never questioned. Being good means accepting authority and doing one's duty. Stage 5 recognizes that individuals have different values and opinions; rules are social agreements of a democracy that can be changed if they infringe on the rights of others. During Stage 6, moral action is internal and may or may not be in agreement with public opinion or society's laws. Moral reasoning is based on ethics and one's inner conscience. Morality is based on principles that transcend mutual benefit.

The first four stages of Kohlberg's (1976) moral development theory are extrinsic because they seek the approval of others. The goal of JD is to move students to Stage 5 where motivation for behavior is intrinsic. At this point, they learn to make responsible decisions, not for rewards, but because it is the right action to take.

Bandura's (1997) social learning theory examines how social influences impact human behavior and learning while applied learning theory is based on the theory of behaviorism (Miramontes, Marchant, Heath, Ficher, 2011). Both are connected to JD because of its goal to create a positive school culture where positive behavior is modeled and imitated.

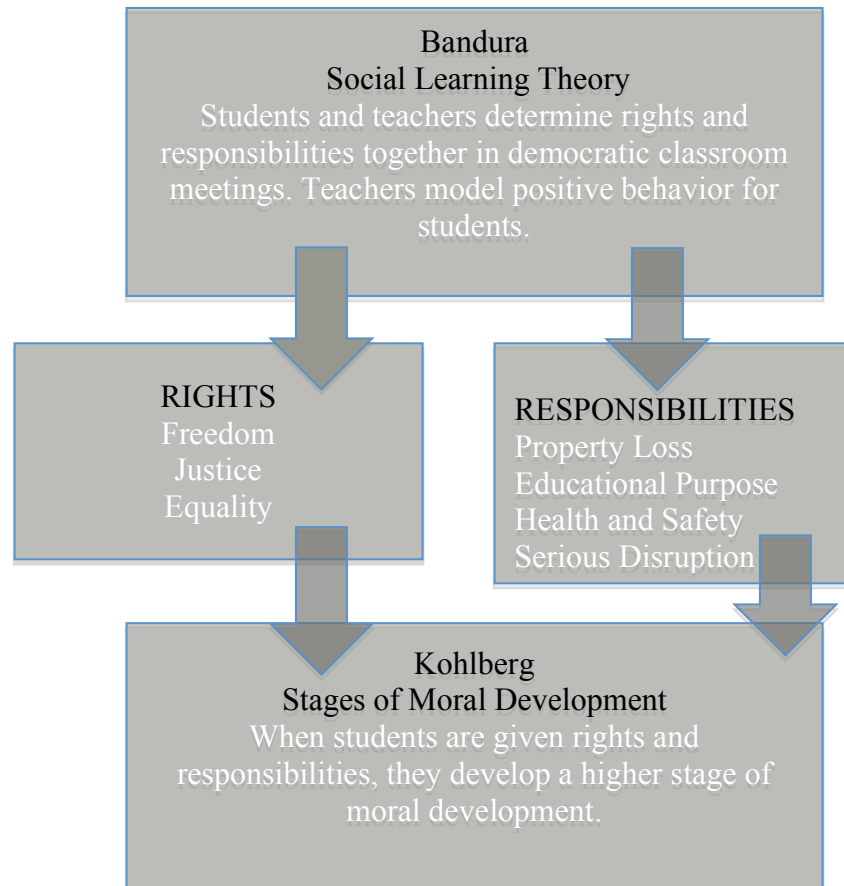
For example, social learning theory states that children imitate behavior they observe in other people. Teachers should strive to create a positive classroom environment and one way to accomplish this goal is to model the positive behaviors they desire their students to imitate. Fleming and Younger (2012) suggest that a positive classroom environment equals positive academic results.

JD views classroom relationships as a democratic society and then models interventions to cause intrinsic change in the unwanted behaviors of society members. JD is a type of positive behavior intervention that works to promote positive change in behavior as well as support academic competence (Sullivan, Long & Kucera, 2011). It is designed to produce intrinsic and social awareness for all students, not just those with a history of poor behavior (PBIS.org, 2013).

In order for the intrinsic, social, and moral development to take place, like in Kohlberg's Stage 5 of moral development, students must be given responsibilities and individual rights (Gathercoal, 2004). Other research by Gathercoal (2002) explains that classroom meetings in which students in a democratic classroom develop and agree on rules as a group provide students with a clear, agreed upon list of rights and responsibilities. The discussion includes a process of how things will be handled when

the classroom members act irresponsibly. During classroom meetings, teachers take on the role of facilitator and role model to guide students as they determine the rights and responsibilities for classroom members.

Gathercoal (2004) expresses the importance of teachers' modeling and following the rights and responsibilities that are consistent with their professional responsibilities. Teachers must be good role models in following through with the roles and responsibilities that have been given to them professionally. Not doing so results in unprofessional behavior and a violation of the human rights of the students. Figure 1 shows how Bandura's social learning theory (1995) and Kohlberg's stages of moral development are part of the framework for JD. Banduras' learning theory (2006) states that students will mimic behaviors practiced by their teachers. Teachers and students who participate in JD hold classroom meetings in which they agree to a list of rules and acceptable behaviors that all class members should follow. All of the rules fall under the rights and responsibilities. Teachers model the rules and remind students they need to adhere to the agreement by asking, "Are you doing the right thing, at the right time, and in the right manner?" This requires the students to reflect and correct inappropriate behavior. In theory, the students will progress on Kohlberg's levels of social development until they reach a level of full autonomy so that they are intrinsically motivated to abide by the rules without the guidance of a teacher.



*Figure 1.* Framework For Judicious Discipline

### **Discipline Problems in Schools**

Schools face extreme accountability and therefore must take action to maximize student achievement. One of the consequences of poor behavior is that it can have a negative impact on student achievement and school climate (Utley & Obiakor, 2012). Communicating and modeling appropriate behavior for students can change poor behavior. Students with the most severe behavior issues require small group or one-on-one attention to influence change for their specific behavior (McClellan & Grey, 2012).

Reynolds (2012) suggested that discipline issues cause additional anxiety, irritation, and stress on troubled students, which can only exacerbate school difficulties.

Reynolds concluded that the stress of the students in North Carolina could be reduced with the implementation of a positive behavior intervention program. Discipline problems in schools have been shown to have a negative affect on the learning environment and effect student achievement. For example, negative behavior may prohibit students from focusing on the instruction they need to be successful in school (Oregon Department of Education, 2010). In order to maximize student learning, inappropriate behaviors must be discouraged.

Administrators and teachers struggle with how to handle the disruptive students who can have a negative impact on the learning environment and school culture (Marchant et al., 2009). Siegel (2008) found that teachers felt as if they spent too much time managing classroom behavior, which took away from instructional time. Teachers stated that their lessons were interrupted by one or two disruptive students, requiring them to take their attention away from the students who were engaged in learning. Teachers viewed these actions as having a negative impact on student achievement. For several years, Smith Middle School has failed to make AYP under the federal No Child Left Behind Act (2012). Teachers and parents alike feel that low student achievement can be attributed to a lack of common expectations for student behavior (Shah, 2012).

According to Marchant et al. (2000), school administrators face the challenge of an increasing number of referrals, suspensions, and expulsions. In many cases, the poor behavior is attributed to the absence of positive role models (Marchant et al., 2009) within families as well as the community. In addition, poor behavior is often influenced

by outside sources such as movies, music videos, and television shows that contain inappropriate actions and language (Moyer-Guse & Nabi 2010).

Referrals, suspensions, and expulsions often result in students being removed from the learning environment of the classroom. If left in the classroom, the disruptive students negatively impact the ability of other students to learn. If removed from the classroom, the disruptive students no longer get the instruction they need in order to maximize their learning. In both cases, the learning environment is being disrupted.

Researchers have recognized the behavioral challenges teachers and administrators face in schools. Traditionally, Smith Middle School has addressed behavior issues with a reactive response. Evidence suggests that reactive and punitive practices reinforce antisocial behavior and may lead to increased aggression (Marchant, Christensen, Womack, Conley, & Fisher, 2010). Reactive responses include suspensions and expulsions after the behavior has taken place. Muscott, Mann, Benjamin, and Gately (2004) argued that the punishment does not deter future behavior issues but can encourage them. For example, students who skip school and are suspended get what they want (Swartos, 2012). Stout (2005) suggested that reactive strategies such as punishment after the negative takes place have little to no impact on behavior without reteaching or positive correction. Positive behavior needs to be modeled by teachers and administrators in order for students to feel safe in school and learn the type of behavior that is acceptable in a school setting.

McAdams Foster, Dotson-Blake, and Brendel (2009) suggested that children learn to manage their personal negative and positive behaviors through their interactions with



parents and guardians. If a child experiences poor behaviors modeled by adults such as lying, stealing, aggression, criminal acts, physical cruelty, defiance, and truancy, they will be more likely to practice the same behaviors. Negative interactions with adults will influence the child to display similar behaviors.

School personnel are then faced with the challenge of how to address this behavior, so that it does not interfere with student learning. McAdams Foster, Dotson-Blake, and Brendel (2009) suggested school-based strategies such as positive behavior intervention programs for working with both aggressive students and their families. Gourneau (2012) found that children who had been exposed to poor behavior towards themselves and others often mimic this same behavior. For instance, Gourneau (2012) found that school bullies have often been the victims of other bullies.

Children have the need to feel accepted and will mimic the behavior they deem acceptable whether it is positive or negative (Olthof & Goossens, 2008). Positive behavior must be modeled for children in order for them to deem it as acceptable. Varjas, Henrich, and Myers (2009) found that students who witness or feel the effects of negative behavior at school do not feel safe at school. If students do not feel safe at school, it may have a negative impact on their academic performance. Laursen (2011) revealed that behavior problems in school stem from the lack of positive role models that many families and communities lack. Laursen suggested that the solution is teaching students how to build positive peer relationships that focus on solving problems together and helping one another. Positive behavior leads to relationships, which provide children with a safe learning environment in which they can be socially and academically successful

(Laursen, 2011). Teachers and administrators must have discipline programs in place that foster positive relationships, provide school safety, and encourage all students to learn to their highest potential.

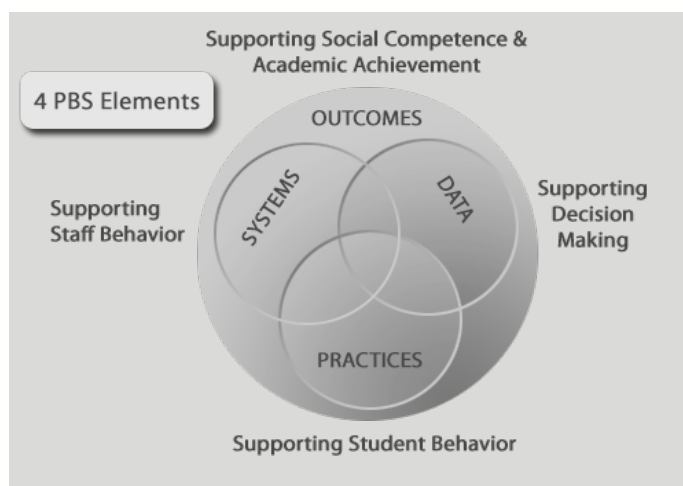
Discipline issues can result in major challenges for schools. For example, a relationship among discipline, school safety, and student achievement exists (Marchant et al. 2009). Students who are discipline problems jeopardize their learning as well as the learning of their peers. When poor behavior choices are made, teachers must stop instruction to address the behavior problem. Furthermore, their peers are distracted from the goals and objectives for the day. The students who exhibit poor behavior are often removed from the classroom and left with no classroom instruction. According to Cregor (2008), school exclusion is ineffective at improving student behavior. When students are not in school, their learning decreases. The discipline problems have caused schools to search for effective methods for promoting and maintaining positive behavior (Hoyle, Marshall, & Yell, 2011).

### **Positive Behavior Intervention Support**

According to the U.S. Department of Education (2000), positive behavior intervention support does not refer to one specific program. Instead, PBIS is a generic term that describes a set of strategies and interventions designed to improve behavior by implementing non-punitive and proactive techniques. PBIS is a term that is an umbrella for numerous behavioral programs. The common goal for all PBIS programs is to foster a positive change in behavior. When implemented correctly, positive behavior intervention support has the potential to improve school climate, reduce negative behavior, strengthen

responsible behavior, and increase academically engaged time in the classroom (Sprick, 2006).

Figure 2 below shows the four components of PBIS and how schools use them to create a behavior plan that will positively impact student behavior. Outcomes are the behavior goals that administrators, teachers, and students strive to achieve. Practices are the strategies that teachers use to help students reach their goals. Data provides information that determines if the strategies are working or if they need to be altered. Systems are supports like the school district, school employees, administration, and families who work together to ensure PBIS programs such as JD are effective.



*Figure 2.* Four PBIS Elements (OSEP Technical Assistance Center on PBIS, 2014)

A PBIS approach to behavior change incorporates proactive instead of reactive strategies in an effort to prevent poor behavior before it occurs. It includes reinforcing positive behavior and classroom lessons that teach students how to act appropriately (Sprick, 1981). PBIS programs are implemented over time and require consistency. Marchant, et al., (2009) suggest that the most effective way of fostering positive change

in student behavior is to determine what specific behaviors need to be addressed and then implement strategies specifically directed at those behaviors. Strategies for a successful implementation of PBIS include developing and establishing a school-wide proactive discipline policy that creates appropriate behavior targets for all students.(Marchant, 2009). According to Sprick, Knight, Reinke, and McKale, (2007), the common characteristics shared by programs under the PBIS umbrella include the following:

- All stakeholders share values, beliefs, vision, mission, and purpose that shape the climate and culture of the school/classroom.
- Expectations for learning and behavior are clearly defined.
- Everyone is treated with respect.
- Educators help the student to feel a part of something worthwhile.
- Staff members place a strong emphasis on appropriate behaviors exhibited by students while inappropriate behavior is an opportunity to provide calm correction.
- Administration is actively involved in the behavioral intervention process.

In 2004, Congress reauthorized the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA). Specifically, the law added language indicative of the success of PBIS programs. Just as the 1997 IDEA law did, IDEA 2004 encouraged all educators to consider “positive behavioral interventions, strategies, and supports.” IDEA 2004 also encourages positive academic experiences and social learning opportunities to address student behavior when it interferes with the learning process. After Congress passed

IDEA, more schools began to implement PBIS programs (National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance 2011). Researchers consistently found positive outcomes such as improved student behavior and increased student learning as a result of the PBIS implementation (Chapman & Hofweber, 2000; Colvin & Fernandez, 2000; Luiselli, Putnam, Handler, & Feinberg, 2005). School districts across the country have realized the importance of PBIS programs in positively transforming school climates.

Schools throughout the United States are using PBIS as a proactive approach to discipline (Hoyle, Marshall & Yell, 2011). PBIS is designed to create a behavioral support system, allowing students to focus on learning while feeling successful and safe in school (Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports, 2010). PBIS seeks to understand inappropriate behavior and creates interventions to change the behavior (Diorio, 2011). Most agree that a proactive approach to behavior issues is needed in order to create a positive school culture that fosters academic achievement (Sugai, Horner & Gresham 2002). Smith Middle School needs a different approach to its behavior issues in order to reduce referrals and positively impact student behavior. The administration has suggested that implementing a PBIS program may assist their efforts to reduce behavior issues. Proactive approaches to behavior problems such as those used in PBIS programs are used to model and teach positive behaviors and to prevent challenging behaviors (Marchant et al., 2009). Swartos (2012) suggests that proactive approaches do not eliminate the need for expulsions and suspensions but may reduce their numbers. JD is one of the many programs that fall under the PBIS umbrella.

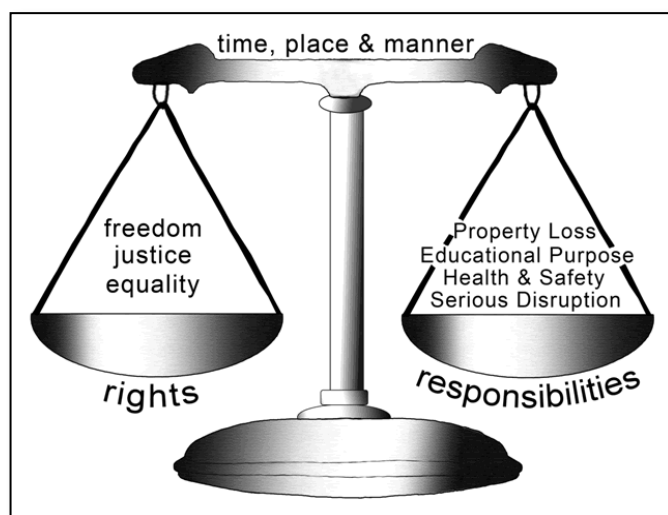
## **Judicious Discipline**

Although many studies can be found on PBIS, specific studies for JD were difficult to locate for this literature review. The most notable researcher for JD is Forrest Gathercoal who wrote the book, *Judicious Discipline*, published as a fifth edition, in 2001. The book specifically explains the concepts and theoretical foundations on which JD was created. In addition, best practices for implementing the program is discussed along with indications of the difficulties and limitations the program participants may face.

The goal of JD is to create a working model for the rules and responsibilities students will face as they leave school and enter society (Gathercoal, 2001). JD educates students on their constitutional rights and teaches them to be responsible citizens. In the classroom, the society is composed of the students in the classroom (Landau, 1994). As a group, students create rules and assign responsibilities for their classroom society to follow. All students are expected to abide by the rules, treat others with respect, and use civility to solve the social problems of the classroom. The JD model balances human rights with the rights and interest of all of the students within the classroom. Gathercoal (2004) describes four compelling states of interest as the basis for all classroom rules. First of all in considering property loss or damage, students must not damage the property of school or their classmates. In return, they expect their personal property to be valued and not damaged just as in society. The second state of interest is legitimate educational purposes. Students have the right to receive an education. Educators will assist students in reaching their full academic achievements and students will put forth their best effort,

in order to obtain a quality education. The third state of interest is threat to health and safety. Students and teachers have a right to function in a safe working and learning environment that promotes physical and emotional well being. Students should not have to worry about being bullied with words or actions. Teachers and students should not have to be concerned with someone entering the school with a weapon or with the building not being a safe environment for learning to take place. The fourth state of interest is serious disruption of the educational process. School officials have the responsibility to deny rights that seriously disrupt learning or productive student activities. In short, any behavior that disrupts the learning environment is not acceptable. Teachers facilitate democratic classroom meetings where the students, as a society, create and agree on rules that are based on the four compelling states of interest (Landau, 1994). Teachers use guiding questions to guide students as they learn responsibility and how to function in a democratic classroom. The overall question the teacher poses to a student who is in violation of the rules is “ Is this the right time, place or manner for your behavior?” This prompt is designed to get students to think about and correct actions. A teacher student conversation occurs and responsibility is placed on the student to correct behavior. This proactive reaction is designed to help students develop autonomy as they learn responsibility and how to respect the rights of others. If students are taught about the need for balancing their rights with the rights of others, they understand the existence of a right time and place for displaying their individual rights. This is a proactive approach to discipline; it aims to prevent poor behavior before it occurs by teaching students the social skills needed to live and learn in a democratic society, such as a

classroom Gathercoal (2004). Figure 3 demonstrates the ten fundamental principles of JD. The left side of the scale displays the individual rights of freedom, justice, and equality. Responsibilities, displayed on the right side of the scale, represent the welfare of the school as a collective body. The bridge for connecting the two is the reflective practice of right time, right place, and right manner. These ten principles are the common language that schools need to practice in order to create a consistent language for implementing JD. Figure 3 below communicates the relationship between the democratic principles of the rights and responsibilities.



*Figure 3.* Judicious Discipline Model.

The literature review revealed several action research studies on JD that were designed to test the theoretical outcomes of implementing the behavior intervention program. The research was conducted in school districts scattered across the country. In all of the studies, the data were gathered by researchers using both quantitative and qualitative measures. The quantitative measure used in the JD studies was a questionnaire



created by the South Australian Department of Education (1980). The questionnaire was administered to students several times throughout the study. It was designed to measure the students' levels of social development as they progressed through the program. The theory was that JD would provide students with the knowledge and skills needed to develop social behaviors that were conducive to their environment. The ideal outcome would be for all students to reach stage four, autonomy, which represents students who are self-directed, are intrinsically motivated, respect the rights of others and take responsibility for their own learning. Qualitative measures, such as teacher and student interviews and observations, were used to gather additional data. The researchers found a positive correlation between the quantitative and qualitative data. This affirmed the results of the student questionnaire and allowed the researchers to make suggested changes to improve the programs that participated in the studies.

One such study for JD was conducted for fifth and sixth grade students in Mankota, Minnesota (Gathercoal & Nimmo, 2002). The researchers found that students advanced in their effort to become intrinsically motivated to do the right thing. Specifically, students, according to their teachers, were transformed into classroom citizens who took on the responsibility to make good decisions without threats or punitive measures from their teachers. They did the right thing because they wanted their actions to benefit, not harm their community (classroom). A five-year study at Kennedy Elementary followed the progress as they implemented JD (Gathercoal & Nimmo, 2001). The researchers found that through classroom meetings, students learned skills needed to deal with conflict resolution and ways to show respect for peers and teachers. For

example, teachers stated that students were easily redirected and corrected behavior when faced with the prompt “Is this the right time, right place or right manner?” Teachers as well as students utilized this prompt. According to the teachers who were interviewed, JD encouraged students to become more self-directed as well as guided them to take on responsibility for their behavior and learning. The documented perception from the teachers was mirrored by the quantitative data, which displayed a growth in the autonomy level from 28% to 59% for all students. Classroom disruptions decreased dramatically, and students behaved the same with or without a teacher present. Susan Hays-Zumbaris (1994) completed a study on JD in Oregon. One of the teachers observed stated that students learned self-management and how to take ownership for their own behavior. The study resulted in students taking more responsibility for their actions and therefore, becoming more productive citizens of the classroom society.

The benefits included teachers and students feeling less stressed and frustrated with the discipline process, which equates to a more productive learning environment (Hayes-Hayes, 1994). Additional benefits included students who respected and were respected by their peers as well as improved student behavior. Furthermore, students took on personal responsibility for their actions, and teachers gained a feeling of professionalism (Gathercoal & Nimmo, 2001). The cautions included the essential need for on going classroom meetings (Landau & Gathercoal, 2000). In classrooms where teachers did not spend time teaching the philosophy and language of JD, students did not show growth in their social development or level of autonomy. For example, teachers who conducted democratic classroom meetings experienced a 50% growth in the

autonomy level where those who failed to hold democratic classroom meetings experienced an 18% growth rate. Students of teachers who did not consistently use the common language of right time, right place, and right manner experienced little or no growth in social development.

The literature review found that JD, if implemented correctly, has a positive impact on reducing poor student behaviors. However, teachers' perceptions and participation in the implementation of JD is a key component to its success. The context of where and how the JD is implemented could impact its effectiveness and that is why a program evaluation is needed at Smith Middle School. Figure 4 below displays a plan for the implementation of JD. The first column represents a problem for many schools, which is the lack of a behavior intervention program to improve student behaviors. JD is implemented in an effort to solve this problem. The input represents the staff members and administrators who complete the professional development that is necessary to implement JD. The activities column represents the interventions and practices the staff members and administrators use to increase positive behavior. The outputs are the specific measurable results the program is expected to produce if implemented correctly. The outputs represent both quantitative and qualitative measures such as student surveys and teacher interviews. Finally, the outcomes are the desired effects that the school community expects to experience as a result of the implementation of JD. The expected results include improved student behaviors that will influence a positive school culture and encourage students realize their personal responsibilities as well as develop respect for the rights of others in their community.

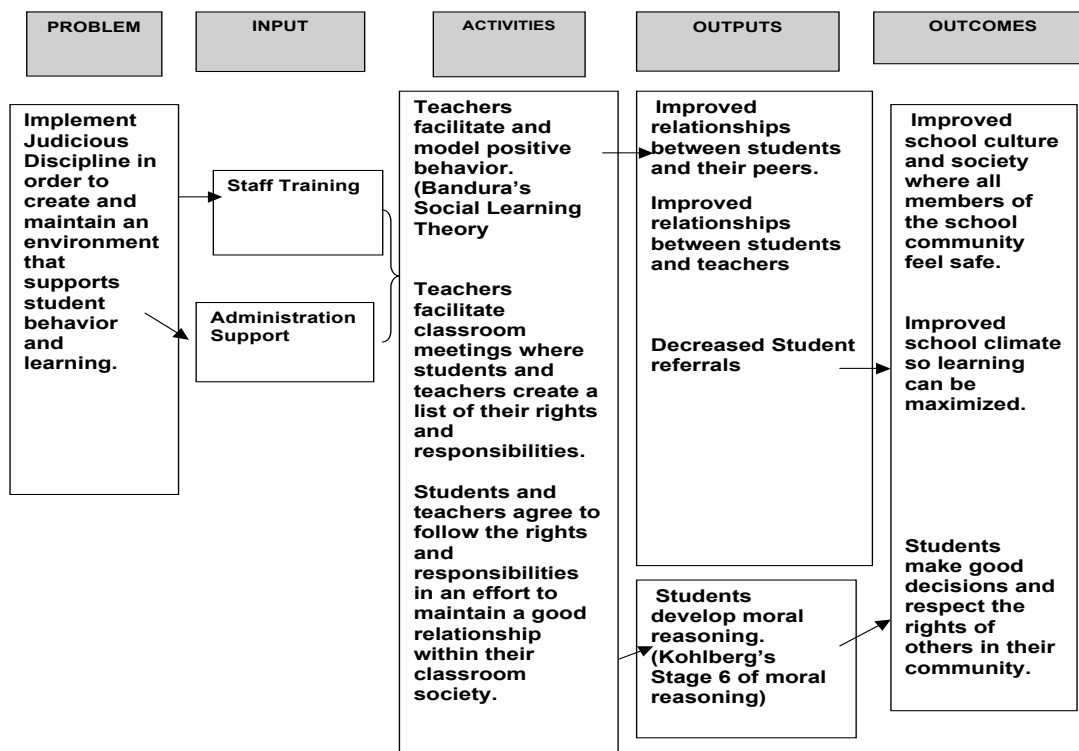


Figure 4. Logic Model for JD.

### The Necessity of Program Evaluation for Behavior Intervention Programs

A review of the literature revealed that systemic program evaluations are an essential component of school improvement (Cai, 2010). According to Lodico, Spaulding, and Voegtle (2010), program evaluations are used for decision-making where research is used to inform or increase understanding of a specific topic. The primary goal

of a program evaluation is to determine if an intervention is working and should continue and to identify areas for improvement (Fitz-Gibbons & Morris, 1987)

Three main benefits that program evaluation provides are school accountability to stakeholders, evaluation for development and evaluation for knowledge (Chelimsky, 1997). Stakeholders place a tremendous amount of importance on the assessment of educational outcomes (Praslova, 2010). Assessment is an on-going process used to monitor progress of outcomes (Allen, 2006). One such outcome is improving student behaviors through intervention programs. Students who display behavior problems need opportunities to demonstrate improvement in behaviors. Studies show that program evaluations have been used as an assessment to document the progression of desired outcomes in programs such as a behavior intervention (Latchet & Smith, 2005). For instance, a program evaluation study by Miramontes, Marchant, Heath and Fischer, (2011) was used to evaluate a statewide PBIS program in a western state. Program participants were invited to share their perspectives of the programs treatment goals, procedures and outcomes. The participants' feedback revealed several areas that needed improvement. The participants suggested that the amount of paper work the program required should be reduced. In addition, feedback suggested that strategies needed to be developed to improve the implementation and the adherence of the programs procedures. The evaluation identified problems and provided recommendations that will promote positive student behavior. Program evaluations provide feedback that is used to monitor the effectiveness of programs as well as guide stakeholders to make continuous adjustments. Researchers recognize that program evaluations are an effective assessment

tool to guide the improvement of programs that assist schools in meeting accountability measures (Lodico, Spaulding & Voegtler, 2010). For educational accountability measures, assessment refers to the collection and use of data to evaluate the learning goals (Ewell, 2001). Federal accountability officials suggest that program evaluations allow project administrators to take a step back to consider a gap in the existing program (Day-Miller & Easton, 2009). Program evaluations allow for assessment on multiple levels like classrooms, specific grade levels, individual schools, or an entire school district school (Bers, 2008). Multiple level assessments allow program administrators to identify gaps as well as make adjustments to eliminate the gaps. In addition, program evaluations assist decision makers in determining the value and impact of a program as well as empowering stakeholders to make efficient adjustments (Cook, 2010).

Stakeholders such as teachers and administrators use information that program evaluations provide to assess the quality of programs. Stakeholders, like parents, governmental agencies, business leaders and other organizations benefit from data that program evaluations provide. The aforementioned agencies desire evidence that schools are producing students who can succeed at post secondary institutions and in the workforce. Program evaluations provide the summative and formative data that stakeholders need to make informed decisions to drive changes that will assist schools in meeting desired outcomes and accountability requirements (Cook, Shadish, & Wong, 2008). These evaluations provide evidence that determines the strengths and weaknesses of a program (He, Rohr, Miller, Levin & Mercier, 2010). Program evaluations are an essential component to schools that are seeking data on the progression of the programs

they have in place. Program initiatives are generally more successful when driven by data rather than hunches (Day-Miller & Easton, 2009). When program evaluations are utilized, education initiatives are revised and more efficiently designed to reach intended audiences.

Program evaluations are essential in meeting current state and federal accountability measures. Successful schools are constantly evaluating their practices and making changes to improve their school. All schools should consistently gather data to determine what works and what does not work. Program evaluations determine the effectiveness of programs and help guide the decision-making process (Lodico, Spaulding & Voegtle, 2010). Based on data and feedback, administration can modify their practices to meet the needs of their students.

The use of a variety of program evaluations has been increasingly utilized since the 1930's (Hogan, 2007). Tyler (1935), Bloom (1956) and Taba (1962) helped to guide educational policy by encouraging the use of testing to measure student achievement (Goldie, 2006). Cronbach (1963) furthered the development of program evaluations by arguing that programs should be assessed to determine if they promoted their desired outcomes. The U.S. Department of Education has emphasized the use of program evaluations since the 1960's in an effort to improve education. In the current school accountability culture, program evaluations have specific functions that are based on the needs of the school (U. S. Department of Education, 2014).

## **Functions of a Program Evaluation**

According to Lodico et al. (2010), program evaluations have three key functions: collecting data, changing program practice, and providing a report with findings and recommendations. A program evaluation often collects two types of data: formative and summative. Formative data is collected and analyzed while the program is operating. This practice allows the program evaluator to give feedback and recommend changes while the program is in progress. Changing practice is at the heart of a program evaluation and happens more quickly than in traditional applied research. The evaluation and recommendations usually signifies the end of one cycle and the beginning of another to learn about the effectiveness of a program and guide decision-making (Brewer & DeLeon, 1986; Bennear & Coglianese 2004).

According to Lodico et al. (2010), formative data is used to improve the program that is being studied at the very moment it is being studied. Data is collected and reported back to the stakeholders as the program is taking place. Formative evaluations occur at multiple points while a program is taking place so that program administrators are informed how well the program is progressing and meeting the set goals (Grayson, 2012) Formative feedback is on-going feedback which serves to identify and react to major problems so they do not affect the program's progress (Bhola, 1990; Kealey, 2010). Formative evaluation reports also serve to identify areas of strength to ensure the program is progressing towards meeting the program's goals.

According to Lodico et al. (2010), the purpose of collecting summative data is to measure outcomes and to examine how those outcomes relate to the success of the



project. In most educational settings, summative data reporting usually takes place at the end of the school year when it is best to measure the impact of a program on the desired target (Kealey, 2010). Unlike formative evaluation, summative evaluation is not an ongoing process (Love, 2009). The evaluation report will provide data and recommendations for continuing or discontinuing the program based on the programs desired goals.

According to Lodico et al. (2010), program evaluations and research use the same methods to collect data. The difference is the purposeful and immediate speed at which a program evaluation can impact change. A program evaluation report can provide immediate formative data as well as long-term summative data. In both cases, the data can be used to re-design the project, so the desired efficiency and effectiveness are impacted whereas a research may take longer to influence change. Program evaluations are essential to behavior intervention programs because they help stakeholders to make decisions about the program to promote change in student behavior (Cai, 2010).

### **Hazards When Program Evaluations Do Not Exist**

The absence of an evaluation program means stakeholders must depend on quantitative data to drive their programs (Frethcling-Westat, 2010). Quantitative data alone does not provide a complete picture. Program evaluations require the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data, so a report can be created from both numerical data as well as from the perspective of the program participants. Program evaluations are essential for school leaders who seek to understand what is and what is not working in a program or initiative. Schools often attempt to measure program progress by trusting

their instincts or one set of data. A program evaluation provides perspective, evidence, and data that are needed to make good decisions. Without a program evaluation, projects may lack accurate information necessary for guidance and the program may have no measure for success. Lack of a program evaluation will prevent the identification of strengths and weaknesses. The three areas that may suffer when project evaluations are not conducted are the program participants, project improvement, and application of the program in other venues. With no evaluation in place, school leaders at Smith Middle School will not know if the program participants are benefiting or being harmed by the program.

### **Summary**

Educational research demonstrates that student behaviors have become a challenge for educators. A 2005 national survey communicated that 44% of teachers who left the profession cited student behavior as a reason for leaving (Cregor, 2008). Many schools struggle with a high rate of disciplinary referrals, suspensions, and expulsions (Marchant, Anderson, Caldarella, Fisher, Young & Young, 2009). Schools are challenged to implement a positive behavior intervention program that decreases poor behavior choices as well as generates a productive learning environment (Sugai, 2009). JD is one such behavior intervention program. Implementing a behavior program such as JD, does not guarantee its success. Schools need to invoke a project evaluation that will provide a variety of data that will guide the development of the program. The administrators at Smith Middle School implemented a program evaluation that provided them with the information they needed to make decisions about the direction of JD.

## Section 2: The Methodology

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this client centered program evaluation was to measure the effectiveness of the JD behavior intervention program at Smith Middle School. Data were analyzed and collected in two phases: formative and summative. Formative data, such as teacher perceptions and teacher interviews, were collected to examine the intervention, particularly with respect to which components were successful, and which components needed to be improved. The formative data were collected and analyzed for the purpose of informing project changes. Summative data utilized student social development surveys to determine ways in which the JD program contributed to changes in student behavior. The summative evaluation was conducted to examine the program's impact on student social development

In this section, I address the methodology used in this program evaluation. I justify the use of a mixed methods design based on the work of Stake (1980) and provide reasons for utilizing a client centered evaluation approach. In addition, in this section I provide a description of the local setting and sample as well as explains the data collection, data analysis, and the findings. Finally, I discuss the rights of the participants and the responsibilities of the researcher, and outline the limitations of this study.

### **Justification for Mixed Methods Design**

In this evaluation study, I used a mixed methods design which, according to Cresswell (2012), requires the exploration of data from qualitative and quantitative viewpoints. I used a mixed methods approach for this study to allow for integration of

both quantitative and qualitative data, which generated new information. Teacher interviews were conducted as a part of the formative phase, to collect qualitative data. Teacher surveys were utilized for quantitative data in the same phase. Quantitative data included student social development surveys, which were a part of the summative phase. A mixed methods approach leads to a deeper understanding of the problem under study by including a variety of data types (Lodico et al., 2010).

While quantitative data such as social development surveys, are acceptable for showing growth and progress in student behavior, the data do not provide a picture of the overall program and how it is implemented in a specific context. Qualitative evaluations, such as teacher interviews, are needed to comprehend why each component of the program performed as it did (Tashakkori & Teddie 2003). A mixed methods approach allows for triangulation of the data, which provides a clearer and deeper understanding of the study. This approach strengthens the study and provides a complete picture. Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, and Turner (2007) stated that mixed methods research is unique since it is based on qualitative and quantitative data. A mixed method approach recognizes the importance of both data types and combines them to create studies that include informative, complete, balanced, and useful research results.

Although the literature review for this study strongly suggests that PBIS programs have a positive impact on student achievement, this study dug deeper and focused on teachers' perceptions of JD and its impact on student behavior and school climate at the local school site. This study was a concurrent, mixed-methods design and as defined by.

Stake (1980), includes a client-centered approach, which is based on the client's perspective.

### **Client-Centered/Participant Program Evaluation**

I used a client-centered evaluation to assess the needs and concerns of the clients. In a client-centered evaluation, the client is considered a valuable resource and their participation in evaluating and refining the program is welcomed (Bloom & Britner, 2011). Participant evaluations provide an opportunity for all those associated with the program to have input (Royse, Thyer, Padgett, & Logan, 2006). Input from all participants allows them to share their needs as well as solutions to meet those needs (Green, 2011). Some argue that participant's evaluations are costly and too subjective, which may jeopardize the validity of the study (Cook, 2010). For this study, the teachers, the students, and the program administrators were the clients and participants.

My role as a researcher was to assist these clients while evaluating the JD program by identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the program. Based on the findings of the evaluation, a recommendations report was created that communicated the strengths and weaknesses of the JD behavior intervention program to the clients. The clients made changes they considered beneficial to the program.

During the first week of the study, nine teachers who were involved in teaching the JD program were invited to participate in an online survey. The purpose of the survey was to provide an opportunity for the clients to help evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of JD. At the end of the teacher survey, teachers were asked to type their email address in a box if they were interested in participating in an interview; three

teachers expressed interest. The purpose of the interview was to triangulate and expand upon the survey responses. While survey data from the teachers were being collected, three one-on-one teacher interviews were conducted. This client-centered program evaluation gave teachers an opportunity to help in evaluating and improving JD, which according to Mertens (2002), could highlight the essential role that they can play in developing, directing, and operating a successful program.

During the first week of the study, the school's assistant principal granted me access to the data routinely collected at Smith Middle School. This data included de-identified student responses to the student social development surveys. The student social development survey was administered to students both before and after they participated in JD. The survey was intended to measure the level of morality, as it reflects Kohlberg's principled behavior levels (South Australian Department of Education, 1980). A chi square test of independence was used to compare pre- to posttest changes in student social development. The teacher survey, teacher interviews, and student survey data were collected and analyzed concurrently and then integrated in order to generate credible, triangulated findings. The results were used to create an executive summary report that provided school leaders with the information needed to make informed decisions regarding the implementation, evaluation, and reformation of the JD behavior intervention program.

### **Participants**

The participants that took part in the formative component of this evaluation study were teachers at Smith Middle School in Central Georgia. Specifically, the participants

were limited to eighth grade teachers who were piloting a behavior program called JD. The community and student population for Smith Middle School is representative of and similar to many low socioeconomic schools across the United States. Forty-eight percent of the student population at this school receives free or reduced lunch (Georgia Department of Education, 2013).

It also represents schools across the country that struggle with student behavior problems. In the district, eleven middle schools of grades six through eight exist with approximately 900 students in each school. The majority of the students at Smith Middle School are White, making up 44% of the population, while the Black students make up 37% of the total population. The remainder of the population is made up of Hispanics, Asians, and multiracial students. The school has thirty-eight regular education teachers and twelve special education teachers. The administrative team is composed of one principal and three assistant principals. The average attendance rate for Smith Middle School is 95.13 %. However, 114 of the 990 students enrolled at the school have been absent for fifteen or more days, which indicates the school has a problem with chronic absenteeism. Of community residents twenty-five and older, approximately 81.7% (+- 5.6% margin of error) have completed high school, compared to the state average of 84% and the national average of 85%.

Of this same sampling group, 12.4% (+-6.3% margin of error) have earned a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to the state and national average of 28% (Towndesktop, 2013). The number of college graduates in this community is 16% below the state and national average. The population for this community has increased 48%

since 2005, due to the creation of numerous blue-collar jobs (United States Census, 2013).

Smith Middle School was selected for this study because of the implementation of a behavior intervention program called JD. For three consecutive years, 2010-2013, Smith Middle School had the highest number of referrals that resulted in hearings in the local school district (Georgia Department of Education, 2013). For the past four years, a minimum of 24% of the school's population received at least one office referral (Georgia Department of Education, 2013).

### **Population and Sample**

Nine of the 16 eighth grade teachers at Smith Middle School participated in JD. Following the guidelines of Lodico, et. al. (2010), these nine participants were invited to complete a survey as well as be interviewed by the researcher. Those who agreed to participate were informed of the purpose of the study as suggested by Creswell (2012), and allowed to review all notes collected during their individual interviews. All nine teachers implementing JD responded to the survey and three of these agreed to participate in a one-on-one interview. Summative data were obtained from 148 students who participated in the JD Program. However, since the school collected that data as part of ordinary school routines, these students were not considered participants in the study.

Purposive sampling was used for this study. Purposeful sampling identifies participants based on their specific knowledge of the phenomena being investigated (Lodico et al., 2010). The primary concern was to gain a deeper understanding and insight into the research problem (Merriam, 2009). The sample for this study was



teachers who participated in the positive behavior intervention program called JD at Smith Middle School. Participants who have experienced the program on a daily basis can share valuable perspectives since they have first hand knowledge of the program.

### **Justification for Participants**

In order for the teachers to provide valid information, they must have gained experience as an active participant in the JD program. Nine teachers completed the professional development for JD, and all nine participated in the implementation of the program. Each teacher brought a different perspective to the evaluation, which Stake (1980) suggested helps bring a deeper understanding of the program. Teacher input, which Amba (2005) suggested was an essential component in determining the value of JD. Because the participants had personal experience with JD, they were able to provide a detailed picture of the program by sharing their experience as a participant in the program (Stake, 1980). This client-centered evaluation documented the individual perceptions of the teacher participants and used the information to determine how the program could be improved (Stake, 1980). Consequently, their input was a key component to the creation of the executive summary that provides recommendations for improving the program.

### **Access to Participants**

Permission from the school principal as well as the school district was secured before the study began. Specifically, the principal signed a letter of cooperation agreeing to share data in addition to granting permission for research to be conducted at the school. A letter of approval was obtained from the district superintendent to conduct the research at the school. Data collection for this study did not begin until approval was granted from

the Institutional Review Board ([IRB] approval number: 612-312-1210) at Walden University. Once consent was granted from the IRB, I contacted the school's administration to inform them that I was ready to begin the data collection process. Once consent was secured from the principal, district, and IRB, I sent teachers a letter of consent/invitation via email, to participate in the study.

With permission from the district and school leadership, access to the teachers was gained by using the district email list of faculty and staff. Teachers who implemented JD were extended an invitation to participate in the study by completing an anonymous survey and participating in a confidential teacher interview. Specifically, a letter was sent via e-mail to invite teachers who implemented JD at Smith Middle School to participate in the study. The email included a letter of consent/invitation to participate that informed the participants of the purpose, time frame, and procedures of the study before data were collected. The email contained a direct link to the online teacher perception survey via Survey Monkey. Participants were informed that the survey would be open for one month.

### **Researcher-Participant Relationship**

I am a sixth grade teacher at Smith Middle School, the site of the research. I was not a participant of the JD program nor did I teach any of the students participating in the program. I have been a coworker of the participating teachers since the school opened in 2009. I held no supervisory authority over the participants, nor did I work directly with any teachers involved in this study. I informed the participants of the purpose, time frame and procedures of the study before data were collected. In my role as researcher, I

conducted a client-centered program evaluation of the implementation of JD by collecting, coding, and analyzing data from these JD program participants.

### **Protection of Participants**

Proper measures were taken to ensure all participants were protected. Data were reported collectively and all participants remained unidentified. Confidentiality and privacy of all participants was and continues to be of utmost importance. Permission to conduct the study was gained from the principal of the research school, the district superintendent, and the Walden IRB. The Walden IRB and the school district approved all procedures for research. A list of teachers who participated in JD was obtained from the school principal. A formal request was made to Smith Middle School to have access to de-identified student social development survey data. The names of all teachers in the study were and continue to be kept confidential.

I first contacted teachers who participated in the JD program via their work email address. The email contained a consent/invitation to participate document that disclosed the purpose study. The email also explained how the results of the study would be used to facilitate improvements to the JD program.

Teachers were informed through the consent/invitation to participate document that participation in the study was voluntary and that teachers would not be compensated for their participation in the survey or interview. I used implied consent for the survey portion of the study; therefore, I did not need to obtain a signature from each teacher. The teachers implied their consent to participate in the study by clicking on the link found in the consent/ invitation to participate document and completing the online survey. If the

teachers wanted to participate in the focus group interview, they informed me by leaving their email address in a designated space at the end of the survey. I then contacted the individuals to send an informed consent form to sign and to arrange a date and time for the interview.

The Student Social Development Survey was administered by the administration to the students who participated in JD as a part of the school's regular data collection practice. Students in this study were not considered participants. For the purpose of this study, they were considered stakeholders and clients. The principal granted access to the de-identified student survey responses as data for this study. Teachers were told that participation was voluntary and they were not pressured by me or other participants to take part. Participants were given opportunities to ask questions and to voice any concerns associated with the study.

A coding system was utilized to protect the privacy and confidentiality of the participants. Participant names were removed and replaced with identification numbers during the data collection and analysis process. All data and participant information were stored at my home on my personal computer in password-protected Microsoft® Office Word and Microsoft® Office Excel documents. Audio tape recordings of the individual interviews were stored in a file box under lock and key. All collected data will be securely stored for a minimum of 5 years with participant confidentiality protected at all times.

### **Data Collection**

I collected formative and summative data to determine the impact of JD on student behavior and to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the program from the teacher's perspective. Data was collected and analyzed in two phases. For the first phase, I collected formative data, via individual teacher interviews and surveys, late in the first year of the intervention for the purpose of informing project changes. Responses to the survey questions helped me to determine the teachers' level of satisfaction with JD. Surveys were chosen for the formative phase of the program evaluation since data can be gathered quickly and reliably and in a cost effective way (Adams & Cox, 2008). Interview questions were open ended, as recommended by Bogden and Biklen (2007), so I was able to gain a deeper understanding of the participant's experience with the program. During phase two, student surveys were used to collect summative data. The student survey data was gathered from pre and post student surveys administered by school administrators to measure changes in student social development over the school year. The data were analyzed, and the results were used to create an executive summary report that made recommendations and suggested changes for continuation of the program. As recommended by Plano-Clark and Creswell (2008) triangulation was used to gain a deeper understanding of the program and, therefore, the study. The findings of the study were placed in an executive summary report and were shared with the program administrators.

### **Instrumentation**

I used a variety of instruments were used to collect the data for this study. For the

formative evaluation components, I utilized teacher surveys with follow-up semi-structured teacher interviews. For the summative evaluation I included data from de-identified student surveys that were administered by the school administration.

### **Formative Evaluation Component**

I used a teacher survey and teacher interviews to address research question 1: What are the strengths and weaknesses of the program from the teacher perspective? The quantitative survey consisted of 17 likert type items and was completed by nine teachers. The survey I used allowed participants to rate statements based on a five-point likert scale: 1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Not Sure, 4-Agree, 5-Strongly Agree. Using this scale allowed me to determine the difference between how teachers responded to survey statements regarding the quality of the components of the JD program. Data from the teacher satisfaction survey were transformed so that this data could be compared to the individual teacher interview data. The merging of the qualitative and quantitative data allows for a mixed methods approach (Driscoll, Appiah-Yeboah, Salib, & Rupert, 2007). The teacher survey was adopted from one offered by The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Technical Assistance Center on PBIS (2012). The survey is published on the center's web site along with a suggestion for schools to adapt it to meet their needs (Appendix C). I utilized the survey in order to provide quantitative data that helped to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the program based on the perceptions of the program participants.

I conducted teacher interviews to explore evaluation question 2: What are the teachers' recommendations for improving the program? and evaluation question 3: From

the teachers' perspective, has JD decreased student discipline problems? When teachers completed the online survey, there was a place for them to indicate their interest in the interview portion of the study and provide their contact information. Three of the nine participants who responded to the teacher survey indicated they would like to participate in the interview process. After receiving notification from willing participants, a time and date were arranged to conduct the one-on-one interviews. All participants received a copy of the interview questions prior to participating in the interview. Teachers signed consent forms before the interviews began and were informed of the purpose and procedures of the study. Participants were made aware that the interview would be audio-recorded on a digital recorder. Teachers were asked to respond to the open-ended questions included in Appendix E. Open-ended questions as suggested by Adams and Cox, (2008); Kress and Shoffner (2007) allowed the researcher to acquire meaningful information about the needs of the teachers based upon the strengths and weaknesses of the program. Written responses were also recorded during the interview as advised by Quimby (2012) to prevent loss of data in the event that the recording device unexpectedly malfunctioned. The interviews were held in the conference room at the school before school hours. The interviews did not exceed forty-five minutes and were informal. To ensure validity, care was used, so the participants were able to determine the accuracy and credibility of their responses (Lodico et al. 2010). Throughout the one-on-one interviews, I restated the participant's responses to assure accuracy as I recorded their comments digitally and by hand written notes. I also asked participants to confirm their responses and correct any mistakes. Merriam suggests (2009) interview questions were clearly worded and stated so

the interviewee was not confused. I did not respond in agreement or disagreement to the interviewees' responses but remained neutral. The interviews provided the teachers with a chance to reflect and elaborate on their experience rather than having a limited response to a rating scale. They shared their perceptions and satisfaction levels for the various components of the JD program. Numbers identified participants in order to keep their identity confidential. The interview provided data for changes in student behavior and identified the strengths and weaknesses of JD. The teachers' responses provided guidance that lead to suggestions and possible changes being made, so the program is more effective at improving student behavior.

### **Summative Evaluation Component**

The student survey is included in appendix D and was used to address evaluation question 4: In what ways has the JD program changed student social development? This survey was developed by *The Social Development Group*, Research Branch of the South Australian Department of Education and has been used by Gathercoal and Nimmo (2002) in other research studies that examined the efficacy of JD. The social development survey differentiates between the power and effect of relationships by asking participants a series of questions. The survey uses students' responses to eight true/false questions to determine their placement of development in one of four possible stages of social behavior development: dependent, rebellion, cohesion, and autonomy. Each stage is described below:

**Stage 1 Dependence.** Students are considered dependent if they are submissive and do what the teacher says. The students usually interact with the teachers and not other



students. Very little disruptive behavior occurs. Motivation is extrinsic. Students desire approval and praise from teachers; students have a fear of punishment.

**Stage 2 Rebellion.** Students test and challenge the teacher. The class contains two groups: One that opposes the teacher and one that seeks to maintain dependent group behavior. The classroom is noisy. Trust among students is low. Behaviors are aggressive, and degrading comments are common. The rebellious group is extrinsically motivated by the approval of their peer group.

**Stage 3 Cohesion.** Students get along well with their teacher as well as each other. The classroom is orderly and in harmony. Very little disruption or conflict occurs. Extrinsic motivation comes from teachers and peers. Poor behavior is met with strong disapproval.

**Stage 4 Autonomy.** Individuals are intrinsically motivated and take responsibility for their own learning. Students enjoy learning. They accept direction from others but usually function well without it. Positive and negative feelings are openly discussed to resolve disagreements. Disruptive behavior is rare. Students are flexible and display respect for each other.

The survey is designed to reflect the stages cited above. Comparing the pre and post results of the survey helped to determine if a change in student behavior had taken place due to the implementation of the JD program. Table 1 displays the relationship between the evaluation questions and the data used to respond to each question.

Although 206 students participated in the program, some parents did not grant permission for their child to participate in school surveys, which resulted in 148 students

completing the Student Social Development survey. Students who were not a part of the program for the entire year were not included in the data. The administration at Smith Middle School routinely gathers data via a survey. After permission was granted from the Walden IRB, the administration shared the data from the pre and post Student Social Development Survey (Appendix D). The results were used to ascertain the students' perceptions of changes in their behaviors.

Table 1  
*Relationship Between Evaluation Questions and Data*

<b>Evaluation Question</b>	<b>Quantitative Data</b>	<b>Qualitative Data</b>
1 What are the strengths and weakness from the teacher perspective?	Teacher survey items 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12, 13,14,15,16,17 and 18	Interview questions 1,2,4,5,6,7 and 8
2 What are the teacher's recommendations for improving the program?	Teacher survey items 5 and 9	Interview questions 1,2,5,7, and 8
3 From the teachers' perspective, has JD decreased student discipline problems?	Teacher survey item 12	Interview data questions 3a,b,c
4 In what ways has the program changed student social development?	Student survey	Interview questions 3a

### **Data Analysis**

I described the data analysis in terms of the formative and summative components of the evaluation respectively.

## **Formative Evaluation**

To address formative evaluation questions 1, 2 and 3 data from the teacher survey and teacher interviews were analyzed. I collected these formative data late in the first year of the project and analyzed it for the purpose of informing project changes.

**Teacher survey.** I used the JD Teacher Satisfaction Survey to collect data to address research question 1 about what are the strengths and weaknesses of the program from the teacher perspective. I analyzed and reported responses to the eighteen likert survey items by using descriptive statistics to determine the participants' perceptions and their satisfaction with the effectiveness of the JD program. I summarized data for each item in the survey using Excel. I calculated frequency distributions, means, and standard deviations to describe the number of times a response was observed for each item. The survey items were related back to several of the research questions for the purpose of analyzing the level of teacher satisfaction for the components of the JD program.

**Teacher interviews.** I analyzed teacher interviews to evaluate questions 1,2 and 3. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the program from the teacher perspective? 2.What are teachers' recommendations for improving the program? and 3. From the teachers' perspective,has JD decreased student discipline problems? Open coding techniques of Strauss and Corbin (1990) were used to analyze the data from teacher interviews.

I implemented a single embedded case study approach to explore teacher perceptions of the JD program. According to Baxter and Black (2008), interviews are often used in a single embedded case study to gain insight into a case as well as enable

the researcher to answer how and why questions. In an effort to gather more detailed data, three teachers at Smith Middle School were interviewed as a follow-up to the teacher perception survey. Specifically, teachers were asked to respond to the open-ended questions included in Appendix E. See Table 2 below for a sample of the questions that teachers were asked during the one-on-one interview.

Table 2

<i>Relationship Between Evaluation Questions and Teacher Interview Item</i>	
<b>Evaluation Question</b>	<b>Sample Item- JD Teacher Interview Questions</b>
1. What are the strengths and weaknesses from the teacher perspective?	1. Tell me about JD as it was implemented in your classroom.  2. Are you satisfied/dissatisfied or neutral about JD? Why is this?
2. What are the teacher's recommendations for improving the program?	5. How satisfied do you think that teachers are with the JD Program?  8. What additional thoughts or concerns about JD do you have?
3. Has JD decreased student discipline problems?	3. How does JD affect student behavior?  3a. Has JD decreased student discipline problems ?

As suggested by Merriam (2009), qualitative data analysis occurred immediately after data collection so not to jeopardize the potential to obtain useful data and findings (Merriam, 2009). The individual interview data was transcribed using Microsoft® Word

and organized using Microsoft® Excel. The process of coding began on the day immediately following the interviews in order to stimulate the emerging theory process and to help keep the data organized. Open coding techniques of Strauss and Corbin (1990) were used to analyze the data from teacher interviews. For open coding, the researcher reviewed the audio recordings and transcripts several times to ensure all responses were considered thoroughly and to examine emergent themes and constructs in light of what they revealed about the strengths and weaknesses of the JD program. After analyzing each response, the data was transcribed into themes that summarized the findings. A chart was created with three categories: open code, properties, and examples of participant words. Interview transcripts were read through several times and then labels were created for chunks of data that summarized common ideas and perceptions that emerged from the transcripts. The ideas and perceptions were placed under the open code heading. I recorded examples of participants' words and established properties of each code. I identified relationships among the open codes to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the JD program as well as teachers' recommendations for improving the program. Categories and subcategories emerged as I gradually gained a better understanding of the patterns existing in the open-ended responses. The themes and patterns were compared with themes from the survey data in an effort to gain a deeper understanding of teachers' perceptions and satisfaction with the JD program. With the interview data and survey data coded and transcribed, I was able to start the triangulation process.

## **Summative Evaluation**

For the summative evaluation I included student survey data to examine how the program impacted student behavior.

**Student social development survey.** I utilized the Student Social Development Survey (see Appendix D) to address evaluation question 4: In what ways has the JD program changed student social development? A chi square test of independence was run in SPSS to compare the pre and post responses to the student social development survey. The results allowed me to examine the change of distribution of students along the social development scale.

I used the survey to measure four areas of student development: teacher power, student power, student/student relationships, and teacher/ student relationships. The first two questions measured students' perceptions of the teachers' ability to share power with the students. Questions 3 and 4 measured the students' ability to share power with their peers. Questions 5 and 6 measured the relationship between the students and other students. Finally, questions 7 and 8 measured the relationship development between the teacher and the students. This information helped to determine if JD was working to improve student behavior. I quantified the survey responses and averages were assigned to each of the four stages mentioned above ranging from the level 1 dependent stage to level 4 the autonomous stage. The percentages of responses in level one and two indicate students who need extrinsic motivation from a teacher to practice positive behavior while responses at levels 3 and 4 indicate students who practice positive behavior through their

own accord. Additionally, a chi -square was run to test if pre to post changes in the distribution of students along the social development scale was statistically significant.

### **Data Analysis Summary**

I used a mixed-methods design for this study that allowed for a deeper understanding of the study problem in the analysis process (Johnson et al., 2007). The data was collected and analyzed in two phases formative and summative. I collected the formative data late in the first year of the project, which included teacher surveys and teacher interviews and was collected for the purpose of guiding project change. A total of nine teachers responded to the teacher survey. I analyzed teacher survey data using descriptive statistics with SPSS software. A total of three teachers participated in individual interviews. I analyzed the interview data using open codes to establish patterns that were used to address the research's evaluation questions. I read through the interview transcripts several times and then started to create labels for chunks of data that summarized what was said. I recorded examples of participants' words for each label as evidence. Analysis of the teacher survey data and individual interview data occurred concurrently in order to identify consistencies and discrepancies in the data.

I collected and analyzed summative data at the end of the first year of the program to determine if the intervention made an impact on student behavior. Summative data included student social development survey data as aspects of student behavior. I calculated a chi square test of independence to compare the pre and post results of the student social development survey to determine the changes in student behavior.

I examined the results of the data analysis to determine common themes and consistencies across teacher survey responses, student survey responses and individual teacher interviews. All data were combined to generate credible findings.

### **Findings**

I utilized a formative client-centered evaluation to identify the strengths and weaknesses of JD as well as to obtain a collection of suggestions for improving the program. I analyzed teacher survey and interview data to this end. I conducted a summative evaluation to test the impact of the program on student behavior as measured by the Social Development Survey (Appendix X). I utilized both descriptive and inferential methods to analyze these data. The findings of both components were used to generate a series of recommendations for the future of the JD program. The client for this evaluation will be presented with an executive summary report that includes the findings from the evaluation as well as suggestions for improving the program. The findings are organized by formative and summative evaluations.

### **Formative Evaluation**

I analyzed teacher survey and interview data to address evaluation questions one, two and three. Survey results from nine teachers and interview responses from three teachers were analyzed to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the program and inform program changes.

**Evaluation question 1.** What are the strengths and weaknesses of the program from the teacher perspective? The findings of the JD Teacher Satisfaction Survey were



integrated with the findings of the teacher interviews for the purpose of identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the program and guiding change.

Analysis of the teacher interview transcripts uncovered numerous strengths and weaknesses of the program. I analyzed the interview data using open coding which produced several themes. I then identified examples of participants' words to establish the properties for each code. For example, during the interviews, teachers complained that administrators did not handle some student office referrals, which lead to an increase in classroom disruptions by students who did not buy in to the JD program. Teachers perceived this continued poor behavior impacted the classroom climate in a negative way and lead to additional behavior issues with the same student. As seen in Table 3, a common theme among all of the teachers that were interviewed was an emphasis on the importance of a supportive administration in order for the program to be successful. Another common theme that emerged from the teacher interviews, as referenced in Table 3, was the perception that JD worked to improve student behaviors.

**Table 3**

*Example of Open Coding for Research Question Two and Four*

Open Code	Properties	Examples of Participants' Words
Student Behavior	Improves Student Behavior	Students have an opportunity to "fix" their behavior.
Administration Support	With no support from administration, student behavior gets worse.	We received very little support from the assistant principal. Referrals were not handled quickly by the administration.

A complete list of interview codes and their properties is in Appendix F.

I conducted a descriptive analysis of the teacher survey responses. The mean, standard deviation, and frequency for each of the eighteen statements on the JD Teacher Satisfaction Survey were calculated (see Table 4 below). Statements with a mean above 4.5 were interpreted as “strongly agree”. Those items with mean scores between 4.5 and 3.5 were interpreted as “agree” while those between 3.5 and 2.5 were interpreted as “neither agree or disagree”. Mean scores below 2.5 were considered as “disagree”. The overall mean score for JD Teacher Satisfaction survey was 4.01 which is an indication that most teachers in this study appeared to be satisfied with the JD program. Sixteen of the eighteen survey items related to this research question had mean scores that ranged from 3.67 to 4.44. These scores indicated that teachers agreed with or were satisfied with issues reflected in these statements.

Table 4 displays the frequency for a sample of responses to teacher survey questions that helped to determine some of the strengths of JD.

**Table 4**

*Means, Standard Deviations, and Frequencies for JD Teacher Satisfaction Survey*

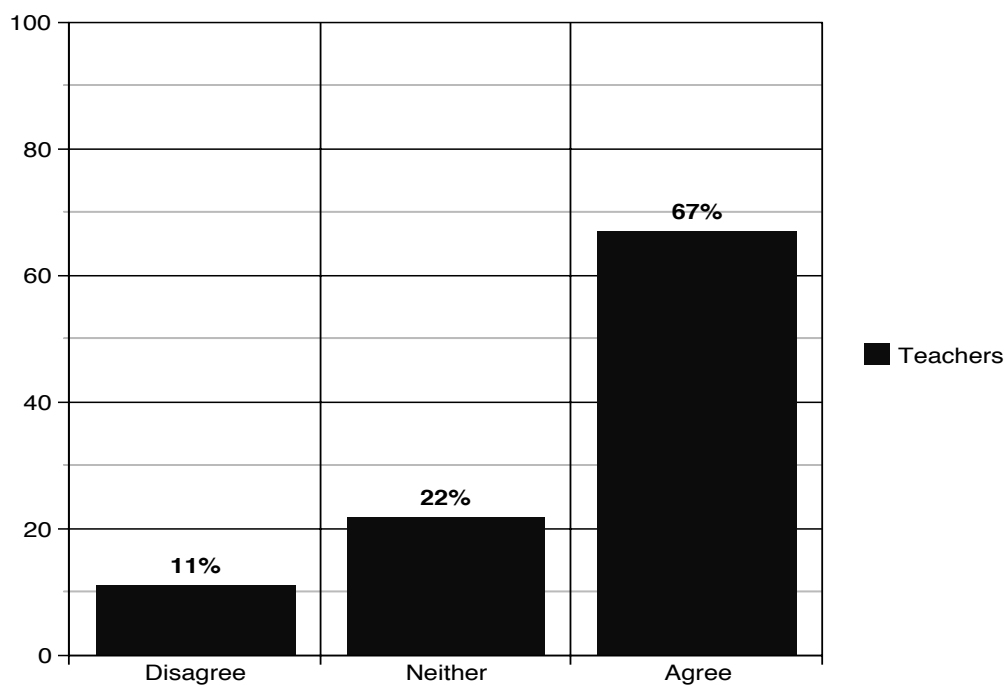
JD Teacher Satisfaction Survey Item (n=9)	Mean	SD	Disagree or Strongly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree or Strongly Agree
8. I consistently model JD expectations for my students.	4.44	0.53	0%	0%	9(100%)
4. I am satisfied with JD	4.33	0.50	0%	0%	9(100%)

JD Teacher Satisfaction Survey Item (n=9)	Mean	SD	Disagree or Strongly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree or Strongly Agree
14. I believe JD has helped to improve students' respectfulness toward others.	4.22	0.71	0%	1(11%)	8(89%)
7. I consistently teach JD expectations to my students.	4.22	0.67	0%	1(11%)	8(89%)
2. Overall, I feel that JD has had a positive impact on teacher/staff behavior.	4.22	0.67	0%	1(11%)	8(89%)
15. I believe JD has helped to improve relationships among students and adults at my school.	4.22	0.71	0%	1(11%)	8(89%)
6. I am satisfied with the plans and decisions of my school's JD team.	4.22	0.83	0%	2(22%)	7(78%)
13. I believe that JD has helped improve students' attitudes toward school.	4.22	1.09	1(11%)	1(11%)	7(78%)

Items 1-6 of the JD survey related to teachers' overall satisfaction with the JD program. Item 1 indicated teachers had an overall satisfaction with JD and the positive impact the program had on student behavior ( $M = 3.78$ ,  $SD = 1.30$ ,  $f = 67\%$  agree). Figure 5 illustrates that six out of the nine teachers that completed the survey either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "Overall, I feel that JD had a positive impact

on student behavior”. Of the three teachers who were interviewed, Teacher A and Teacher C strongly agreed with this statement, and Teacher B agreed.

During the interview process, each teacher was asked, “Are you satisfied/dissatisfied or neutral about JD? Why is this?” Teacher A stated, “I absolutely love it. When implemented consistently, JD helps students make appropriate choices and become better citizens.” Teacher B said, “Satisfied, I enjoy it. The responsibility is placed back on the students to change or modify their behavior instead of me telling them what to do.” Teacher C said, “I am very satisfied with JD. It removed the emotion about the behavior and focused more on what is right and fair.” I concluded that one strength of JD from the teachers’ perspective was that it had a positive impact on student behavior.



*Figure 5.* This figure illustrates the response frequencies to the prompt of Question 1 “Overall, I feel that Judicious Discipline has had a positive impact on student behavior.”

My analysis of item 2 indicated that eight of nine teachers were satisfied that JD had positively impacted teacher and staff behavior ( $M = 4.22$ ,  $SD = .67$ ,  $f = 89\%$  agree). For item 4, all nine participants were satisfied with the JD consequences ( $M = 4.33$ ,  $SD = .50$ ,  $f = 100\%$  agree). During all one-on-one interviews, teachers stated they were satisfied with the JD program in several areas. Teacher A agreed or strongly agreed with all of the satisfaction statements with the exception to item 5 which reflected the lack of administrative support. Item 5 “I am satisfied with my schools administrative support for JD ” indicated neither satisfaction nor dissatisfaction with the school’s administrative support ( $M = 3.22$ ,  $SD = 1.09$ ,  $f = 45\%$  agree). Of the nine participants that took the survey, three fell into the “disagree or strongly disagree” category, two “neither disagreed or agreed”, and four “agreed or strongly agreed”. This is a slight indication that teachers’ perceptions of the administration’s support for the JD program needs to improve.

Further exploration of the data revealed that two of the three teachers who were interviewed were inconsistent with their responses on the survey and during the teacher interviews in regards to administrative support. Teacher A disagreed with the statement “I am satisfied with my school's administrative support for JD” while Teacher B agreed with the statement and Teacher C strongly agreed with the statement.

During the interviews Teacher A was consistent with her views of the administrations support. When asked if teachers were satisfied with the administration’s support of JD, she stated “Absolutely not. When it came time for referrals, we received very little, if any, support from our AP. Students who didn’t want to follow the

guidelines of JD found out quickly that referrals were not handled in a timely manner, if at all, and behavior declined in these students.”

Teacher B agreed with the survey statement of satisfaction with the schools administrative support for JD but in contrast responded with “No” to the interview question of teachers’ satisfaction with the administration’s support of JD. “This is the weak link.” Commented Teacher B, “We need the administration to assign a consequence when we refer a student.” The two response are mixed and, therefore, do not provide a clear a perception for what Teacher B thinks of the administrative support.

Teacher C strongly agreed that she was satisfied with the administration’s support on the survey. However, during the interview she stated, “I feel that the administration could have done more to support the program. I feel they tried to implement it in ways they could, but my bet is none of the administration at that time had read the book.” The survey response is not in line with the interview response from Teacher C and, therefore, her perceptions of the administration’s support for the program are mixed. The findings indicate that administrative support is a weakness of the program that needs to be addressed.

Overall, the JD Teacher Satisfaction survey and interview participants were perceived to be satisfied with the JD program. During the interview process, Teacher A repeatedly made statements that confirmed her satisfaction with the program. For example, she made statements like “It was empowering them to make the right choices.” and “My approach to discipline now is one of teamwork and problem-solving; students and I are on the same side, so to speak.” Teacher B agreed with all the satisfaction

statements. During the interviews, she expressed her satisfaction with the program by stating, “I am satisfied with JD. I don’t yell as much as I did in the previous years. I’m a lot less stressed.” This statement solidifies Teachers B’s survey that indicates, overall, she is satisfied with the program. Teacher C strongly agreed with all five of the satisfaction statements on the survey. She reiterated her views during the interview by stating, “I am very satisfied with JD. Most students become defensive and don’t take responsibility when corrected for behavior; however, with JD, those walls come down and students take ownership for their own behavior. The students begin to see how their behavior violates the rights of others.” The comments from Teacher C verify her survey responses for her overall satisfaction with the JD program.

Items 7-11 in the JDTeacher Satisfaction survey related to consistency. For item 7, eight of the nine teachers perceived that they consistently taught the JD expectations and consequences ( $M = 4.22$ ,  $SD = .67$ ,  $f = 89\%$  agree). Item 8, with the highest mean score, showed that all nine teachers consistently modeled JD expectations for their students ( $M = 4.44$ ,  $SD = .53$ ,  $f = 100\%$  agree). Items seven and eight indicate teachers perceive they consistently teach and model JD for their students.

Selected as “neither agree or disagree” was item, 9 “I consistently reward students for using the JD reward system in place at my school” ( $M = 3.11$ ,  $SD = .78$ ,  $f = 34\%$  agree). This result suggests that teachers are not rewarding their students for practicing JD. Of the nine participants, two appeared in the “disagree or strongly disagree” category, four neither disagreed nor agreed, and three agreed or strongly agreed. This indicates a lack of fidelity since only three of the nine teachers use rewards.

From the three participants who were interviewed, Teacher A disagreed with the statement “ I consistently reward students for using the JD reward system in place at my school” while Teachers B and C neither disagreed nor agreed. This indicates that none one of the three teachers who were interviewed consistently reward their students for good behavior.

The response to survey item 10 indicates that six of the nine teachers surveyed are satisfied with the rate at which students are rewarded. Specifically, item 10 states that teachers felt that JD consistently rewarded students who displayed positive behavior at an appropriate rate ( $M = 4.00$ ,  $SD = .93$ ,  $f = 63\%$  agree). However, two of the three teachers interviewed, Teacher A and Teacher C, neither agreed nor disagreed, and Teacher B agreed. The teacher perceptions of how students are rewarded in the JD program are mixed. The variety of responses received for this statement indicates a problem with the fidelity of implementation. This is a weakness for the program and one that will be addressed in the executive summary.

Item 11 stated, “I feel that JD punishes students displaying negative behavior at an appropriate rate” ( $M = 3.78$ ,  $SD = .67$ ,  $f = 67\%$  agree). Six of the nine teachers who completed the survey “strongly agreed” with this statement while three “neither agreed or disagreed”. According to the survey results and teacher interviews, the perceptions of the program’s consistency of implementation are mixed. The responses vary from 100% in agreement this for “I consistently model JD expectations for my students” to 34% in agreement with “I consistently reward students using the JD reward system in place at my school”. However, the inconsistency seems to be related to the fact that not all

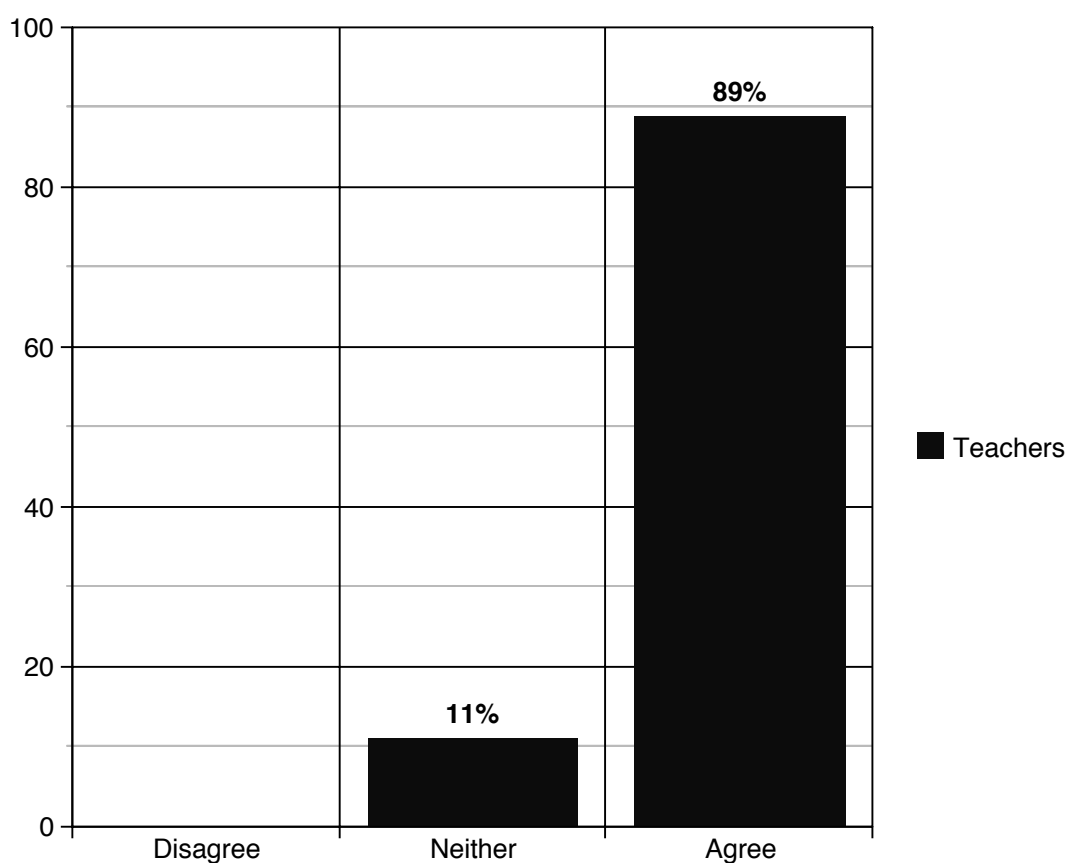


teachers have implemented the program the same. During the interviews, all three teachers stated that some participants spent more time planning for implementation than others. A lack of formal training for all staff members and a lack of school wide implementation of JD are weaknesses of the program. In addition, some teachers have not implemented the training consistently which indicates a lack of fidelity. A recommendation to provide training for all staff members as well as implement the program school-wide will be made in the executive summary.

Items 12-16 on the JD Teacher Satisfaction Survey related to school climate. Results indicated that teachers are satisfied with how JD has affected the school climate. Item 12 stated, “ I believe that JD helped decrease student discipline problems significantly at my school”. Six of the nine teachers surveyed agreed or strongly agreed with this statement ( $M = 3.89$ ,  $SD = 1.05$ ,  $f = 67\%$  agree). Seven of the nine teachers surveyed agreed or strongly with item 13 “I believe that JD has helped improve students’ attitudes toward school” ( $M = 4.22$ ,  $SD = 1.09$ ,  $78\%$  agree).

For item 14, eight of the nine teachers agreed or strongly agreed with “JD has helped improve students’ respectfulness toward others” ( $M = 4.33$ ,  $SD = .71$ ,  $89\%$  agree). Figure 6 displays the findings that 89% of the teachers surveyed agreed or strongly agreed with the statement for survey item 14. All three of the teachers who were interviewed either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. They reiterated this belief in the interviews. Teacher A stated, “Students were more prone to behave respectfully toward others. They accept the responsibility to make sure their behaviors were not interfering with others’ rights.” Teacher B stated, “Students seem to put more

thought into how their behavior and actions affect others. Students show respect for each other even if they don't like each other." Teacher C stated, "By rooting the JD in our government, students are able to see how they are part of a greater community. This cuts down on negative interactions with students where they argue about their behavior." The survey results and the interview responses indicate that students are more respectful toward each other when participating in JD.



*Figure 6.* Response frequencies to the prompt: "I believe JD has helped to improve students' respectfulness toward others."

Eight of the nine teachers agreed or strongly agreed with item 15 "I believe that JD helped improve relationships among students and adults at my school" ( $M = 4.33$ ,  $SD$

= .71,  $f = 89\%$  agree). All three of the teachers who took part in the interviews agreed or strongly agreed with item 15 on the teacher survey. During the interviews, teachers were asked, "Has JD helped to improve relationships among students and adults in the school?" Teacher A stated "I think it definitely did for the teachers who took the time to have discussions with students about behavioral issues prior to referrals. Students were able to see that we are all on the same side and want them to be successful. Students were more open with teachers about admitting inappropriate behaviors because they knew they would be able to work together to solve the problem(s)." Teacher B stated, "Student and teacher relationships are better... especially for those who stick with JD. Teacher C commented, "Through JD, students feel respected because of the one on one conferencing that takes place. I found that through this method students were very respectful and began to trust their teachers to be fair." The results from both the JD Teacher Satisfaction Survey and the teacher interviews indicate that JD is working to improve relationships among students and adults at the school.

The ratings for survey item 16 indicated that six of the nine teachers agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "I believe that JD has helped to improve school safety throughout the school" ( $M = 3.78$ ,  $SD = .97$ ,  $f = 67\%$  agree). Of the teachers interviewed, Teacher A agreed with this statement but responded to the question "Has JD helped to improve safety throughout the school?" with, "Not throughout the school, no. Because it was implemented in eighth grade traditional only; most students and teachers were not trained or familiar with the practice of JD". Teacher B neither agreed nor disagreed but responded to the interview question on improving school safety by stating, "Yes, in the

areas where it's been implemented more than others. Being in the right place and doing the right thing. Students make better decisions." Teacher C strongly agreed to the survey statement and responded to the interview question with " Yes, We all know how horseplay can get out of hand very quickly. When a teacher sees that happen and asks the time, place, manner questions, students evaluate their behavior and possible outcomes and usually stop without a problem. Issues are stopped before they can escalate." The survey responses lead me to conclude that all three teachers who were interviewed believe that JD worked to create a safer school. However, the safety improvement is limited to the classrooms where the program was implemented. The inconsistency of safety throughout the school seems to be related to the fact that the program training and implementation was limited to certain eighth grade teachers and their classrooms. Lack of training for all staff members and school-wide implementation of JD are weaknesses of the program. A recommendation to train all teachers on the JD program and a plan to implement the program school-wide will be made in the executive summary.

Items 17 and 18 on the JD Teacher Satisfaction Survey related to the initial implementation of JD. For item 17, six out of the nine teachers surveyed agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "I feel that teachers perceptions and opinions were considered before JD was implemented at our school" ( $M = 3.67$ ,  $SD = .87$ ,  $f = 67\%$  agree). Teachers A, B and C agreed with the statement on the survey. During the interviews, all three teachers talked about approaching the administration to gain permission to implement JD. All three teachers expressed appreciation that the administration listened to their opinions and approved the request to implement JD.

Six out of the nine survey participants agreed or strongly agreed with item 18 “I have made preparations on my own in order to implement JD” ( $M = 4.33$ ,  $SD = 1.00$ ,  $f = 67\%$  agree). All three of the teachers strongly agreed with this statement. Teacher A was asked, “What preparation have teachers done on their own to implement JD?” Teacher A stated, “Some teachers do discuss right time, right place, right manner with students when addressing inappropriate behavior, but not many. We have a long way to go.” Teacher B responded to the same question with “We read the books, modified the lessons, and planned together. We attempted to make the program school-wide, but many teachers are not trained and are not willing to implement the program because they don’t fully understand the program or they are intimidated by the amount of work the program takes.” Teacher C commented, “We met several times over the summer to discuss the program, prepare lessons, and get supplies together (bulletin boards, restroom passes, cool zone signs, referral slips, etc.) In addition, we met with the larger eighth grade team to share the lessons, book, and ideas. There were a few simplistic trainings – more like informational meetings that sufficed as training, but I don’t feel this was adequate for the teachers.” All three teachers noted that lack of training for teachers is a weakness of the JD program. The lack of fidelity, which is the proper and consistent implementation of JD, and the fact that the program was not implemented school-wide were, once again, identified as weaknesses of the program. The executive summary reflects these findings and recommends that teachers at Smith Middle School receive training, ongoing support and that JD be implemented school wide on a consistent basis.

**Strengths.** During the interviews, all three teachers stated they were satisfied with the results of the JD program. Teachers stated, “I am very satisfied with the program” and “I certainly am satisfied with the program.” Another said, “I am very satisfied with the program because I don’t yell as much and I’m less stressed.” Teachers in individual interviews mutually agreed upon several strengths of JD program. All teachers perceived that the program worked to improve student behavior. Specifically, teachers agreed that the program helped students make positive behavior choices with little teacher intervention. One teacher stated, “Students have an opportunity to fix their behavior” and “Students change or modify their behavior instead of me telling them what to do.” Another teacher stated, “Students put more thought into how they behave” and “Students take responsibility for their actions”. Still another commented, “Students change unwanted behavior” and “Students are empowered to make the right decision. “Another strength of the program on which teachers agreed was that it fosters respect between students/students and teachers/students as well as improves relationships. Teachers stated, “Students show respect for each other even if they don’t like each other” and “Students put more thought into how their actions and behavior affects others.” Another teacher said, “Students and teachers are on the same side.” The teacher satisfaction survey echoed the perception that JD worked to improve relationships between students/students as well as teachers/students. Eight out of nine teachers agreed or strongly agreed with the item 2 “Overall, I feel that JD has had a positive impact on teacher/staff behavior”. Eight out of nine teachers agreed with item 14 “I believe that JD has helped to improve students ‘respectfulness towards others”, and eight of nine agreed

with item 15 “I believe JD has helped to improve relationships among students and adults at my school.” Teacher perception from the interviews and the teacher survey indicate that JD improves student behavior, reduces teacher stress, and fosters improved relationships among students, their peers, and their teachers.

**Weaknesses.** Similarities surfaced in how the respondents felt about the program’s weaknesses. Teachers who were interviewed agreed that lack of administrative support was one of the weaknesses of the JD program. Teachers stated, “We received very little support, if any, from the assistant principal” and “Referrals were not handled in a timely manner by the administration; behavior for these students declined.” Another said, “ I feel the administration could have done more to support the program. On teacher survey item 5 “I am satisfied with my schools administrative support for JD”, four of the nine teachers agreed which also indicates that teachers’ perceive the administration could have done more to support the JD program. One teacher stated, “None of the administration read the book ”. Another commented, “When the administration did not back us up, the kids behavior was awful. Those kids, mentally, did not change, or move towards autonomy.”

I found that lack of adequate training was an area of weakness about which all three teachers agreed. One teacher voiced, “Some teachers read the JD book, and others did not.” Another said, “ What hinders the program most is teachers or administration that are not willing to put in the work to read the book and apply the concepts.” Another said, “Some read the book over the summer and took the time to plan for the program while others didn’t start the book until we started back to school. Maybe this was because

the program was not required by the administration.” Teachers agreed another weakness of the JD program was that it was not implemented consistently or school wide. The response to item 9 on the teacher survey mimicked this perception. Three of nine teachers agreed with item, 9 on the teacher survey “ I consistently reward students for using the JD reward system in place at my school”. This indicates a lack of fidelity since only three of the nine teachers use rewards. One teacher summed up this idea by stating, “JD was not implemented school wide, so the students’ behavior during connections seemed to be worse” and “When combined with students who were not a part of the JD program, their behavior sometimes reverted back to disrespectful behavior.” Weaknesses range from lack of support from the administration, failure to implement the program throughout the school, and a lack of fidelity with implementation.

**Evaluation question 2.** What are the teacher’s recommendations for improving the program? During the interviews, teachers identified problems with JD and offered solutions for improving the program. The solutions were identified through the use of open codes. After reading through the interview transcripts several times, I identified open codes that summarized what I saw emerging from the data. I then identified examples of participants’ words to establish properties for each code. Several themes emerged from the teacher interview data. Teachers recommended that the JD program needs additional support from the schools administration. Specifically, the support includes teacher training, rapid discipline consequences when teachers find it necessary to write student referrals for poor behavior choices, and school-wide as well as consistent implementation of the program.



Teachers suggested that the administration should provide professional development for all teachers to be trained properly in order to implement the JD program. A lack of adequate training was an area of weakness about which all three teachers agreed during the teacher interviews. One teacher stated, "Some teachers read the JD book, and others did not." Another said, "Some read the book over the summer and took the time to plan for the program while others didn't start the book until we started back to school. Maybe this was because the program was not required by the administration." If teachers do not receive the proper training, they cannot be expected to implement the program the way it was designed which will affect the fidelity of implementation. For example, according to the teacher participants, consistently holding classroom meetings and having individual conversations with students when they practice poor behavior are two of the essential components for JD to work. Following through with these two practices gives students a voice and a choice. The classroom meetings allow students to voice their opinions as individuals about the rules and regulations the classroom decides as a collective society. The choice component is the choice students are faced with on a daily basis; they can follow the rules agreed upon as a classroom society, or they can reject the rules and face punishment by the administration.

For example, when teachers refer students for consistently displaying poor behavior, the administration must act swiftly to hold students accountable. Not all students are willing participants in the JD program. One teacher said, "When they fail to participate, the administration needs to assign consequences. A five minute talk and a warning do nothing to improve student behavior." Teachers believe students need to be

held accountable for their actions. One teacher stated, “ When they are not held accountable, it hurts the JD program because the person is not showing respect to their teachers and their peers.”

Not implementing the program school wide and on a consistent basis reduces the program’s effectiveness. One teacher stated, “If the administration does not have the expectation that everyone uses this method, does not train the teachers, and does not use the methods themselves, the school becomes off balance, and there can be division of ideas, of results, etc. This is confusing for both students and staff.” Another teacher commented, “Unless JD becomes a school-wide concept that is expected and administered from the top down, students do not get the consistency that is so important when implementing any sort of behavior method.” JD is a proactive, not a reactive program. Therefore, the participants suggested that teachers’ school wide must practice the program consistently and use the statements “right time, right place, right manner” when addressing students for inappropriate behavior. One teacher stated, “The time we take up front to implement the program pays off by forming more responsible students with better behavior and improved academic performance”.

Although all teachers were satisfied with the results of first year of implementation for JD, they have some suggestions for improving the program. Teachers believe the administration can take a few steps to improve the results of the program. Suggestions are: provide proper training for teachers, monitor the implementation of the program to insure fidelity, provide rapid discipline consequences when teachers find it necessary to write student referrals for poor behavior choices, and have a consistent

school-wide implementation of the program. If these changes are made, the first year participants of JD at Smith Middle School believe student behavior will improve.

**Evaluation Question 3.** Has JD decreased student discipline problems? For teacher interview question 3a) Has JD decreased student discipline problems? Teacher A responded, “In my experience, JD has reduced repeated behaviors.” Teacher B commented, “More students think about their actions and do the right thing at the right time in the right manner. Students seem to put more thought into how their behavior and actions affect others.” Teacher C responded, “Through this method, there were less insubordinate actions towards teachers.” Item 12 on the JD Teacher Satisfaction Survey stated: “I believe that JD has helped decrease student discipline problems significantly at my school”. Six of the nine participant responses fell into the “agree” or “strongly agree” category. Of the nine who responded, three were interviewed. When asked to respond to the question, “Has JD decreased student discipline problems?” Teacher A responded with “I’m not sure if it has decreased problems, but it has, in my experience, reduced repeated behaviors.” This statement was consistent with the response on the JD Teacher Satisfaction Survey of neither agree or disagree on the item “I believe that JD has helped decrease student discipline problems significantly at my school”. Teacher A does not perceive JD having made an impact on student behavior until a student makes a mistake and a one- on-one conversation takes place between the student and the teacher. This indicates that Teacher A perceives that JD is working to encourage students reflect on their poor behaviors and working to prevent them from making the same mistakes again which is what the program is designed to do. During the interview, Teacher B

responded to the question “Has JD decreased student discipline problems?” with “Yes. More students think about their actions and do the right thing at the right time in the right manner.” This indicates that Teacher B perceives that JD is working to reduce discipline problems. Teacher C was consistent with her responses to the interview question and survey item relating to research question #3. She responded to the interview question, “Has JD decreased student discipline problems?” with, “Yes, definitely. Through this method, there were less referrals, less parent phone calls about bad behavior, and less insubordinate actions towards teachers.” In addition, she strongly agreed with survey item 12 “I believe that JD has helped decrease student discipline problems significantly at my school. Teacher C was the initiator of JD. She was the most knowledgeable of the practices of the program. She stated that she consistently modeled and implemented the program’s practices in her classroom on a daily basis. Her consistent perception of the program on the survey and during the interview was that it worked to decrease student behavior problems.

I concluded that the analysis of the teacher survey and interview data shows that the program works to decrease student discipline problems. All three of the teachers who were interviewed said the program is progressing in the right direction to make students reflect on their past actions and think about their future actions. The interview questions allowed the teachers to explain their perceptions in more detail whereas the survey was based on a rating scale and, therefore, allowed a limited response. All three teachers who interviewed made statements that indicated they believed that JD worked to decrease student discipline problems. During the

interviews, teachers communicated that JD encouraged students to reflect on their poor behaviors and not make the same mistakes again, which is what the program is designed to do.

### **Summative Evaluation**

I utilized the summative data to address evaluation question four. Specifically, the summative data was used to measure student social development (measured by the Student Social Development Survey) as it relates to student behavior.

**Evaluation Question 4.** This question asked: In what ways has the JD program changed student social development? The Student Social Development Survey (Appendix D) was administered by the school administration to students in the JD program twice during the 2013-2014 school year to measure the progression of students on the social development scale. Students completed the first survey at the beginning of the school year and then again at the end of the year. The pre and post survey consisted of eight true or false statements to which students responded in order to determine their progress in each of the four social development attributes. The questions measured the power and effect of student/teacher and student/student relationships and placed them in one of four categories dependency, rebellion, cohesion, and autonomy. Table 7 below provides the percentage of students at each stage of the social development levels at the beginning and at the end of the school year. The goal of JD is for all students to fall under the category of autonomy at which they are self-directed and take responsibility for their behavior. Other characteristics at the autonomy level include respecting the rights of

others, the ability to adapt, and a high level of interaction where issues and disagreements are discussed and settled peacefully.

Table 5 shows a 42 % dependency rate on the pre-test at the beginning of the study while the post-test drops to a 27% dependency rate. This is a 15% decrease in responses at the dependency level from the beginning to the end of the first year JD was implemented. This is an indication that JD is working since the dependency rate, the lowest level on the social development scale, has decreased. This data communicates that students have progressed on the social development scale. Table 5 shows a 15% rate at the rebellion stage on the pre-test and a 10% rebellion rate on the post-test. The change is a 5% decrease in the number of responses at the rebellion stage from the beginning stages to the end of the first year that JD was implemented. Once again, this indicates that students have advanced on the social development scale. Table 5 shows a 21% rate at the cohesion stage on the pre-test and a 31% at the same stage on the post-test. This reflects a 10% increase in growth at the higher social development level of cohesion. The final stage of autonomy increased by 10% from the beginning to the end of the first year of the program. The increase in the cohesion and autonomy stages indicates that students have advanced on the social development scale. All four stages indicate that students are shifting from teacher-centered classroom management to student-centered classroom management. These are the results that are expected if students are shifting from a teacher-centered, autocratic form of classroom management to a student-centered, democratic form of classroom management and ultimately improved behavior. Table 5 provides the distribution of responses at the various levels of social development at the

beginning and the end of the program: dependency, rebellion, cohesion, and autonomy. A Chi-Square Test of Independence was employed to test whether the change in the distribution of students along the social development scale was statistically significant. The distribution of students along the social development scale changed from the pre-test to the posttest  $\chi^2(3) = 48.43, p < .001$ . Examining the frequencies of students in each developmental stage shows that from pre-test to post-test, students moved out of the dependency stage, and likewise, students moved toward the cohesion and autonomy stage.

The distribution of responses in each category (question pair) was also compared pre and post using a series of chi-Square Test of Independence. Two of the four categories (question 1/2 and question 3/4) showed a significantly different distribution of responses in the pre-test than in the post-test (see Table 5). This is an indication that students are moving out of the dependency stage, the lowest level on the social development scale, and progressing towards the higher levels of social development. The other two categories (question 5/6 and question 7/8) did not show a significantly different distribution of responses between the pre-test and post-test (see Table 5). This indicates no significant change in the level of distribution responses between the pre and post-test at the cohesion or the autonomy stage, the two highest stages on the social development scale. Which JD did not work to move a significant number of students to the two highest levels of social development during the first year of the program.

Table 5

*Comparison of pre-test and post-test responses to the Student Social Development Survey*

Stages	$X^2$ ( $df=3$ )	$P$	Pre Test	Post Test
Dependency (Items 1 and 2)	16.29	< .001	42%	27%
Rebellion (Items 3 and 4)	73.73	< .001	15%	10%
Cohesion (Items 5 and 6)	1.16	.76	21%	31%
Autonomy (Items 7 and 8)	6.37	.09	22%	32%

According to the survey results at the end of the first year of JD, students perceived that their teachers were increasingly sharing power with them. In addition, students perceived that they were taking on more responsibility and were better able to handle power relationships among themselves. An increase in responses at the autonomous level and a decrease in responses at the dependency level over the eight-month period was observed.

The results of the student social development survey were triangulated by the responses from the teacher interviews. For question 3, How does JD affect student behavior? Teacher 1 responded, “Most students change unwanted behavior so we don’t need future discussions”. Teacher B responded, “Students take responsibility for their actions. Students are practicing good behavior because it’s their choice, not because they



are being rewarded for it.” Teacher C replied to the same question with “Students think about their behavior and the impact (negative or positive) it has on others.”

The results of the student social development survey and teacher interviews indicate that JD is working to facilitate the movement of students toward the autonomous behavior level. According to teacher perceptions students are practicing good behavior on their own accord and not because they are forced to do so by a teacher. However, the results also indicate that a large portion of the JD student body is still at the lower end of the social development scale. In order for all students to advance to the autonomy stage, and improved student behavior, the JD program administrators will need to explore why some students are progressing more rapidly than others on the social development scale.

### **Summary of Findings**

This section provides a summary of the data collection and data analysis required to answer the evaluation questions related to JD. This study used a mixed-methods design, which included quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis to respond to the overall question of “How and in what ways does the JD program contribute to changes in student behavior?” The formative evaluation explored teacher perceptions to establish the strengths and weaknesses of the program and to inform change. The summative evaluation used findings from student surveys to measure the impact of the intervention on social development. The results of the formative and summative evaluations were used to create an executive summary that provided the client with the information needed to improve the program.

The formative data revealed several areas of strength for the JD program, including teacher perceived improvement in overall student behaviors such as: students making positive behavior choices, students displaying respect for other students, and student/teacher relationships improving. According to the data from the teacher surveys the teacher satisfaction rate with the JD program was 100%. All three teachers that were interviewed made statements that indicated they believed that JD had a positive impact on student behavior. Participants believed JD also fostered respect between students, and improved relationships between students and teachers. For example Teacher A responded to a question of JD helping to improve relationships among students and adults in the school with “I think it definitely did for the teachers who took the time to have discussions with students about behavioral issues prior to referrals. Students were able to see that we are all on the same side and want them to be successful.” Teachers also credited the program with teaching students how to take responsibility for their own actions and to think about how their behavior affected others. During the interview, Teacher C stated, “Through this method, there were less referrals, less parent phone calls about bad behavior, and less insubordinate actions towards teachers.” Teacher B commented, “More students think about their actions and do the right thing at the right time in the right manner. Students seem to put more thought into how their behavior and actions affect others. Students show respect for each other even if they don’t like each other.” Overall, teachers agreed that they were satisfied with JD and would recommend it to other teachers. Students at Smith Middle School who participated in JD made some

progress in the area of social development. During the interviews, teachers offered possible reasons for the programs shortcomings.

According to the teachers, the areas of weakness in the JD program included lack of support from the administration, failure to implement the program throughout the school, and a lack of fidelity with implementation. Teachers said one of the reasons the program had little impact on student referrals was the lack of support from the administration. Teachers stated, if student referrals were not handled in a timely manner and with consequences, some students were not deterred to change their behaviors thus resulting in additional discipline problems.

Teachers agreed that the JD program was implemented inconsistently. During interviews, teachers said JD students acted differently when mixed with non-JD students and when with a teacher who did not practice JD. Teacher C in the interview stated, “The more you get to know your students, the more you can speak into their lives. Through JD, students feel respected because of the respectful conferencing that takes place.” If non- JD teachers do not take time to hold one-on-one conferences with students, the result is a lack of fidelity with implementation. Teachers with no JD training may not conduct the one-on-one student teacher conferences required by JD to build relationships. Therefore, JD students were perceived to act differently when they were not with JD teachers thus resulting in poor behavior that may have resulted in office referrals. This type of behavior also indicates a lack of autonomy within the students, which could be the result of the lack of fidelity with the implementation of the program.

I found that the summative data from the student social development survey indicated that some students who participated in JD made progress towards the desired goal in the area of social development. Two of the four categories (question 1/2 and question 3/4) showed a significantly different distribution of responses in the pre-test than in the post-test. This indicates that JD is working to help students progress on the student social development scale towards autonomy. The other two categories (question 5/6 and question 7/8) did not show a significantly different distribution of responses between the pre-test and post-test. This indicates no significant change in the level of distribution responses between the pre and post-test at the cohesion or the autonomy stage, the two highest stages on the social development scale. This is evidence that students are making progress on the social development scale but maybe not as quickly as school leaders would like to see. If the program continues, more students will likely move towards the level of autonomy.

As a result of implementing JD, students are progressing towards autonomy. Findings of the formative data from the teacher interviews included suggestions for improving the program and identified which resources teachers felt they needed in order to make the suggested improvements. Key weaknesses of the program were lack of support from administration, lack of teacher training, failure to implement the program school wide, and a lack of fidelity of implementation. Recommendations to improve JD include a plan for all teachers and staff to participate professional development and for the program to be implemented consistently and with fidelity school wide. Teachers also suggested that greater support from the administration would strengthen the program and

improve student discipline. I recommend that a continuous formative evaluation of the program should be implemented to measure its progress and guide necessary changes. The evaluation should include teacher surveys and interviews. The data from the JD Teacher Satisfaction Survey and teacher interviews indicate that JD has made a perceived positive impact on student behavior and has decreased student discipline problems.

### **Evidence of Quality (Validity/Trustworthiness)**

To ensure quality and validity, I reread participants' responses during the interview process to verify their answers were recorded accurately. Data from teacher interviews, teacher surveys, and student surveys were triangulated. Creswell (2003) states that through triangulation and integration, quantitative and qualitative data might improve the depth of understanding for the researchers, participants, and the project administrators. The strength of triangulation and integration of quantitative and qualitative data is that, together, they generate new information that ensures no gaps in the data. The collection of a variety of data types such as objective (numerical data) and subjective data (perceptions) leads to greater validity and allows the researcher to have a deeper understanding of the educational issues. This study incorporated the triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data to ensure a detailed picture of the program and to provide the client with the information they need to make improvements to the program.

### **Limitations of Program Evaluation**

Two limitations to this study were purposive sampling and the fidelity of implementation. Purposive sampling allows the researcher to purposefully discover an understanding of the phenomenon under study and to gain deeper insight into the

research problem (Merriam, 2009). Fidelity of implementation is the level of consistency and accuracy to which teachers use the curriculum and instructional practices they learned while participating in professional development. Purposive sampling, the fidelity of implementation, and the unknowns in the referral data and how they impact limitations will be discussed more specifically in the following paragraphs.

According to Johnson and Christensen (2012), purposive sampling is not an equal probability sampling method; limitations of this method include the ability to make generalizations from a sample or single research study to a population. Purposive sampling was used to select the small group of teachers who participated in the JD study. The major limitation to this program evaluation study was that only nine teachers qualified to participate in the study, and three of the nine agreed to be interviewed. The study depended on their willingness to participate in the survey and the individual interviews. Because teachers at Smith Middle School were the only participants in school district to implement JD, it was the only middle school used for this study.

Fidelity of implementation was a second limitation to this study. The teachers who implemented the JD program participated in a book study for the purpose of professional development. The professional development was self-imposed by the teachers with no guidance or requirements from the school administration. Three of the nine teachers read the book and met to discuss it several times over the summer break while the other six teachers did not read the book until they returned for a new school year. In addition, the three who completed the book study in the summer worked together during that time to plan classroom lessons. If the program was not implemented with consistency and

accuracy, this indicates a problem with fidelity (Mellard, 2010). Because of the inconsistency in the training amongst the nine teachers, the implementation may have also been inconsistent. The fidelity of this training is difficult to ascertain. The extent and the consistency of the program was the responsibility of the classroom teacher, and each teacher may have implemented the program somewhat differently based on personal beliefs. The implementation in each classroom was unique and contributes to the success or failure of the program. In short, not all of the curriculum and instructional practices of JD were consistently and accurately implemented by all of the teachers who participated in the program. The lack of consistency indicates a problem with the fidelity of implementation.

### **Conclusion**

I collected the data for this study through formative and summative evaluations. The formative evaluations included teacher interviews (qualitative) and teacher surveys (quantitative). The summative evaluation included student surveys (quantitative). According to Lodico et al. (2010), triangulation strengthens a mixed methods design by comparing the quantitative and qualitative data to see if they produce similar findings. I integrated the data to ensure a complete understanding of the program. I combined the results of the quantitative and qualitative data which indicated a positive change in student behavior due to the JD program. Specifically, I integrated the teacher surveys with the teacher interviews to determine that from the teachers' perspective JD had a positive impact on student behavior. The student survey data indicated that students are moving out of the dependency stage and progressing towards the higher levels of social

development, which equates to a positive impact on student behavior. However, the results at the cohesion and the autonomy stage revealed no significant change in the level of distribution responses between the pre and post-test. Overall, this indicates that JD is working to encourage positive behavior but not at the desired rate towards the highest level of autonomy.

Teachers offered suggestions for improving JD during interviews. In order for all students to advance towards autonomy on the social development scale, teachers recommended that the entire school participate in JD. Before this can happen, all teachers and administrators need to receive formal training for JD. Once the program is implemented, it should be monitored to ensure fidelity of implementation. According to the teachers who were interviewed, these suggestions will create a school culture that focuses on positive behavior, reduces referrals, and ensures a feeling of safety all students. The study concluded that JD was successful at reducing discipline problems and improving student behaviors. This research could possibly benefit other schools within the district by their implementing JD along with the suggestions for improving the program.

Section three describes the project and how it was derived based on the data. The introduction provides details about and rationale for the project. The literature review addresses the project and explains how the project relates to data. Finally, an executive summary report designed specifically for the school leaders at Smith Middle School will be shared.



## Section 3: The Project

### **Introduction**

I conducted this evaluation to determine if a behavior intervention program called JD was having a positive impact on student behavior and to explore which components of the program worked and which needed improvement from teachers' perspectives. The client centered program evaluation allowed teachers to identify the strengths and weaknesses in the program, provide suggestions for improvement, and identify resources they needed in order to make the suggested improvements. This project report conveys the overall findings of the data analysis, considers relevant literature, and recommends changes to JD that may improve students' behavior. In this portion of the paper, I will discuss the goal of the evaluation, the rationale for program evaluation, a review of relevant literature, and the implication of the social change related to this evaluation.

### **Description and Goals**

This project is an executive summative report that will be presented to school leaders. The focus of this report is to share the results of the data analysis and to make recommendations for improving the JD program. The executive summary can be found in Appendix A.

The main audience for this report consists of county administrators, school building administrators, school building teachers, and all other officials deemed appropriate. The goal of this report is to share information in regards to the impact that JD had on student behavior and how a program evaluation was utilized to provide the data that school leaders need to make improvements to the program.

A lack of knowledge concerning the effectiveness of JD was the motivation behind this study. The program was implemented at Smith Middle School to improve student behavior, and was limited to eighth grade students and teachers. However, no evaluation was in place to determine the program's impact on student behavior, and no information was available to help guide the future direction of the program. This project study was created to conduct a program evaluation of JD as an initial step in addressing a school's need for a meaningful and systematic method of promoting a continuous commitment to improving in student behavior.

The goal of this evaluation was to determine whether the program was meeting its intended goals and if there were any changes that needed to be made to enhance the quality of the program. The evaluation required input from the teachers associated with the program. Specifically, the formative evaluation sought to engage teachers in meaningful discussion regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the program and suggestions for how the program could be improved. The summative evaluation used student social development surveys to determine if the intervention worked to improve student behavior. To increase reliability and validity, the study utilized a mixed-methods design and triangulated data from student surveys, teacher surveys, and teacher interviews.

The format of the executive summary report includes the following: (a) an introduction, (b) a description of the purpose of the study, (c) a statement of the problem, (d) the results of the study's evaluation, (e) recommendations to address the problems, (f) study results, (g) a conclusion, and (h) references. The intended audience for this

executive summary report is the school leaders and other school system officials who make the final decisions regarding the design, implementation, and evaluation of behavior intervention programs. This evaluation will provide the school leaders with the study's findings regarding the current state of JD and its impact on student behavior at Smith Middle School.

### **Rationale**

Smith Middle School has a goal to improve student behavior as well as to improve perceptions of school safety while fostering a positive learning environment. Furthermore, the school has goals in place to decrease the number of classroom disruptions and student discipline problems, as well as improve the relationship between teachers and students, and increase student awareness about their rights and responsibilities for living and learning in a democratic society.

This evaluation used a mixed-methods approach to analyze student behavior data as well as explore teachers' perceptions and satisfaction levels with the newly implemented JD program. The study allowed me to explore the program's components and to gather recommendations to improve any areas that the clients felt were not successful.

The results of this evaluation will be shared in an executive summary report with the school's administration. The goal of this executive report is to share information for making necessary changes to components of JD as a means to improve student behavior at Smith Middle School. An executive summary report was used for this project because it is an appropriate and efficient method for presenting information to the school leaders.

Because of a lack of exposure to the type of research, data analysis, or specific academic terms I have used, some school leaders may not understand the language of the dissertation or research paper component of this study. The executive summary report will provide information for the school leaders to consider as they work to make improvements to the JD program.

The recommendations in the executive summary report address administrative support, training, and future evaluation. The process of the study is displayed in Figure 7 and depicts the evaluation process for the JD behavior intervention program. Column one represents the problem that Smith Middle School faced when they implemented JD and struggled to determine if the program was working due to the lack of an evaluation measure. The input was a client centered program evaluation was implemented to determine the strengths and weakness of the program. The activities column displays the instruments that were utilized to gather the data needed to evaluate the program. The outputs represent the results of evaluation along with the recommendations that were presented to the program administrators in the form of an executive summary report. The outcome column communicates the information that program administrators have gained to guide their decision making for future implementation of JD.

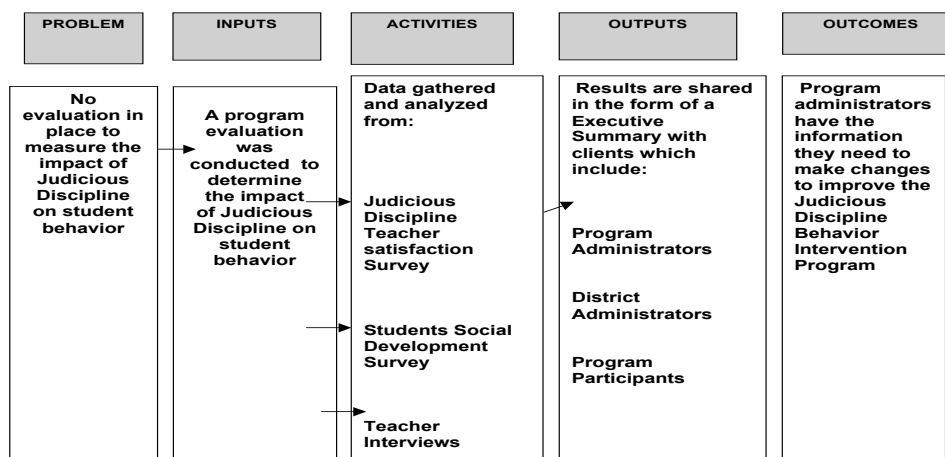


Figure 7. Logic Model for Program Evaluation of JD.

### Review of the Literature

This literature review explores the type of evaluation used in this study and the content presented in the executive report. First, an in-depth analysis of a client centered evaluation and how it informs the study will be discussed. Second, a literature review will stress the need for teacher training, administrative support, and the necessity of fidelity when implementing behavior intervention programs. Components of this literature review are based on the strengths and weaknesses of JD as identified in the study's findings.

A variety of sources were examined for this literature review. Full-text materials were found in professional peer-reviewed sources. Sources for this section came from *Google Scholar* or from databases such as *EBSCO* or *ERIC*. Some of the search criteria included terms such as: *effective teacher training, conducting a client-centered program evaluation, administrative support for behavior interventions, professional learning, effective professional development, measuring fidelity of implementation, middle school, types of evaluations, factors of fidelity, effective leadership, executive summary, and fidelity of implementation* .

### **Client-Centered Evaluation**

A goal of this study was to summarize the findings from a client centered responsive evaluation that provides evidence for design and implementation decisions (Amba, 2005; Stake, 2002). A client-centered evaluation allowed me to gather information from the perspective of the teachers and the students about the strengths and weaknesses of JD. The evaluation revealed that the primary strength of JD was improved student behavior; and the primary weaknesses were insufficient teacher training, a lack of support from the school administration, and fidelity with implementation of the program. The school leaders need to be presented with the clients' perceptions and first-hand experiences with JD in order to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the program, as well as the needs and concerns of the program participants. Doing so guided the administrators in making changes that will help improve the conditions of the program and to improve student behavior. A client-centered evaluation was the best choice to uncover and communicate the needs of the program to my client.

The client-centered method of program evaluation measures the effectiveness of a program from the perspective of the client. The purpose of a client-centered evaluation is to ensure that the program being studied is working to satisfy the needs and concerns of the client (Mertens, 2002). These evaluations require clients to collaborate through dialogue and in-depth discussions, as well as share experiences with the researcher (Amba, 2006; Stake, 1980).

The client is not a coevaluator but provides detailed insight about the program (Amba, 2006). Allowing a client to share their perspective based on their personal experience with a program is a powerful way to help the evaluator gain a deeper understanding of the client's needs Stake (1980). In this evaluation approach, the evaluator gathers both qualitative and quantitative information. The evaluator is concerned with the quality of the program and its impact on a client. The qualitative data provides information from a client that is essential in determining the program's worth. While quantitative analysis is essential for measuring goals, alone it cannot provide a complete picture of programs worth. Stake (1983) adds:

“Responsive evaluation will be particularly useful during formative evaluation when the staff needs help in monitoring the program, when no one is sure what problems will arise. It will be particularly useful in summative evaluation when audiences want an understanding of a program's activities, its strengths and shortcomings and when the evaluator feels that it is his responsibility to provide a vicarious experience“ (p. 15).

The client-centered program evaluation originates from Roger's (1951) work in client-centered therapy. The client being served in a program plays a major role in investigating potential problems and issues associated with the program similar to a client in therapy. The client shares their perspective and experiences with the program with the researcher which includes problematic and successful components. and A client-centered program evaluation is subjective and, therefore, contrasts sharply with the process-oriented and the objective-oriented evaluation approaches. This approach is not designed to evaluate if the clients are meeting the program's goals but to evaluate the needs of the clients as they relate to the program being studied (Amba, 2006; Bloom, 2010).

Evaluators communicate what the clients disclose about the program and its components (Stake, 1980). Evaluators do not make decisions about changes or the direction the program is headed. In their reports, evaluators make recommendations based on findings from the data collected in the study. For this study, the evaluator created a report and presented the findings to the administration. The report contained suggestions that were based on the data analysis for improving the program.

The data from this client-centered program evaluation provided school leaders with information they need to determine the impact of JD on student behavior. The project enabled me to examine the strengths and weaknesses of the program based on the data. The project utilized information from the data, such as teacher interviews, to make suggestions for improving the program based on the clients' perspectives. The mixed methods evaluation allowed me to gain a more complete picture of the strengths and



weakness of the program and make suggestions to improve its impact on student behavior.

Client-centered evaluations often continue after the first year in order to track the progress of the program being evaluated (Fitzpatrick, 2011). Evaluations should incorporate the flexibility to gather data and make adjustments when needed (Patton, 2008). Program evaluations no longer need to be evaluated on a specific date or month but are ongoing throughout the life cycle of the program (Wholey, 2010). In order to monitor the future progress of the JD program, a responsive client centered evaluation should continue. Continued evaluation of programs provides reflection on the performance of the program and enable the program administrator to receive feedback on the effectiveness of the program (Dunsworth, 2012). An evaluation JD should continue in order to provide the administrators with the information they need to guide changes of the program.

Based on the results of the first year-end evaluation, a plan for the following year should be created. In general the plan should include on going monitoring that addresses the specific data to collect, when to collect the data, how to collect the data, how to analyze the data, and what outcome data to report to whom. According to Paul (2010) future summaries should include information generated by current evaluation questions as well as information from any newly created questions based on the needs of the study. Ongoing client centered program evaluations support continuous improvement as well as generate information to determine if a program is working as it was intended (Killion, 2013).

## **Professional Development**

According to Gore and Ladwig (2006), teacher professional development (PD) is crucial to the successful implementation of new programs at the classroom level. Effective professional development allows teachers to increase their knowledge and develop new instructional practices. When staff members receive quality training to implement new and existing programs, it can lead to increased motivation in the staff (Cooper, 2010). According to Bayer (2014) effective professional development should consider the needs of the teacher and school, teacher choice in the selection and implementation of professional development and on-going support offered to the teachers.

In a study by Gibson (2012) teachers gave suggestions on ways to improve their ability to implement a new program. First, follow-up to the initial PD needs to take place. Teachers felt as if they were given training, but no follow up to the training. Secondly, teachers felt they needed supportive and knowledgeable administrators to back their implementation of the program. Other suggestions were securing funds to attend ongoing PD, having other teachers with whom to collaborate, and having a designated program expert to go to when there were questions. All of these suggestions were identified as important elements for successful implementation of a new program. Lastly, teachers cited resistance to change as affecting the success of the implementation. The reason for the resistance was the amount of constant change that was already going on in the classroom.

Professional training is a vital part of PBIS programs such as JD. Several research studies suggest (Barrett, Bradshaw, & Lewis-Palmer, 2008; Morrissey, Bohanon, & Fenning, 2010) that, when implemented with fidelity, School Wide Positive Behavior Support is effective at reducing the overall occurrence of problem behavior. One of the key components that contribute to this effectiveness is professional development. According to Flannery (2013) professional development in SWPBS should be ongoing. School staff members should receive intensive training before the program starts as well as follow support once the implementation begins. Ongoing reviews of current practices should be conducted to determine if revisions need to be made or if teachers need additional training and support. The reviews should take place via teacher observations, surveys, and interviews. The absence of an ongoing school-wide professional development for JD was an area of weakness on which all participants agreed.

One teacher stated, “Some teachers read the JD book over the summer and met to discuss plans for implementing the program. While others did not read the book until school started.” Maybe, this was because the program was not required by the administration. Currently the administration does not require teachers to implement the program. During the interviews, all teachers agreed that if every staff member received ongoing training and implemented JD, student behaviors would improve in all classrooms and not just those who implemented the program. One teacher summed up this idea by stating, “JD was not implemented school-wide so when our students combined with students who were not a part of the JD program, their behaviors sometimes reverted back

to disrespectful behavior". With ongoing professional development the program could be implemented more effectively and consistently school wide.

Teachers also indicated that they had made preparations on their own in order to implement JD (67%). Teachers in the JD study did not receive formal training from the administration but agreed to read a book on their own time. Research has indicated that the sustainability of PBIS programs such as JD must rely on ongoing professional development, coaching, and system evaluation (Carr et al., 2002; Sugai et al., 2000). Smith Middle School would benefit from offering all teachers and the entire staff initial and ongoing additional training for JD. The program would also benefit from ongoing planning, evaluations, and revising of the behavior system. Gathercoal (2004) recommends that schools who implement JD should be prepared to dedicate time and resources to the initial training as well as ongoing training so the staff maintains an understanding of the tasks the program requires them to perform. Doing so will facilitate their goal of improved student behaviors. In order for this to happen, Smith Middle School needs strong administrative support.

### **Support From Administration**

The functional leadership theory (Hackman & Walton, 1986) states that the major role of leadership is to promote collaboration among stakeholders. During the interview process, teachers spoke about how the administration was not consistent when handling behavior referrals. For example, the student handbook stated that specific actions would be taken after each of the four step offenses. However, administration did not consistently follow these procedures. Effective leadership requires leaders to have a strong

commitment during change (Ely, 1990). Less than half of teachers agreed with the statement “I am satisfied with my school's administrative support for JD.”

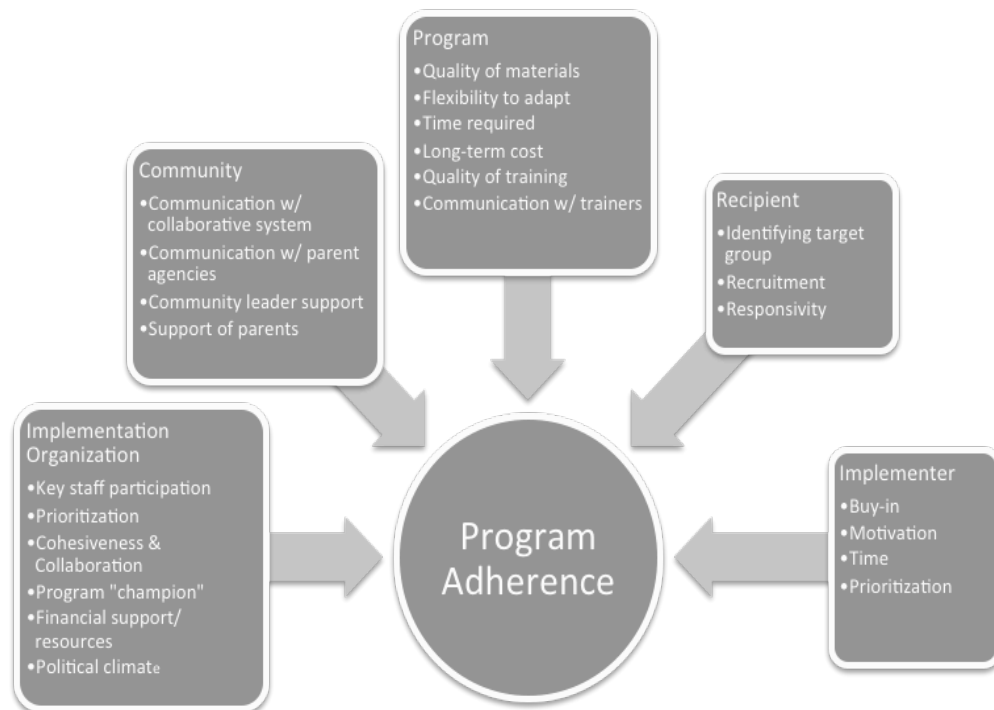
Administrative support is an essential component to the success of PBIS programs (Cooper, 2010; McArdle, 2011) such as JD. The administration at Smith Middle School would benefit from hearing these teachers' perspectives concerning the lack of administrative support. According to Foucault (1998) and Wang's (2011) regular discussions between teachers and administrators could be helpful in determining why these teachers do not feel supported. One possible explanation could be that the administrator may not be aware of the steps the teacher had already taken to correct the student's behavior. However, this type of information is important to know if those in want to hold students accountable for their behavior and support their teachers. Lack of administrative support jeopardizes a positive working environment. To correct this problem, teachers and administrators need to consider scheduling regular meetings to discuss how the administration could offer more support in dealing with student referrals. Administrators also need to let teachers know they appreciate their steps to implement the program with fidelity and their attempts to correct student behavior before a referral is written.

### **Fidelity Of Implementation**

Fidelity of implementation is essential for achieving the same results that were achieved during research (Moncher & Prinz, 1991; Yeaton & Sechrest, 1981). Fidelity of implementation in educational settings occurs when teachers properly utilize skills and knowledge they gained from professional development to deliver an intended curriculum

by using instructional strategies in the same way that they were designed to be used, and delivered (Azano, 2014). According to Harn (2013) evidence-based programs that are implemented with high fidelity will result in desired outcomes whereas low fidelity will lead to poorer outcomes.

Fidelity is necessary to achieve the same results that were achieved in the research phase of the program in question. When changes are made or strategies are omitted in how the program is implemented, the effects on the students may be unexpected (Azano, 2011). In order to understand the impact on students, researchers need to consider the degree to which teachers implement programs as they were intended by the developers. Several factors are related to the fidelity of programs in educational institutions (Gresham, 2000). These factors include the time required to implement the program, perceived effectiveness of the program by participants and the complexity of the program (Elliott 1988). Schools must have a plan in place that determines how and when they will measure these and other factors that impact the fidelity of implementation. Figure 8 displays factors that impact the fidelity of implementation.



*Figure 8.* Factors of Fidelity of Implementation

The complexity of a program is directly related to the fidelity of implementation. The more complex a program is, the greater the chance for a lack of fidelity during implementation (Yeaton & Sechrest, 1981). Fidelity is even more cumbersome when implemented by third parties like teachers. To ensure fidelity, checks must be in place to assure teachers are implementing the program as it was designed (Mortenson, 1998). JD is a complex program that was implemented by teachers. It is complex because of specific components that must be implemented on a daily basis. For example, teachers must consistently refer to the Bill of Rights and speak the JD language of “right time”, “right place”, and “right manner” in order for it to be effective (Gathercoal, 2004). No

checks were in place to ensure all teachers were implementing JD properly. Time is another constraint to the fidelity of implementation. Complex programs usually require more time to implement (Noell, 2005). JD requires lesson planning, classroom time to implement the lessons, whole class meetings, and one-on-one student conferences that take time. JD requires a daily commitment of time as well as a long-term commitment in order to be effective (Gathercoal 2004).

New programs and practices that are perceived by school personnel to be effective may be implemented with greater fidelity than programs whose practices are less acceptable (Brackett, 2007). As a result, these practices are more likely to be effective in changing behavior. Practices that are presented with positive outcome information have been shown to influence the acceptability of the practice (Clark & Elliott, 1988). Practices that result in rapid behavior change may be continued with greater fidelity than those, which take longer to produce results (Gresham, 2000). Teachers who participated in JD shared the perception that it worked to change students' behavior. None of the participants were required to participate in the program. Even so, when interviewed, some of the participants stated that fellow participants were not implementing the program consistently. During the study, determining the fidelity of implementation for JD was not possible since a measure was not in place.

How and when to measure fidelity of implementation is an issue that must be included when planning to implement a program evaluation. Starting early monitoring of fidelity is essential to provide rapid feedback for the areas the intervention was designed to target (Webster-Stratton et al. 2011). Program administrators should observe fidelity



early and often with the goal of improving practice and outcome. If consideration of fidelity is postponed until the middle or end of the implementation, valuable early feedback may not be considered and, therefore, may negatively impact outcomes (Kutash, 2012). It is recommend that a specific checklist of the programs desired practices is used during the observations in order to provide timely and responsive professional development and maximize student outcomes (Kretlow & Bartholomew, 2010).

As previously stated, the administrators over JD had no plan in place to measure the fidelity of implementation early within the program. This absence of attention could prevent the program from generating the desired students' outcomes. For JD, fidelity of implementation must be measured early and often throughout the life of the program. Observations should take place with the use of a pre-determined checklist of the programs desired practices. In addition, interviews and rating scales should be used to gather data in regards to the perceptions of the participants. Doing so will provide program administrators with the multiple sources of the information they need to provide necessary support, resources, and professional development to the parties who are implementing the program.

Several data sources for this study suggest that the fidelity of the implementation of JD may have been compromised. First, the data from the Student Social Development Survey communicated that the change in student social development was not evident at the higher stages of cohesion and autonomy as evidenced by no significant change in the level of distribution responses between the pre and post-test. In other words, large

portions of students were grouped at the lower end of the social development scale. A second indication that the program lacked fidelity of implementation came from the one-on-one teacher interviews. All three teachers stated the program was not being implemented consistently. One of the essential components emphasized during the training of JD was consistently using the terms “right time”, “right place”, and “right manner”. All three teachers who were interviewed stated that not all of the program participants consistently used these terms when addressing students for inappropriate behavior.

Gathercoal (2004) found that teachers who did not hold consistently use the terminology of JD experienced a higher level of students in the rebellion range of social development. Teachers who consistently practiced all of the components of JD maintained a high autonomous level response rate on the student social development scale. After a five-year study, the findings revealed that teachers who take time to model and practice JD with their students reap the benefits Gathercoal (2004). These benefits included teachers who feel less stress, students who display respect for the teacher and for each other and an over all environment of civility.

In order for a behavior intervention program to be effective, professional development and staff cooperation is a must (Sugai et al., 2000). Another challenging aspect of implementation, according to Sugai et al. is persuading all staff members to support the program, once it is in place, by continuing to communicate the program expectations to the students. In order for JD to work as it was designed, teachers must practice fidelity of the implementation of the program.

## **Implementation**

In order to implement this project study fully, a system of evaluations was established that included tools for data collection, data analysis, and the creation of an executive summary report that included recommendations for improving the program. The delivery of the executive report will provide school leaders with recommendations to guide them in making informed decisions about the future of JD. Time and resources were needed to accomplish each task in the evaluation. The approximate time needed to properly address the evaluation questions was thirty weeks.

Once they receive the executive report, the administration should establish measurable goals and guidelines for the program. This evaluation and the executive summary report will guide the administration in making changes in the JD program. If invited, I will assist the administration in conducting future evaluations.

## **Potential Resources and Existing Supports**

The primary audience for the executive report is the school leadership. I will request a meeting with the school leaders to present the executive summary report developed as the project for this study. During the meeting, I will respond to any questions the group may have. For the formative evaluation, I gathered data from teacher and student surveys that targeted specific components of JD (see Appendices C and D). The surveys were quantitative in design. In addition to the survey instruments, I also developed a set of interview questions for the individual teacher interviews (see Appendix E). The data collection instruments used for the formative evaluation component allowed students and teachers to provide their perspectives of the strengths

and weaknesses of JD and to have an opportunity to provide suggestions for improvements. The data collection instruments and methods for data analysis may be utilized by school leaders continually to monitor the impact of JD in the future. The implementation of the recommendations contained in the executive summary is the responsibility of the school's leaders.

### **Potential Barriers**

If research experts view program evaluations as a valid method to measure student progress, why do not more schools use them to evaluate their programs? Schools do not employ program evaluations for a few reasons. Concerns of the program staff include who is going to do the evaluation, when is it to be done, and how to acquire funds for the evaluation, According to Taut and Alkin (2002):

“Program evaluations require funding, time and technical skills: requirements that are often perceived as diverting limited program resources from clients. Program staff are often concerned that evaluation activities will inhibit timely accessibility to services or compromise the safety of clients” (p.13).

Traditionally, educational policy has been formed by ideas more than evidence (Slavin, 2008). Administrators and teachers alike are guilty of depending on their feelings with no evidence to measure the success of programs within their schools or districts (Bernhardt, 2000). Schools use this method because of the lack of the knowledge or skills to conduct a program evaluation (Lachat &Smith, 2005). Most school districts do not

offer professional development on data collection and analysis in order to promote program development (Cromey, 2000). Bringing in an outside trained evaluator provides a third party who will be objective and bring a new perspective to the project (Isaacs, 2003). Professional evaluators create well-designed programs that effectively target goals and objectives by collecting and analyzing data (Chatterji, 2008). However, professional evaluators can be expensive.

Limited financial resources often prevent schools from securing a professional evaluator to evaluate the effectiveness of their programs. It is typically recommended that 5-15% of project cost be set aside for the cost of evaluation (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 2012). Many schools are currently facing budget cuts that eliminate the possibility of hiring a third party to conduct a program evaluation. Some or all of the cost may be reduced if the evaluator is a staff member. Even then, additional resources will be needed to cover the time for staff participation as well as materials needed to gather and analyze data.

Schools lack resources to conduct program evaluations (Goldie, 2006). Staff members are hesitant to participate in an evaluation that requires more of their time. Teachers report that they are overwhelmed with the amount of work they already have and the little time they have to complete it (Ikemoto & Marsh, 2007). In addition, teachers do not have access to the databases and specialized software needed to conduct program evaluations (Lachat & Smith, 2005).

For this study, several factors constrained the implementation of the project, one of which was a limited number of teachers to serve as possible participants for the study.

Other barriers included the amount of time the study demanded and the amount of data that needed to be collected and analyzed. I developed the evaluation measures for the formative evaluation that included the teacher survey and the open-ended questions for the individual teacher interviews. For the summative assessment, the school administered the student social development surveys and provided me with the results. The responsibility for analyzing and triangulating data from the student surveys, teacher surveys, and teachers interviews was mine alone. This process was a time consuming endeavor for me.

Soliciting teacher participants for the survey and focus group interview portion of the study was another barrier I experienced. Only nine teachers participated in the JD program and thus were qualified to participate in the online survey and teacher interviews. All nine participated in the online survey, but only three agreed to participate in the individual interviews. I needed as many teachers as possible to participate in order to sustain the validity and reliability of the study's results. For the interviews, I was faced with the issue of securing the conference room at the school and scheduling interview times to meet with the participants that was agreeable for both them and me. Additionally, I had to rely on the school to provide the de-identified data from the student survey.

### **Proposal for Implementation and Time Line**

Data collection for this study did not begin until approval was granted from the Institutional Review Board (612-312-1210) at Walden University. IRB approval was granted on February 11, 2015. The study officially began on February 20, 2015, when I

sent teachers, a letter of consent/invitation to participate in JD via email to those who agreed to participate in the study.

The executive summary report uses data to communicate the strengths and weaknesses of the study as well as provide suggestions for improving the program. Additional suggestions include a time line that will serve as a guide to school leaders as they continue an ongoing evaluation process. The evaluation plan includes formative measures designed to help the school leaders make immediate changes while the program is in progress. In addition, a summative evaluation is suggested at the end of the school year to help them determine if the program met its goals.

I recommend that formative evaluation start no later than six weeks after the program has been implemented and should be completed within two months to include collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and reporting the data. The formative process should be completed at least twice during the school year.

### **Roles and Responsibilities of Student and Others**

All participants in JD are considered members of a democratic learning community. As members, they are expected to participate in classroom meetings, engage in problem solving discussions, and contribute to decision making that will protect the rights of all those involved in their democratic classroom. This framework for discussion helps to move behavioral issues from the category of teacher/student struggle to two or more people, which include teachers and/or students working as a team to resolve a conflict. Specifically, the role of the teachers and the administration in JD is to help students understand their rights and responsibilities as a community member within

school and society. The main responsibility of the administration is to develop an action plan that implements and coordinates the JD program. The students' role is to participate in developing a plan, which will bring their behaviors more in line with social expectations.

As the researcher, I am responsible for presenting the executive summary report to the school leaders as well as clarifying any questions that they may have in reference to the evaluation and its contents as written in the report. If the school leaders request my participation in future evaluation initiatives, I will respect their request and accept the responsibility. However, the school leaders will be responsible for the funding, time, and resources needed to continue the evaluation process.

### **Implications Including Social Change**

The content of this executive summary report addresses the problem of poor student behavior at Smith Middle School by presenting the findings of an evaluation to the school leadership. Before JD was implemented, Smith Middle School did not have a program in place to address the problem of poor student behaviors. Smith Middle had the highest number of hearings out of all the schools in the district, and the number of student referrals had increased for the past three years. The implementation of the JD program sought to improve student behaviors and decrease the number of student discipline problems while creating responsible citizens who respect the rights of others. The intention of the program was to make the school community safer by implementing the behavior intervention program. JD is aligned with Kohlberg's (1984) theory of moral development. Bowen (2004) suggested that proactive behavior intervention strategies



might result in positive behavior changes that spilled over from the school and into the community. JD is a proactive intervention program that encourages students think about their behavior choices before they act.

JD was implemented at Smith Middle School to encourage students to develop social and moral reasoning. Kohlberg (1989) argued that moral discourse is spurred by moral reasoning. He believed in a community approach to education with three basic goals: a discussion of moral reasoning, the development of classroom rules through a democratic process, and the creation of societies whereby students and teachers utilize moral reasoning to drive decision making. The teachers who participated in JD held classroom meetings where students engaged in discussions about their rights and responsibilities as students within the school and a citizen in the community.

### **Local Community**

This study may affect social change. Negative student behaviors can have a negative impact on a teacher's ability to teach and a student's ability to learn. Research shows that disruptive student behaviors negatively impacts student learning and the culture of the school (Tschannen-Moran & WoodFolk Hoy, 2001). Poor student behavior may frustrate teachers, making them less effective in the classroom (Howard & Johnson, 2002). According to Dunne (2002), schools are faced with the challenge of finding ways to reconcile education and citizenship. The classroom lessons offered in JD teach students to become responsible members of a society who respect the rights of others. At Smith Middle School, JD had a positive impact on student behavior. This progression of students moving towards autonomy is evidence that students are progressing morally and

that the emphasis that JD places on Kohlberg's (1984) theory of moral development will have a positive effect on social change.

In past years, the leaders at Smith Middle School had quantitative data from Infinite Campus to tell them student behavior was getting worse, but no qualitative evidence exists to support if they were well-informed of the internal factors that may influence student behavior (Douglas et al., 2008). The lack of qualitative data means that teachers and staff did not formally have an opportunity to share their perceptions of student behavior resulting in a lack of information needed to guide a student behavior program. As evidenced in the formative evaluation data, some factors related to JD include lack of support from the administration and a lack of training which have lead to the program's not being implemented consistently school wide.

This executive report will present findings and recommendations that provide the leadership at Smith Middle School the information they need to address components of JD that present a threat to the program's impact on student behavior. If the recommendations in the executive summary are implemented, their implementation should enable school leaders to monitor and improve the impact that JD has on student behaviors. The executive summary contains resources to continue the process of evaluating the program on a continuous basis, which may lead to an overall decline in the number of student referrals.

This project provides benefits to the students, teachers, school leaders, and the community. The school leaders may be encouraged to consider using evaluations to guide their decisions in regards to JD and other school initiatives. Teachers will have

more confidence in their leadership when they understand that decisions about school initiatives are being driven from the findings of the evaluations. Furthermore, the school leaders may share the findings of this study and future evaluations with district leaders and surrounding community members to communicate their commitment to school improvement. Specifically, for this study, improvement in student behaviors could equate to students becoming productive members of their community.

### **Far-Reaching**

This study could benefit school leaders from across the districts that are searching for a behavior intervention program and ways to evaluate that program. Teachers and administrators from other schools could visit Smith Middle School and talk to the teachers and students to learn more about the program. The administrators at Smith Middle School could share the benefits of a program evaluation and how it has helped to guide their decision making for the program. Specifically, they may use the recommendations and resources included in the executive summary as an example of how to identify strengths and weaknesses within a program and how to use the information to facilitate change. This study may result in initiating systematic change district wide in terms of the behavior intervention as well as the program evaluation that is used for assessing the impact a variety of programs. Making improvements to JD may help to improve student behavior, reduce student referrals, and teach students to be responsible citizens of the community. Student behavior could improve not only at Smith Middle School but also at other schools within district through the sharing of this study. The district-wide implementation of program evaluation would show the community and

other stakeholders that the district leaders are committed to making changes based on findings from the evaluations.

### **Conclusion**

Section 3 was organized to provide a full picture of JD by explaining the development of the executive report that will be presented to the school leaders at Smith Middle School. The purpose of the report was to provide leadership with information that will deepen their understanding of the impact of JD on student behavior as well as to emphasize the importance of continued program evaluations. The report provides the strengths and weaknesses of the JD program as well as makes recommendations for improving areas of need based on the perspective of the teachers who participated in the program. The executive report provides recommendations based on the results of the formative and summative evaluations of the study. The formative evaluation included nine participants who completed a structured online survey that was used to answer questions pertaining to JD and its effectiveness at this particular school. The summative evaluation included collecting and analyzing data from student surveys. The results from this study will provide school leaders with recommendations to guide them in making necessary changes to JD. These changes may include, which improvements will be made, what will be needed to make the improvements, and how will the improvements be implemented. A review of professional literature was included in this section to support the evaluation design, a rationale for the evaluation, and potential implications towards social change.

I will present the executive report to the leaders at Smith Middle School after the study has received final approval from Walden University. It will be the decision of the leadership to implement the recommendations to improve JD.

Section 4, the last section of the study, includes my reflections on the process of researching and developing this executive report. Specifically, I include sections on limitations and bias and the overcoming of each, my roles in the research, and the recommendations for future research.

## Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

### **Introduction**

In the final section of this study, I will discuss the strengths and limitations of the project study. In addition, I will detail my reflections of scholarship, development and implementation of the project and present recommendations for future evaluations. I will also discuss the importance of the completed study and discuss how the findings can be used to affect social change.

This program evaluation was conducted to inform the school leaders at Smith Middle School of the value and impact of a behavior intervention program called JD. According to student referral data from the Infinite Campus behavior-tracking program, Smith Middle School had the most student hearings out of the 12 middle schools in the district. As a result, the school leaders agreed to allow a group of grade eight teachers to implement a behavior intervention program called JD as a way to improve student behavior and decrease discipline problems. School leaders, however, have not evaluated the program to determine the programs strengths, weaknesses, or its effectiveness in improving student behavior. Therefore, an evaluation was needed to test the effectiveness of JD at Smith Middle School from the perspectives of teachers involved with the program.

The rationale to implement a program evaluation for JD was an to address Smith Middle School's need for a systematic evaluation to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the program based on data. Formative and summative evaluations were used to answer the four evaluation questions that guided this study. The formative

evaluation, measured by teacher surveys and teacher interviews revealed the strengths and weaknesses of the program. The summative evaluation revealed the program's impact on student behavior as measured by the student social development survey. The recommendations may be used to guide program reform for the future school years.

### **Project Strengths**

This project addressed the need to evaluate a program implemented for the purpose of improving student behavior. Other studies have emphasized a need for program evaluation to inform leaders as they make decisions and strive to improve behavior intervention programs (Cai, 2010; Cook, 2010). This program evaluation study was designed to test the efficacy of the JD program by identifying possible areas for improvement based on the perspectives of the participants. The project used formative and summative evaluations, which added to the validity and reliability of the findings. The culminating project for this study reveals the strengths and the weaknesses of the program to the school leaders in the form of an executive summary report.

One of the strengths of this evaluation process is that it allowed a detailed examination of JD that lead to the creation of the executive summary. The report provides school leaders with the findings of the study and information that describe components of the program based on both quantitative and qualitative data. The executive summary also includes suggestions for improving the program. Another strength of this evaluation is that it used both formative and summative data to create the executive summary.

The formative evaluation provided a variety of data for the components of JD, which was critical in the creation of the executive summary. The formative evaluation gathered data based on the perceptions of teachers and students who participated in JD. One hundred and forty-eight students completed the Social Development Survey, and nine teachers completed the JD Satisfaction Survey; three of those teachers participated in one-on-one interviews. The teacher surveys were an asset to this project because it enabled me quickly and reliably to obtain data concerning the teachers' perspectives. The one-on-one teacher interviews were an effective method for collecting a variety of perceptions and personal experiences with the current program, as suggested by Lodico et al. (2010). The implementation of a mixed-methods approach for the formative evaluation allowed for depth and breadth in inquiry. Both the surveys and the interviews quickly produced data related to the strengths and weaknesses of JD. This data was shared in the executive summary and was appropriate for guiding the future development of the program.

The summative evaluation gathered quantitative data from student surveys that measured the progress of students as they advanced on the student social development scale. The summative data provided information that verified that JD was improving student behavior, but not at the desired rate. The summative data analysis used in the executive summary demonstrated to school leaders that the program was working to improve student behavior and reduce discipline problems. The data also provided school leaders with the information they need to make decisions that will guide the future of the program.



The executive summary, which was prepared for the leaders at Smith Middle School, contains recommendations for program reform that are based on this study's findings. The culminating project developed for this study presents the findings to local school leaders along with suggestions for improving the program. The combined results of both the formative and summative evaluations will guide school leaders as they make decisions based on how JD is impacting student behavior and the changes that need to be made to the program to increase its effectiveness.

Additional strengths of this study are proven through its promotion of democratic collaboration, the slight move towards more socially responsible students, and continuous improvement of practices by engaging in evaluations. This evaluation provided an executive report that may influence leaders to make changes to JD that generate resources and provide teachers with the support needed to make the Smith Middle School a safer place for students, staff, and faculty members.

### **Recommendations for Remediation of Limitations**

The program evaluation provided evidence of the value and impact of JD, but the study also revealed several limiting characteristics as areas for improvement. These improvements will help future evaluations to overcome possible limitations that may negatively impact the evaluation results (Spaulding, 2008). The limitations are: consideration of alternative behavior intervention programs, researcher bias, a limited implementation of JD, and the quality of training received in order to implement the program. One limitation of the study may have been bias due to my dual role as educator and researcher in the school. The principal provided de-identified data, which allowed me

to overcome this limitation. When given the data, students were identified by number for the purpose of confidentiality and to prevent bias.

I recommend that the school leaders at Smith Middle School invest in an external evaluator to conduct future evaluations of JD. The suggestion to engage external evaluators for improving JD would limit potential bias, as these evaluators would not be school stakeholders and would have no personal interest in the program. If school leaders or the district are unable to hire an external evaluator, then they could provide training for teacher leaders to be able to conduct the evaluation of the program.

Investing time and resources to train teacher leaders how to use a variety of tools to collect and analyze data will empower them to continue the evaluation process for JD and other programs that are in need of evaluation. A data committee could be formed by a group of teachers who agree to go through the training and carry out the evaluations.

A second limitation includes the fact that the teachers were self-selected. At the end of the JD Satisfaction online survey, I invited teachers who completed the survey to participate in the one-on-one interviews. I don't know why the participants volunteered for the interview. They may have had particularly strong feelings or opinions about JD, a specific interest in the study or its findings, or they may have wanted to help me as a researcher.

A final limitation is that this study was only conducted at one middle school. Elementary, middle, and high school administrators use a variety of behavior intervention programs across this district. Deciding which program best meets the needs of students within the individual schools is left up to the school leadership. School leaders at the

local site of interest gave permission to a group of grade eight teachers who requested permission to implement JD in their classrooms.

The implementation of JD at Smith Middle School, then, is different from the behavior intervention programs other school leaders have chosen to implement at their respective schools. Some of the schools in the county have PBIS programs in place, but none have specifically implemented JD.

I recommend that all teachers and staff members at Smith Middle School receive training on how to implement JD school-wide. Doing so will allow the program to be implemented consistently throughout the entire school instead of just the eighth grade. During the implementation, formative evaluations should take place to measure the progress of the program from the student and teacher perspective. At the end of the first year, summative data should be gathered, analyzed, and compared to other schools in the county that have behavior intervention programs.

Data should be collected from schools that use a behavior intervention program or PBIS programs that are similar to the program at Smith Middle School in order potentially to resolve the limitation presented by focusing on one school. Behavior data should be collected from schools with different intervention designs and student profiles. Data amongst the different schools should be compared by the specific behavior intervention plan that is being implemented within the grade range of students (elementary, middle, or high).

Data from different schools offer the opportunity for more student and teacher stakeholders to be involved in the formative evaluation component and, thus, add to the

understanding and depth of knowledge concerning behavior intervention programs throughout the district. Including more schools would also enhance the summative evaluation component because the additional data would provide a greater sense of how the different programs impact student behavior and influence school culture. Information for the behavior intervention programs would be extremely useful to district-level leaders involved with making decisions that impact stakeholders throughout the district. Once the formative and summative evaluations are complete, the programs at each school could be compared to determine which one successfully improved student behaviors and decreased the number student discipline problems. The district leaders may decide to implement a single behavior intervention school-wide or continue to allow each school to implement the program that best fits the needs of their students and staff.

The third limitation to the implementation of JD is the different levels or total lack of staff training. All of the teachers who participated in JD read the book *Judicious Discipline* by Forrest Gathercoal (2001) by for how to implement the program. Some read the book during the summer and met with other teachers to discuss the book and create plans for implementation before school started. Others did not read the book or start planning lessons until school started. All of the program participants read and participated in planning once school started. Because this was a voluntary program, the majority of the teachers at Smith Middle School did not participate in any training related to JD. This lack of consistency may have impacted study since teachers and staff approached and handled student behavior issues differently. The inconsistent treatment and expectations from the school faculty may have caused some confusion amongst the

students and may have had an impact on student behaviors. First, it is recommended that school leaders encourage teachers, staff members, and students to become committed to JD by providing the necessary steps to a successful implementation. It is necessary to obtain the support of the staff to keep a behavior intervention program active. Staff members must commit to scheduling regular meetings and using data to make decisions.

Administrative support is also an essential component to the success of JD. According to Bradshaw et al. (2008), initial training in behavioral intervention programs should focus on strategies for teaching behavioral expectations to students. In order for teachers to do this, they must go through extensive training, so they have an understanding of the program. Training will help to ensure the program is implemented consistently throughout the school and reinforce to students that all teachers are willing participants in the program. It is also recommended that a committee be formed to develop lessons for classroom meetings for teaching behavioral expectations associated with JD. These lessons will ensure consistent implementation and take the stress from teachers who already experience a heavy workload. A limitation of PBIS programs such as JD, as identified by Bradshaw (2008), is the time required for the program to be effective. Typically, behavior intervention requires 3 to 5 years from program implementation to the realization of positive results. To assist with the time requirement, the formative evaluations should be implemented to help the leadership know if the program is working towards the goal of improving student behaviors or if adjustments need to be made.

Another training related suggestion that will assist teachers and students is to

create a school safety advisory board. School leaders can include representatives such as local police officers, attorneys, business professionals, and parents all of whom are essential in promoting school safety based on the principals of the Constitution of the United States (Bradshaw et al., 2008). These groups could reinforce classroom meetings and lessons by explaining to teachers and students how JD teaches life skills that are valuable to individuals, their community, and society as a whole.

### **Recommendations for Alternative Approaches**

Although a client-centered evaluation was implemented for this study, it is only one of several types of evaluations that could have been utilized. Other possible evaluations include impact evaluations, process oriented evaluations and objective evaluations.

Impact evaluations explore the positive and negative impacts of changes that occur due to the implementation of a program (Rossi & Freeman, 1993). Although useful, impact evaluations do not establish objectives or measure outcomes. Impact evaluations can assist researchers in responding to specific evaluation questions about what works and what doesn't work and why. Impact evaluations can also assist in responding to questions of what would have happened if the program were not implemented.

A process evaluation is another possible evaluation type that may have been used for this study. This type of evaluation is used to monitor the implementation and operation of a program (Dart, Petheram, & Straw, 1998). A process-oriented evaluation is useful to determine if a program is being implemented the way it was intended and determine what barriers are preventing delivery of the delivery. Process evaluations

provide information needed to make adjustments that will strengthen the implementation of the program. A disadvantage to a process evaluation is that it is not designed to measure outcomes.

Objective oriented evaluations are summative in nature and examine the results of a program. Objective evaluations measure the desired outcomes of a program after one complete cycle of the implementation. Objective evaluations are often used in educational settings where objectives are established at the beginning of a program and evaluated at the end to measure the extent to which the objective was achieved (Hogan, 2007). Objective evaluations gather data at the end of the program implementation and therefore cannot recommend adjustments and change while the program is taking place.

A client-centered evaluation is a type of participant evaluation that requires in-depth discussions to determine what the client needs to improve the program. The client-centered evaluation allows clients to share their experiences and ideas to improve the program (Mertens, 2002). Although subjective, a client-centered evaluation provides insight into a program from the participants, which allows the evaluator to measure the effectiveness of the program from the participant's perspective (Amba, 2006).

Prior to the implementation of this study, Smith Middle School did not have a method of evaluation in place to inform school leaders with information about the effects JD on students behavior and student discipline problems. This study measured the effects of JD by implementing a client-centered evaluation that included both a formative and a summative component. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected and analyzed to provide a complete picture of the components of the program and how they

were working to impact student behaviors. Triangulation of data was used to validate the research and strengthen the study by cross checking the data from the two types of evaluations.

### **Scholarship**

As a national Board Certified Teacher, an award-winning teacher at the district and state level, a recipient of a Specialist Degree in Education and as a recipient of several grants, I thought I was prepared for the work and research this project evaluation would require. I was not. Thanks to these scholars Amba (2006); Bloom (2010); Grayson (2012); and Kealey (2012), I have learned the importance of using peer review articles to address questions, methods for collecting and analyzing data, and reasons for using both formative and summative evaluations. For example, the formative evaluations provided snap shots of the effectiveness of JD from the perspective of the participants whereas the summative evaluation supplied data that completed the big picture of the impact the program had on student behavior and referrals. I have gained a deeper and more meaningful understanding of scholarly research, data analysis, and data reporting.

The use of a mixed-methods approach for this evaluation allowed me to gain knowledge in multiple data collection tools to retrieve information. Creating and collecting data from the teacher surveys exposed me to components of Survey Monkey with which I was not familiar. The one-on-one teacher interviews played an important role in my growth as a researcher because I was able to improve my interviewing skills as well as learn how to conduct open coding to analyze the data collected during the interviews. The data that was gathered from the surveys and interviews provided me with



assurance that I had precise data regarding which components of JD work and which components need to be improved according to the teachers involved with the program.

I have grown as a professional educator because of my ability to incorporate scholarship into everyday professional practice in the school. If asked, I plan to use my scholarly knowledge and skills to help my school and the district with future research, presentations, grant writing, or programs that affect social change. I recognize that I still have much to learn as I continue to build upon the scholarly research foundation that has been established through this project.

### **Project Development and Evaluation**

Several reasons exist as to why some schools are successful at implementing behavior intervention programs while others are not. For this study and based on the analysis of the teacher survey results and the teacher interviews, I concluded that an essential component to the success of behavior intervention programs such as JD is staff training, consistent implementation school-wide, and support from the administration. Selecting the most proper evaluation design for this study made it possible to arrive at these conclusions as well as easily share the findings with the school leaders. I utilized a mixed-methods study with a formative evaluation and a quantitative summative evaluation. The purpose of the formative evaluation was to get feedback about the program's components while the program was in action (Merrell, Ervin, & Gimpel, 2006) while the summative evaluation served to determine if the program improved student behavior and decreased discipline problems after the program had completed a one year cycle (Kealey, 2012). I developed an executive summary report to share the findings of

the study with the leadership at Smith Middle School. The executive summary contained significant data analysis and recommendations for improving JD. In addition, the report contained graphs and charts and was written in reader friendly terms. Using both formative and summative evaluations was essential to the success of the project and to the creation of the executive summary report. Providing multiple sources of data to the leadership provided them with the information they need to guide this program and to serve as a base line for future studies.

An executive summary power point report was created with the most important information, which the leaders needed to guide their decision-making. The summary included investigation of the problem, data collection, data analysis, and data reporting for the study and ended with recommendations. Specifically, the strengths and weaknesses of the study were shared along with whether or not the program significantly impacted student behavior.

The greatest challenge I experienced during this project was the data analysis stage. As a teacher of middle and high school mathematics, I did not expect to be overwhelmed by the data. An abundance of qualitative data from the teacher interviews was a challenge in how to organize due to my inexperience with open coding. I also struggled with running a chi-square test of independence for the student social development survey, as a result of my inexperience. With the help of my chair and a few explanations from a friend who is a statistician, my frustrations were resolved. I now have experience and a better understanding of how effectively to organize, analyze, and interpret data using a mixed- methods approach.

Using Survey Monkey for the teacher satisfaction survey was a quick way to retrieve data for the study. I found the site to be user friendly and appreciated that it offered numerous tools to organize and display data. Although conducting, transcribing and analyzing the data from the teacher interviews was time consuming, the data provided an extensive amount of information from the teacher's perception. Teachers were able to talk about which components of JD were effective and which components needed to improve. They were allowed to give suggestions for improvements, which was an essential component for this study.

### **Leadership and Change**

Teacher leadership roles require teachers to serve as mentors, curriculum developers, and staff development providers. Teacher leaders work to improve public education while remaining engaged in the day-to-day classroom with their students (Wasley, 1991). They are decision makers and facilitators of change at their local school as well as at the district level. Nickse (1977) studied teachers as change agents and found that teachers are effective leaders of change because they are where the action is and they are in a position to initiate change. This study gave me the opportunity to learn and grow as a teacher leader in my local school as well as in the district.

Improving student behavior has always been a topic of discussion with my colleagues. As a teacher, I welcome the opportunity to learn about new strategies and programs that will assist in managing student behavior. Therefore, the fact that a new behavior intervention program, one of which I had never known, was being implemented

in my school was of great interest. The new program JD is the reason I conducted this study. I wanted to see if the program would improve student behavior in our school.

One goal for this study was to provide an opportunity for the teachers' voices to be heard. I included teachers in the evaluation process to show them that school leaders and I as a teacher leader have a genuine interest in their perceptions and needs as they relate to the JD program. As a leader for change, I want teachers to know that their opinions are valued and, most importantly, their input will lead to positive impact on student behavior through JD.

As a teacher leader within the school, my goal was to provide school leaders with information and recommendations for improving components of JD that were not successful. I wanted to facilitate change by providing the leadership with knowledge that was a result of my research. As a teacher leader, I have the ability to motivate and inspire other teachers as well as the school leaders. I believe that the results of my study encouraged the school leaders to make changes in practices that may not have been considered in past years.

The development of this program contributed to my development as a leader. I worked closely with the school leaders and especially the Dean of Discipline at the school of interest. As a result of this study, the Dean of Discipline formed a discipline committee comprised of teachers from all grade levels to discuss the school-wide implementation of JD and other student discipline issues.

The executive summary report for this project was specifically created for the local school leaders. However, a group of teachers from the district alternative school

have heard about the study and have requested a copy of the executive report along with the research paper once it receives final approval. Due to my experience with this study and with program evaluation, I could potentially assist the district with behavior intervention programs as well as help them evaluate the programs they have in place.

This project has motivated me to continue to grow as a teacher leader. As a teacher leader, I will listen to my colleague's concerns and needs in order to gain an understanding of the current issues our school and district are facing. I understand that being an agent of change requires me to become a continuous learner that is knowledgeable of current research and best practices. I will continue to use my research skills to locate information that will address the concerns of teachers at my local school and the district level while recommending solutions to meet their needs.

### **Analysis of Self as Scholar, Project Developer, and Practitioner**

As a student at Walden University, I have been afforded many new learning opportunities, which have molded me as a scholar, project developer, and practitioner for social change. When I entered the doctoral program at Walden University, I did so with virtually no experience as a scholarly writer and limited with experience in the area of research. I was well aware of the challenging task that was before me and knew that I must grow as a researcher and a scholarly writer before my project study was completed. The classes and professors at Walden University provided the guidance, instruction, and support that I needed to grow as a researcher and as a scholarly writer. Specifically, the literature review forced me to improve my research and scholarly writing skills. I had experience with basic search engines like *ERIC* for locating information of interest.

However, at the residency I attended a seminar hosted by the library research center that provided invaluable information about how to more effectively and efficiently research topics of interest. I learned that limiting my choice of key words would eliminate articles that could bring a different perspective to my study. My chair also encouraged me to explore avenues of which I had not thought to bring more depth and meaning to my study. Through this process, I have learned the difference among primary sources, scholarly articles, secondary sources, and peer-reviewed sources as well as the influence that each has on the quality of a dissertation. The growth I experienced in researching and writing the first literature review resulted in the second literature review being a less daunting task. I now have confidence in my ability to research and a new perspective for professional scholarship and scholarly writing.

My research skills have dramatically improved due to my broader knowledge of program development and research design. A number of approaches could have been used to investigate the impact of JD on student behavior. In my opinion, this project study was the most effective method to examine the program and to determine its strengths and weaknesses from the teacher's perspective. As a teacher within the target school, I was concerned about the program's impact on student behavior. This was the perfect time to conduct a project study since the program was new and no plans were in place to determine if it had an impact on student behaviors. The administration was supportive of my desire and willingness to conduct an evaluation. Although the statistical evidence from the student and teacher surveys showed that JD had an impact on student behavior, it was the qualitative data from the teacher interviews that allowed me a greater

understanding of how the program worked, which components worked, and which components needed improvement. However, I would not have the knowledge for selecting the most appropriate approach for this study without a strong foundation in research that granted me the ability to study articles, journals, and books related to program evaluation; mixed-methods designs; formative evaluation; and summative evaluation. For example, I learned that using a mixed-methods design would add dimension to my study by creating a complete picture that consisted of both quantitative and qualitative data that could be triangulated. I gained experience and confidence in my ability to conduct interviews, analyze data, and create data collection instruments. Through this experience, I have been transformed from a novice researcher a scholarly practitioner who now has the skills and ability to that are beneficial in conducting future program evaluations in the local school and at the district level.

This journey has forced me to learn much about myself as a research practitioner and a scholar practitioner. A scholar practitioner is one who is grounded in theory and research, and who has experimental knowledge and ethical conduct. The practitioner recognizes problems, examines them, and searches for solutions (Nganga, 2011). My goal in conducting this project evaluation was to inform the school leadership of the value of JD in order to improve student behavior. It was necessary for me to inform leaders of the strengths and the weakness of the program, so they could consider the action that needs to be taken to improve the program. Just as I shared the best practices for improving JD at the target school, I wish to share them with other individuals who have an interest in behavior intervention programs and those who have the authority to

make decisions concerning the quality of the programs. Even though the findings from this research will directly impact students at one local school, my role as a teacher leader and scholar practitioner enables me to conduct program evaluations throughout my district. My experience with program evaluation has equipped me to conduct research, collect data, analyze data, and find solutions that will result in being a change agent for my school and district.

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

According to the US DOE (2005), many school based behavior intervention programs have not proven to be effective. This study will promote social change by guiding the school leaders to recognize the strengths and weaknesses of JD and by placing greater attention to program planning, development, implementation, and evaluation. While this study addressed the value of JD at one local school, the study's findings have the potential to impact social change beyond the school level. This program evaluation is intended to create social change for the school leaders who implement and make decisions about the program as well as the teachers and the students who are directly impacted by the program on a daily basis. This study is unique because it involves the perceptions and opinions of the teachers who were participants in the program. The stakeholders' perceptions were considered when making recommendations for this evaluation. Their input added to the reliability and significance of the JD study; therefore, they contributed to program reform.

According to Kellogg (2007) social change takes place when individuals strive to make a difference. Without internal motivation, school leaders will have a difficult time



impacting social change (Kellogg, 2007). I agree with Kellogg's position that implementing a positive behavior intervention program such as JD and its principles of teaching respect and individual rights and responsibilities should take a more active role in the educational system. Teachers should model democratic values for students as well as facilitate the development of their democratic and emotional health as they engage with their classmates (Hawley, 2002). Noddings (2005) suggests that all educators should be concerned with educating and meeting the needs of the whole child in order to develop the total student. Today's society desires graduates who demonstrate positive character traits, think critically, and are prepared to solve global problems (Soder, Goodlad, & McMannon, 2001). Schools can help to develop responsible citizens who recognize and respect the rights of others and who can make wise choices that contribute to society (Soder et al., 2001)

Social change should occur after the reformation of JD. Making changes to amend the components of JD should improve student behavior which may have a positive impact on instructional conditions for teachers, learning conditions for students, and an overall improvement in school climate. The goal of JD at Smith Middle School is to improve student behavior, ultimately leading to a reduction in student referrals and discipline hearings at the local school and the district level. As a result of this study, positive social change may occur at the local school level and at the district level. The findings and recommendations from this program evaluation can provide school and district leaders with the knowledge they need to (a) improve student behavior, (b) make educated decisions for policy and procedure changes, (c) utilize data to create, guide and

sustain behavioral intervention programs; and (d) institute continuous evaluation of school-wide and district-wide programs that involve program stakeholders. This program evaluation study could also be valuable to educational and political leaders outside of the district who make decisions related to policy. Therefore, this study could possibly facilitate social change that is far reaching beyond the boundary of the local school that it was initially intended to serve.

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

This study recognized the importance of meeting the need for a program evaluation at Smith Middle School. The intent of the JD program was to promote positive behavior by educating the whole child through lessons that teach students about their rights and responsibilities as citizens. By doing so, students will be molded into moral citizens who practice positive behavior. This study suggested that schools adopting JD would see an improvement in student behavior, which will contribute to a more positive school climate.

An essential component in the success of JD is the active participation of the administration, faculty, and staff members. If all participants do not receive proper training and implement the program consistently throughout the school, the effectiveness of the program may be restricted. JD has the potential to improve student behavior and facilitate social change, but these outcomes are not always guaranteed. JD has yielded positive results in improved student behavior, but an on-going analysis of how JD is developed, implemented, and sustained can provide a better understanding of the

program's worth. In order to monitor the progress and impact of JD on student behavior, evaluations must continue.

The purpose of this evaluation was to inform school leaders of the impact of JD on student behavior at Smith Middle School. The findings of this study could result in on-going evaluations being implemented for similar programs within the district and state or throughout the United States. Possibilities of future research could involve the duplication of the current study of JD at different schools and at a variety of locations throughout the United States. This study was limited to one middle school; therefore, future research could be done at the elementary, high school and collegiate levels and possibly in the workplaces.

I believe if the recommended changes from the executive summary are applied to JD, it will ultimately lead to improved student behavior. If future research is conducted on JD or similar programs, I suggest the researcher use a mixed methods, client centered approach that includes both formative and summative measures. The formative evaluation would help program leaders make decisions and necessary changes while the program is progressing and before the program ends. Including the client perspective would provide a deeper understanding of the components of the program that would be beneficial to gaining a more conceptual understanding of how the program works (Amba, 2006). A mixed-methods approach will also help the researcher gain a deeper understanding of the client's personal experiences with the program (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007). The stakeholders will feel valued in knowing that school leaders are interested in their perspective and in meeting their needs. The summative

evaluation takes place at the end of the study and will provide data to determine if the program met its intended goals (Kealey, 2010). Combining both formative and summative measures will allow the researcher to gather multiple forms of data improving the validity and reliability of the study. The data from the formative evaluation may help the researcher gain a more thorough understanding of the results of the summative evaluation data and vice versa.

### **Conclusion**

On a personal level, I chose this project study to satisfy my curiosity about the worth of a behavior intervention program called JD and to gain more insight into the process of program evaluation. I had never heard of JD or program evaluation and was driven by my professional desire as a researcher to evaluate the program in order to provide the schools leaders with a better understanding of its effectiveness. The project revealed important data that is essential in making decisions on the future direction of the program. In addition to the executive summary, a power point presentation was created and will be shared with school leaders and stakeholders to further inform them of the strengths and weaknesses of the study. Specifically, the statistical analyses revealed that the program was meeting its goal to improve on the social development scale, although not as quickly as desired. Data analysis from the formative evaluation, teacher surveys, and teacher interviews, revealed the primary strengths of JD were (1) improved student behavior, (2) students taking responsibility for their actions, and (3) the program fosters respect between students/students and teachers/students and thus improving relationships.

In contrast, students showed no significant progress towards autonomy on the social development scale.

Respondents identified several similarities as weaknesses of the program.

According to participants, the primary weaknesses of JD were as follows. (1) All agreed that that lack of administrative support was one of the weaknesses of the JD program. (2) Lack of adequate training was an area of weakness on which all teachers agreed. (3) Teachers agreed that the program was not implemented school-wide or with consistency. However, participants felt that if a few adjustments were made to the program, it would make a significant impact on student behavior and decrease student discipline problems throughout the school.

Based on the findings from the study, I created an executive summary report that contained recommendations to improve components of JD. In addition, I created a power point presentation that will explain to school leaders how the study's findings can benefit the teachers and students at the school. The findings from this study may encourage school leaders to implement a program evaluation to investigate the value of other programs and interventions.

As this project study concludes, I hope that the results will encourage future research in program evaluation and student behavior intervention programs. The findings of this study could result in on- going evaluations being implemented for similar programs within the district and state or throughout the United States. Possibilities of future research could involve the duplication of the current study of JD at different schools and at a variety of locations throughout the United States. This study was limited

to one middle school; therefore, future research could be done at the elementary, high schools and collegiate levels and possibly in the workplaces. Before implementing a behavior intervention program, school leaders should consider the strengths and weaknesses of this study before implementing a similar program at their school.

As a result of this process, I now have a new admiration and appreciation for research, program evaluation, data analysis, and scholarly writing. This experience has empowered me to grow substantially as a researcher, scholarly writer, and teacher leader. My experience as a doctoral student at Walden University has transformed me from a novice researcher to a scholar practitioner. As a teacher leader, my desire is to use my research skills and experience with program evaluation to assist my local school and other schools within the district to determine the value of current and future programs.

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## Appendix A: Executive Summary

### *Evaluation of a Middle School Positive Behavior Intervention Support Program*

#### **Introduction**

The following report will summarize the findings and make recommendations from *Evaluation of a Middle School Positive Behavior Intervention Support Program*, a research study conducted by Tracie M. Grogan as a doctoral student at Walden University. The purpose of this study was to conduct a comprehensive program evaluation of a behavior intervention program from the perspective of teachers who were program participants. Judicious Discipline (JD) is designed to provide the structure and framework for a democratic classroom in which positive student behavior is promoted and supported. The intention of the program is to instill an intrinsic sense of responsibility in students, so they will move away from a teacher-directed orientation to one of autonomy and self-control. JD uses lessons that are based on the Bill of Rights to emphasize individual rights and responsibilities as members of a classroom and school community and to promote positive behavior. Nine out of forty-six teachers at the school volunteered to participate in the professional development and implementation of the program curriculum. Consequently, those teachers were responsible for developing lesson plans for the program on their own. Teachers who have participated in professional development for JD and its core principles modify and teach the lessons. Before this project study was conducted, the school lacked a systematic and meaningful evaluation tool for monitoring the behavior intervention program.

This evaluation of JD sought to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the components of the program and to explore recommendations for improving the program from the teachers' perspective. The evaluation questions that guided this study were the following sequence. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the program from the teacher perspective? What are the teacher's recommendations for improving the program? From the teachers' perspective, has JD decreased student discipline problems? In what ways has the program changed student social development? The remainder of this report will describe how the evaluation study was conducted, the details of the findings, and the recommendations for action.

### **Evaluation**

Several different data collection methods were implemented to evaluate JD. A teacher survey and one-on-one teacher interviews were used to determine which components of JD worked and which needed improvement based on the teachers' perspective. In addition, student social development surveys were utilized to measure student behavior as demonstrated by students' progress towards the desired goal of autonomy on the social development scale. Data were integrated and triangulated during analysis to develop the study's findings. Using the findings of this study, a series of recommendations were developed. A power point presentation has been created to present the results and recommendations of the study to the school leaders.

### **Findings**

**(1)What are the strengths and weaknesses of the program from the teacher perspective?**



A JD Teacher Satisfaction Survey and teacher interviews were used to address research question two. I selected a modified survey to collect data to measure teacher perceptions of the overall effectiveness of the program. Teachers participated in a JD Teacher Satisfaction Survey by rating eighteen statements on a Likert scale: 1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Neither Disagree or Agree, 4- Agree, 5- Strongly Agree. Nine teachers were invited to participate in the survey, and all nine completed the survey.

The overall mean score for JD Teacher Satisfaction survey was 4.01 which is an indication that most teachers in this study appeared to be satisfied with the JD program. Sixteen of the eighteen survey items related to this research question had mean scores that ranged from 3.67 to 4.44. These scores indicated that teachers agreed with or were satisfied with these statements.

Data were collected and analyzed concurrently and then integrated to determine a series of themes relative to the strengths and weaknesses of JD. The findings of the teacher survey and teacher interview data revealed the strengths and weaknesses of JD. The data from the JD Teacher Survey indicated that some components of the program worked and some components need to be improved. The areas of strength were improvement in overall student behavior, students made positive behavior choices, students displayed respect for other students, and the teacher/ student relationships were improved. The teacher satisfaction rate with the JD program was 100%.

Key weaknesses of the program were lack of support from administration, lack of teacher training, failure to implement the program consistently school wide, and a lack of fidelity of implementation by several teachers.

**Key Points for Strengths:**

- Teacher Survey item 1 “Overall, I feel that JD had a positive impact on student behavior” was measured as 67% agree.
- For item 14, eight of the nine teachers agreed or strongly agreed that “JD has helped improve students’ respectfulness toward others.”
- Eight of the nine teachers agreed or strongly agreed with item 15 “I believe that JD had helped improve relationships among students and adults at my school.”

During the interviews, all teachers stated they were satisfied with the results of the JD program. Teachers stated, “I am very satisfied with the program” and “I certainly am satisfied with the program.” Another said, “I am very satisfied with the program because I don’t yell as much, and I’m less stressed.”

- All teachers perceived that the program worked to improve student behavior. Specifically, teachers agreed that the program helped students make positive behavior choices with little teacher intervention. One teacher stated, “Students have an opportunity to “fix” their behavior.... Students change or modify their behavior instead of me telling them what to do.” Another teacher stated, “Students put more thought into how they behave... Students take responsibility for their actions”. Still another stated, “Students change unwanted behavior.... Students are empowered to make the right decision.”
- Another strength of the program on which teachers agreed was that it fosters respect between students/students and teachers/students and improves

relationships. Teachers stated, “Students show respect for each other even if they don’t like each other” and “Students put more thought into how their actions and behavior effects others.” Another teacher said, “Students and teachers are on the same side.”

**Key Points For Weaknesses:**

- Teacher survey item 9 resulted in 34% in agreement with “I consistently reward students using the JD reward system in place at my school”. This shows a possible lack of fidelity with implementation.
- Teacher survey item 5 “I am satisfied with my schools administrative support for JD” indicated neither satisfaction or no satisfactions with the school’s administrative support (M 3.22, SD 1.09, f 45% agree). This is a slight indication that teachers’ perceptions of the administration’s support for the JD program needs to improve.
- How the respondents felt about the program’s weaknesses were similar. Teachers who were interviewed agreed that the lack of administrative support was one of the weaknesses of the JD program. Teachers’ comments included “We received very little support, if any, from the assistant principal” and “Referrals were not handled in a timely manner by the administration; behavior for these students declined.” Another said, “ I feel the administration could have done more to support the program. None of the administration read the book ”. Yet another stated, “When the administration did not back us up, the kids behavior was awful. Those kids, mentally, did not change.”

- Lack of adequate training through professional development was an area of weakness on which all teachers agreed. One teacher stated, “Some teachers read the JD book, and others did not.” Another said, “ What hinders the program most is teachers or administration that are not willing to put in the work to read the book and apply the concepts.” Another said, “ Some read the book over the summer and took the time to plan for the program while others didn’t start the book until we started back to school. Maybe this was because the program was not required by the administration.”
- Teachers agreed another weakness of the JD program was it was not implemented school wide. One teacher summed up this idea by stating “JD was not implemented school wide, so the students’ behavior during connections seemed to be worse”... “When combined with students who were not a part of the JD program, their behavior sometimes reverted back to disrespectful behavior.”

**(2) What are the teacher’s recommendations for improving the program?**

The areas of strength were student behavior improved overall, students made positive behavior choices, students displayed respect for other students and the teacher/ student relationships were improved. The teacher satisfaction rate with the JD program was 100%.

Findings of the qualitative data from the teacher interviews included suggestions for improving the program and identified which resources teachers felt they needed in order to make the suggested improvements. Key weaknesses of the program were lack of

support from administration, lack of teacher training, failure to implement the program school wide, and a lack of fidelity of implementation by several teachers.

### **Overview of Recommendations**

Several recommendations were generated according to the various strengths and weaknesses revealed in this study's findings. These recommendations include the following aspects:

#### **Professional Development**

Professional development is a vital part of PBIS programs such as JD. When staff members receive quality training to implement new and existing programs, it can lead to increased motivation (Cooper, 2010). Lack of adequate training for the JD program was an area of weakness on which that all teachers agreed. One teacher stated, "Some teachers read the JD book over the summer and met to discuss plans for implementing the program. While others did not read the book until school started." Currently the administration does not require teachers to implement the program.

According to Bayer (2014), effective professional development should include a match to existing teacher needs, teacher involvement in the design/planning of professional development activities, active participation opportunities, long-term engagement, and high-quality instructors. In a study by Gibson (2012), teachers gave suggestions on ways to improve their ability to implement a new program. The suggestions made by Bayer (2014) and Gibson (2012) can be applied to the JD Program.

An initial step for implementation is that professional development for JD should take place for the entire staff. Appointing one or more program administrators and then

sending them to a workshop by the JD Institute can accomplish this goal. The program administrators could redeliver the content to the faculty with the use of materials such as videos and books provided by the institute. During the interviews, all teachers agreed that if every staff member received training and implemented JD, student behaviors would improve in all classrooms and not just in those who implemented the program. Teacher A summed up this idea by stating “JD was not implemented school wide, so when our students combined with students who were not a part of the JD program, their behavior sometimes reverted back to disrespectful behavior”. The School would benefit from offering all teachers and staff initial and ongoing additional training on JD. This would increase the consistency of the program and the likelihood for it to be implemented more effectively and consistently school wide.

Additionally, the program would also benefit from ongoing professional development to include planning, evaluations, and revising of the behavior system. Teachers need time to collaborate with other teachers and administrators to plan lessons, discuss problems, and create solutions to ensure the program stays on track. The ongoing development will also serve to remind teachers of the program’s philosophy and practices. It is recommended by Gathercoal (2004) that schools involved with JD should invest time and effort in training staff and adhering to the philosophy and practices of the program. Doing so will facilitate their goal of improved student behaviors.

When interviewed, teachers felt they needed supportive and knowledgeable administrators to back their implementation of the program. Teachers need a designated program administrator to go to when they have questions. Funds should be secured to

send the program administrator to the JD Institute for training. Research has indicated that the sustainability of PBIS programs such as JD must rely on ongoing professional development, coaching, and system evaluation (Carr et al., 2002; Sugai et al., 2000). In order for this to happen, Smith Middle School needs a knowledgeable program administrator who can offer teachers support.

Lastly, teachers cited resistance to change as affecting the success of the implementation (Gibson, 2012). The reason for the resistance was the amount of constant change that was already in the classroom. The administration should limit the number of programs that are implemented at the same time so teachers are not overwhelmed. All of these suggestions were identified as important elements for successful implementation of a new program.

### **Support From The Administration**

During the interview process, teachers spoke about how the administration was not consistent when handling behavior referrals. For example, the student handbook stated that specific actions would be taken after each sequential. However, administration did not consistently follow these procedures. In addition, only 45% of teachers agreed with the statement “I am satisfied with my school's administrative support for JD.”

Research has shown that administrative support is an essential component to the success of PBIS programs such as JD (Cooper, 2010; McArdle, 2011). The administration at Smith Middle School would benefit from hearing these teachers' perspectives concerning the lack of administrative support. According to Foucault (1998) and Wang's (2011) thoughts on transformative discourse, a discussion between teachers

and administrators could be helpful in determining why these teachers did not feel supported. One possible explanation could be that the administrator may not be aware of the steps the teacher had already taken to correct the student's behavior. However, this type of information is important for administrators to know if they want to hold students accountable for their behavior and to support their teachers. Lack of administrative support jeopardizes a positive working environment. To correct this problem, teachers and administrators need to consider scheduling regular meetings to discuss how the administration could offer more support in dealing with student referrals. Administrators also need to let teachers know that they appreciate the teachers steps to implement the program with fidelity and their attempts to correct student behavior before a referral is written.

### **Fidelity of Implementation**

Fidelity of implementation occurs when teachers properly use skills and knowledge they acquired from professional development to deliver an intended curriculum by using instructional strategies in the same way that they were designed to be used and delivered (Azano, 2014). Fidelity is necessary to achieve the same results that were achieved in the research phase of the program in question. When changes are made or strategies are omitted in how the program is implemented, the effects on the students may be unexpected (Azano, 2011). In order to understand the impact on students, researchers need to consider the degree to which teachers implement programs as they were intended by the developers.



Several data sources for this study suggest that the fidelity of the implementation of JD may have been compromised. First, the data from the Student Social Development survey communicated that the change in student social development was not evident at the higher stages of cohesion and autonomy because no significant change in the level of distribution responses between the pre and post-test was evident. In other words, large portions of students are still grouped at the lower end of the social development scale. During the interviews, teachers stated that not all teachers were consistently having conversations or classroom meetings, essential principles of the program's implementation. A second indication that the program lacked fidelity of implementation came from the one-on-one teacher interviews. All teachers commented that the program was not being implemented consistently. One of the essential components emphasized during the training of JD is consistently using the terms "right time", "right place", and "right manner". All three teachers who were interviewed stated that not all of the program participants consistently used these terms when addressing students for inappropriate behavior.

Gathercoal (2004) found that teachers who did not consistently use the terminology of JD experienced a higher level of students in the rebellion range of social development. Teachers who consistently practiced all of the components of JD maintained high autonomous level response rates on the student social development scale. After a five-year study, the findings revealed that teachers who took time to model and practice JD with their students would reap the benefits Gathercoal (2004). These

benefits included teachers who feel less stress, students who display respect for the teacher and for each other and an over all environment of civility.

In order for a behavior intervention program to be effective, initial and ongoing professional development and staff cooperation is a must (Sugai et al., 2000). In addition, the program administrators should follow a specific ongoing monitoring plan to ensure the fidelity of the implementation of the JD. A challenging aspect of implementation, according to Sugai et al., is persuading all staff members to support the program once it is in place by continuing to communicate the program expectations to the students. In order for JD to work as it was designed, teachers must practice fidelity of the implementation of the program, and the implementation needs to be monitored frequently by the program administrators through a variety of formative evaluations.

How and when to measure fidelity of implementation is an issue that must be included when planning to implement a program evaluation. Program administrators must start early monitoring of fidelity to provide rapid feedback for the areas the intervention is designed to target (Webster-Stratton et al., 2011). Program administrators should observe fidelity early and often with the goal of improving practice and outcome. If consideration of fidelity is postponed until the middle or end of the implementation, valuable early feedback may not be considered and, therefore, may negatively impact outcomes (Kutash, 2012). Program administrators can use several methods to monitor the fidelity of implementation.

To monitor fidelity, teacher/student observations should take place once a month with the use of a pre-determined checklist of the program's desired practices. A specific

checklist will provide immediate feedback for program administrators that will result in timely and responsive professional development needed to address issues within the program. This rapid feedback will maximize the programs' effectiveness and ensure the fidelity of implementation (Kretlow & Bartholomew, 2010).

In addition, teacher interviews and surveys should be used to gather data in regards to the perceptions of the participants implementing the program. Doing so will provide program administrators with multiple sources of the information they need to provide necessary support, resources, and professional development to ensure the fidelity of implementation. Gathering information from the participant's perspective will allow administrators to gain insight into issues that teachers see on a daily basis, but administrators may have overlooked during observations.

### **Ongoing Formative and Summative Evaluations**

Just as any other school-wide initiative requires modification, student behavior intervention needs to be monitored and continuously improved to ensure that the program is meeting the needs of the teachers and students. Many of the same formative assessments that are used to measure the fidelity of implementation can be used to determine if JD is working to improve student behaviors. The formative evaluation should include observations by program administrators, teacher and student surveys, teacher interviews, and the analysis of student behavior data every month.

I recommend that program administrators conduct teacher/student observations once a month with the use of a pre-determined checklist of the programs desired practices and outcomes. Administrators should use the observation data to help facilitate

discussions at the monthly teacher professional development meetings. Second, the JD Teacher Satisfaction survey and Student Social Development survey as well as the one-on-one teacher interview questions that were used in the original study should be utilized to determine if the program is effective based on the perceptions of the students and teachers. The Student Social Development survey should be administered three times a year: once at the beginning of the school year, one at the mid year point and one at the end. Each time students complete the Social Development Survey, a chi square test of independence should be used to explore the change in the distribution of students along the social development scale. The teacher survey should be administered and followed with small group or one-on-one teacher interviews three times a year. As mentioned in the professional development plan, the program administrators should meet with teachers at least once a month to discuss their perceptions of the progress of JD and its impact on student behavior. Student behavior data can be gathered monthly, instead of yearly, and compared using a t-test to determine a possible significant difference between the referral numbers for the same month of the previous year. Conducting comparisons monthly as well as year-end student referral totals allows program administrators and teachers to assess the immediate impact of JD on student referrals.

If the above recommendations are followed, the formative evaluations will inform school leaders of how teachers and students view the program's activities and help them determine if the activities need to be improved and if the program's activities are being executed efficiently and effectively. Including the stakeholders in the formative evaluation process sends the message that school leaders are interested in their input and

at the same time are vested in attending to their needs. These evaluations should be ongoing throughout the life of the program and should be conducted by the program administrators, an external evaluator, or a combination of both.

The summative evaluation, on the other hand, should take place at the end of each school year. The summative component can use a measure of assessment such as pre- and post-tests. The summative data will help school leaders measure student progress on the social development scale as well as analyze the number of referrals to determine if JD is meeting its goal of improving student behavior. The end of year Student Social Development survey results will serve as a summative assessment at the end of the year and will reveal how students have progressed on the Social Development scale from the beginning to the end of the year. The total number of referrals as well as specific categories should be compared to the referral results from the end of the previous year to determine if JD is working to reduce the number of student referrals. The results will help to determine if JD is working to improve student behavior. Combining the formative evaluation with the summative evaluation will help school leaders understand not only if the program is working but also which factors contribute to its success or failure.

### **(3) Has JD decreased student discipline problems?**

Analysis of the teacher surveys and teacher interviews indicated JD made a positive impact on student behavior. The teacher surveys indicated that six of the nine teachers perceived JD had a positive impact on student behavior. Two of the teachers who were interviewed neither agreed or disagreed with the statement “I believe that JD has helped decrease student discipline problems significantly at my school”. However,

one strongly agreed. JD has had some success at reducing behavior problems according to the teacher perspective. Other types of behaviors that should be considered include student attitudes towards teachers and other students, parent contacts due to poor behavior, and students' correcting and not repeating their behaviors. A deeper, more thorough understanding of the impact of JD was gained as teachers were able to share their perceptions. Allowing program participants to share their perceptions provides them a sense of ownership and supplies the study with essential information that can be used to identify the strengths and weaknesses in the program and ultimately lead to changes that will improve the program.

**Key Points:**

- For item 12 on the JD Teacher Satisfaction Survey, "I believe that JD has helped decrease student discipline problems significantly at my school", six of the nine participant responses fell into the "agree" or "strongly agree" category.
- Teacher C strongly agreed that JD helped decrease student discipline problems significantly at the school. When asked to respond to the following question during the interview, Teacher C was consistent with the responses to interview questions and survey items relating to research question 1. The teacher's response to the interview question, "Has JD decreased student discipline problems?" with "Yes, definitely. Through this method, there were less referrals, less parent phone calls about bad behavior, and less insubordinate actions towards teachers." Teacher A responded to the same question with " I'm not sure if it has decreased problems, but it has, in my experience, reduced repeated behaviors." Teacher B responded with "JD has decreased discipline problems.

More students think about their actions and do the right thing at the right time in the right manner.”

- All three teachers who were interviewed made statements that indicated they believed that JD did make a positive impact on student behavior.
- The findings for research question three indicate that JD worked to decrease student discipline problems.

#### **(4) In what ways has the program changed student social development?**

The student survey resulted in mixed results. The data indicated that students are moving out of the dependency stage and progressing towards the higher levels of social development which is a positive impact on student behavior. However, the results at the cohesion and the autonomy stage revealed no significant change in the level of distribution responses between the pre and post-test which indicates JD was not working to create positive behavior at the desired level of autonomy. A Chi-Square Test of Independence was run to explore the change in the distribution of students along the social development scale. The distribution of students along the social development scale changed from the pre-test to the post-test  $\chi^2(3) = 48.43, p < .001$ . Examining the frequencies of students in each developmental stage shows that from pre-test to post-test, students moved out of the dependency stage and into the cohesion and autonomy stage. The distribution of responses in each category (question pair) was also compared pre-post using a Chi-Square Test of Independence. Two of the four categories (Question 1/2 and Question 3/4) showed a significantly different distribution of responses in the pre-test than in the post-test. The other two categories (Question 5/6 and Question 7/8) did not

show a significantly different distribution of responses between the pre-test and post-test. This is another indication that students were moving out of the dependency stage, also the lowest level on the social development scale, and progressing toward the higher levels of social development. However, this change was not evident at the cohesion or the autonomy stage, the two highest stages on the social development scale, because no significant change in the level of distribution responses were between the pre and post-test.

The results of the student social development survey indicate that the JD program is working to create students who are moving towards the end of the scale autonomous. The results of this survey communicate that the students at Smith Middle School who participated in JD made progress in the area of social development. They were practicing good behavior as a choice not because they were forced to do so by a teacher. However, the results indicate that a large portion is still at the lower end of the social development scale. In order for all students to advance to the autonomy stage, the JD program administrators will need to consider making changes to the program to support students in their advancement towards full autonomy.

### **Summary**

This executive summary report was developed and presented for the benefit of school leaders using JD for the purpose of improving student behavior. The evidence-based recommendations offered in this report for the improvement of JD are based on findings from the formative and summative evaluation I conducted on the program during the 2014-2015 school year. Local school leaders are encouraged to review and consider



these recommendations for program reform in order to improve student behavior, improve the quality of the program, and support teachers in implementing the program with fidelity. Other school leaders within the district who use behavior intervention programs are encouraged to consider evaluating the program at their schools. The school leaders could use the evaluation tools used in this project study to conduct a formative evaluation of behavior intervention at their respective schools.

## Appendix B: Executive Summary Presentation

# Evaluation of a Middle School Positive Behavior Intervention Support Program

A Summary of Findings and Recommendations

Tracie Grogan, Doctoral Candidate (Walden University)

## Agenda

- Introduction
- Purpose Of Study
- Evaluation Questions
- Findings
- Recommendations Based on Findings
- Interpretation and Reflections

## Introduction

- \* Judicious Discipline was implemented in an effort to improve poor student behavior, which led to a high number of teacher referrals and disciplinary hearings.
- \* For three consecutive years, Smith Middle School had the greatest number of referrals and hearings in the district (Georgia Department of Education, 2013). For four consecutive years a minimum of 24% of the school's population received at least one office referral (Georgia Department of Education, 2013).

## Introduction, cont'd

- \* This study involves the beliefs, perspectives and opinions of those who participated in the program which makes it unique.
- \* The findings of this project study are important because they provide information to help determine if components of Judicious Discipline are working to improve student behavior.

## Purpose of Study

- The school had no method in place to determine whether Judicious Discipline was meeting its goal of improving student behavior.
- No measures were in place to assess the progress of student behavior or consult teachers on their perceptions of the program.
- I conducted a program evaluation of Judicious Discipline to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the program and its impact on student behavior.
- Without an evaluation of Judicious Discipline, the school may be without valuable information to guide the program.
- Without improvement in student behaviors, the school faces a continued negative impact on School Keys and the school climate score of the College and Career Ready Performance Index measurement of accountability.

## Evaluation Questions

1. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the program from the teacher perspective?
2. What are the teacher's recommendations for improving the program?
3. Has Judicious Discipline decreased student discipline problems?
4. In what ways has the program changed student social development?

## Evaluation Types

**Formative evaluation-** used to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the program and to guide while the program was in progress.

**Summative evaluation-** used to measure the effectiveness of JD on students social development at the end of the program.

## Findings

The evaluation questions were answered by analyzing data from:

**Formative Evaluation Data**

- a quantitative survey administered to teachers
- open-ended teacher interviews

**Summative Evaluation Data**

- responses to student surveys

The findings are described and organized by evaluation type and research question.

## Formative Evaluation

Used to respond to the following evaluation questions:

1. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the program from the teacher perspective?
2. What are the teacher's recommendations for improving the program?
3. Has Judicious Discipline decreased student discipline problems?

### Evaluation Question 1:

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the program from the teacher perspective?

A Judicious Discipline Teacher Satisfaction Survey and teacher interviews were used to address research question one:

#### **Strengths**

- Item #1- 6 out of 9 agreed or strongly agreed that Judicious Discipline had a positive impact on student behavior.
- Item #2- 8 out of 9 agree that Judicious Discipline has positively impacted teacher and staff behavior.
- \* Item #14- 8 out of 9 believe Judicious Discipline has helped to improve students' respectfulness toward others.
- \* Item #15- 8 out of 9 believe Judicious Discipline has helped to improve relationships among students and adults at my school.

Evaluation Question 1:  
What are the strengths and weaknesses of the program from the teacher perspective?  
(Con't)

Statements from teacher interviews when asked "Are you satisfied/dissatisfied or neutral about Judicious Discipline? Why is this?"

- Teacher #1 stated, "I absolutely love it. When implemented consistently, JD helps students make appropriate choices and become better citizens." "Students and teachers are on the same side."
- Teacher #2 said, "Satisfied, I enjoy it. The responsibility is placed back on the students to change or modify their behavior instead of me telling them what to do. Students show respect for each other even if they don't like each other"
- Teacher #3 said "I am very satisfied with Judicious Discipline. It removed the emotion about the behavior and focused more on what is right and fair." "Students put more thought into how their actions and behavior effects others."

Evaluation Question 1:  
What are the strengths and weaknesses of the program from the teacher perspective?  
(Con't)

**I concluded the strengths of Judicious Discipline include:**

- 1. Has a positive impact on student, teacher and staff behavior.**
- 2. Empowers students make positive choices.**
- 3. Contributes to increased respect among students.**
- 4. Improves teacher/student and student/student relationships.**

Evaluation Question 1:  
What are the strengths and weaknesses of the program from the  
teacher perspective?  
(Con't)

**Weaknesses-Support From Administration**

- Item #5- Only 4 out of 9 agreed or strongly agreed with "I am satisfied with my schools administrative support for Judicious Discipline" indicated neither satisfaction or no satisfactions with the school's administrative support.

Statements from teacher interviews when asked "Are teachers satisfied with the administration's support of Judicious Discipline?"

- Teacher #1- "Absolutely not. When it came time for referrals, we received very little, if any, support from our AP. Students who didn't want to follow the guidelines of JD found out quickly that referrals were not handled in a timely manner, if at all, and behavior declined in these students."
- Teacher #2- "No. This is the weak link. We need the administration to assign a consequence when we refer a student."
- Teacher#3- "I feel that administration could have done more to support the program. I feel they tried to implement it in ways they could, but my bet is none of the administration at that time had read the book."

Evaluation Question 1:  
What are the strengths and weaknesses of the program from the teacher  
perspective?  
(Con't)

\* **Weaknesses-Lack of Proper Training**

- An area of weakness that all teachers who were interviewed agreed on.
- Teacher #1 - "Some teachers read the JD book and others did not."
- Teacher #2- "What hinders the program most is teachers or administration that are not willing to put in the work to read the book and apply the concepts."
- Teacher#3 "Some read the book over the summer and took the time to plan for the program while others didn't start the book until we started back to school. Maybe this was because the program was not required by the administration."



## Evaluation Question 1:

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the program from the teacher perspective?  
(Con't)

**Weaknesses- Lack of Fidelity**

Item#9- Only 3 out of 9 agreed or strongly agreed“ I consistently reward students for using the Judicious Discipline reward system in place at my school”

- This result suggests that teachers are not rewarding their students for practicing Judicious Discipline.
- This indicates a lack of fidelity with implementation since only 3 of the 9 teachers use rewards.

## Evaluation Question 1:

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the program from the teacher perspective?  
(Con't)

**Weaknesses- Lack of Fidelity**

Example of Inconsistent Implementation-  
Teacher #3 in the interview stated:

- “Through Judicious Discipline, students feel respected because of the respectful conferencing that takes place.”  
“Some teachers don’t take time to conference one on one with students.”
- This is a lack of fidelity with implementation since the curriculum was not implemented exactly as the training recommends .

Evaluation Question 1:  
What are the strengths and weaknesses of the program from the teacher perspective?  
(Con't)

I concluded key weaknesses of the program:

1. Lack of support from administration.
2. Lack of Adequate Training.
3. A lack of fidelity of implementation by several teachers.

Evaluation Question 2:  
What are the teacher's recommendations for improving the program?

Teacher Interviews were used to address evaluation question #2.  
The following is a sample of teacher responses from the interviews.

- "If the administration does not have the expectation that everyone uses this method, does not train the teachers, and does not use the methods themselves, the school becomes off balance, and there can be division of ideas.
- Another teacher commented, "Unless JD becomes a school-wide concept that is expected and administered from the top down, students do not get the consistency that is so important when implementing any sort of behavior method."

Evaluation Question 2:  
What are the teacher's recommendations for improving the program?

Teacher Suggestions For Improving JD:

1. Proper Training For All Staff.
2. Implementing the program school wide and on a consistent basis.
3. Support From Administration.

Evaluation Question 3:  
From the teachers' perspective, has Judicious Discipline decreased student discipline problems?

Data from the teacher survey was integrated with the data from the teacher interviews to solidify the validity of the study.

Judicious Discipline Teacher Survey:

- For item #12 "I believe that Judicious Discipline has helped decrease student discipline problems significantly at my school", 6 of the 9 participant responses fell into the "agree" or "strongly agree" category.

Evaluation Question 3:  
From the teachers' perspective, has Judicious Discipline  
decreased student discipline problems? (con't)

Statements from Teacher Interviews when asked “Has  
Judicious Discipline decreased student discipline  
problems?”:

- “I believe that Judicious Discipline has helped decrease student discipline problems significantly at my school” and “Yes. More students think about their actions and do the right thing at the right time in the right manner.”
- All three teachers that were interviewed made statements that indicated they believed that Judicious Discipline did make a positive impact on student behavior thus decreasing discipline problems.

Evaluation Question 3:  
From the teachers' perspective, has Judicious Discipline  
decreased student discipline problems? (con't)

The findings for evaluation question #3 indicate that teachers' perceive student behavior improved as a result of the JD intervention.

## Summative Evaluation

Used to respond to the following question:

4. In what ways has the program changed student social development?

Evaluation Question 4:  
In what ways has the Judicious Discipline program changed student social development?

To answer this Evaluation Question 4:

- The Student Social Development Survey was completed by 148 students before the program began (at the beginning of the school year) and again at the end of the school year.
- To measure the change at each stage of the social development level, statistics were used to calculate the before and after for each category (see chart on next slide)
- a Chi-Square Test of Independence was run to explore the change in the distribution of students along the social development scale.

Evaluation Question 4:  
In what ways has the Judicious Discipline program changed student social development? (con't)

The percent represents the number of students at a each stage of social development.

Stage	Beginning	End	Change
Dependency	42%	27%	-15%
Rebellion	15%	10%	-5%
Cohesion	21%	31%	+10%
Autonomy	22%	32%	+10%

Evaluation Question 4:  
In what ways has the Judicious Discipline program changed student social development? (con't)

- Chi-Square Test of Independence was run to explore the change in the distribution of students along the social development scale.
- The distribution of students along the social development scale changed from the pre-test to the posttest  $\chi^2(3) = 48.43, p < .001$ .
- Examining the frequencies of students in each development stage shows that from pre-test to post-test, students moved out of the dependency stage, and, likewise, students moved into the cohesion and autonomy stage.

Evaluation Question 4:  
In what ways has the Judicious Discipline program changed student social development? (con't)

- The distribution of responses in each category (question pair) was also compared pre-post using a Chi-Square Test of Independence.
- Two of the four categories (Question 1/2 and Question 3/4) showed a significantly different distribution of responses in the pre-test than in the posttest.
- Two categories (Question 5/6 and Question 7/8) did not show a significantly different distribution of responses between the pre-test and post-test.
- This is another indication that students are moving out of the dependency stage, the lowest level on the social development scale and progressing towards the higher levels of social development.
- However, this change is not evident at the cohesion or the autonomy stage, the two highest stages on the social development scale, where there is not a significant change in the level of distribution responses between the pre and posttest.

Evaluation Question 4:  
In what ways has the Judicious Discipline program changed student social development? (con't)

The results of the student social development survey indicate that the Judicious Discipline program is working to create students that:

- Are moving towards the end of the scale to autonomous.
- Progressing in the area of social development.
- However, the results indicate that a large portion is still at the lower end of the social development scale.
- Based on other JD research, the longer the program is the place, the more students will progress to the higher level of autonomy.

## Reflection

- This project was driven by my professional desire to evaluate Judicious Discipline.
- The recommendations I made are based on the results on the study.
- I believe if the recommendations are implemented, Judicious Discipline will improve student behavior

## Recommendations

### **Professional Development**

#### **All Staff Members Should Receive Initial and on going Professional Development for Judicious Discipline**

- ✓ Appoint a program administrator and send them to a workshop by the Judicious Discipline Institute.
- ✓ The program administrator will redeliver the content to the entire faculty and become the “go to” expert when teachers need support.
- ✓ The administrator will facilitate teacher collaboration at monthly meetings to plan lessons, discuss problems and to create solutions to ensure the program stays on track.
- ✓ The on going professional development will also serve to remind teachers of the programs philosophy and practices.



## Recommendations (con't)

### Support From The Administration-

- ✓ Research has shown that administrative support is an essential component to the success of PBIS programs such as Judicious Discipline (Cooper, 2010; McArdle, 2011).
- ✓ According to Foucault (1998) and Wang's (2011) thoughts on transformative discourse, a discussion between teachers and administrators could be helpful in determining why these teachers did not feel supported.
- ✓ The program administrator will schedule monthly meetings to discuss how the administration could offer more support in dealing with student referrals.

## Recommendations (con't)

### Fidelity Of Implementation

In order for Judicious Discipline to work as it was designed, teachers must practice fidelity of the implementation of the program.

- ✓ The program administrators should follow a specific on going monitoring plan.
- ✓ To monitor fidelity, it is recommended that teacher/student observations should take place once a month with the use of a pre-determined checklist of the programs desired practices.
- ✓ Monitor progress through on going formative assessments that provide data and feedback from program participants.
- ✓ A specific checklist will provide immediate feedback for program administrators that will result in timely and responsive professional development needed to address issues within the program.
- ✓ Teacher interviews and surveys should be used to gather data in regards to the perceptions of the participants implementing the program. Doing so will provide program administrators with multiple sources of the information they need to provide necessary support, resources and professional development to ensure the fidelity of implementation.

## Recommendations (con't)

### Formative and Summative Evaluation

**Formative Assessments**-The formative evaluation should be on going. They include observations by program administrators, teacher and student surveys, teacher interviews and the analysis of student behavior data every month. These evaluations should be on going throughout the life of the program and should be conducted by the program administrators, an external evaluator, or a combination of both.

**Summative Assessments**- The end of year Student Social Development survey results and the number of student office referrals will serve as a summative assessment at the end of the year. This analysis will reveal how students have progressed on the Social Development scale from the beginning to the end of the year and communicate the total number of referrals for the year. The referral data will be compared to the referral results from the end of the previous year to determine if Judicious Discipline is working to reduce the number of student referrals.

## Conclusion

- \* This executive summary report was developed and presented for the benefit of school leaders using Judicious Discipline for the purpose of improving student behavior. The evidence-based recommendations offered in this report for the improvement of Judicious Discipline are based on findings from the formative and summative evaluation conducted on the program during the 2014-2015 school year. Local school leaders are encouraged to review and consider these recommendations for program reform in order to improve student behavior, improve the quality of the program, and to support teachers in implementing the program with fidelity.

## Appendix C: JD Teacher Satisfaction Survey

Please read each question and circle the response that closely matches your feelings. All responses and information will be kept confidential. Thank you for participating in this survey.

1. Overall, I feel that JD has had a positive impact on student behavior.

Strongly disagree   Disagree   Not Sure   Agree   Strongly Agree

2. Overall, I feel that JD has had a positive impact on teacher/staff behavior.

Strongly disagree   Disagree   Not Sure   Agree   Strongly Agree

3. I am satisfied with the JD expectations created during classroom meetings that provide guidelines for student behavior (classroom, hallway, cafeteria, and restroom).

Strongly disagree   Disagree   Not Sure   Agree   Strongly Agree

4. I am satisfied with the JD consequences (verbal/written warnings, loss of privileges, parental contact, office referrals, etc.).

Strongly disagree   Disagree   Not Sure   Agree   Strongly Agree

5. I am satisfied with my school's administrative support for JD.

Strongly disagree   Disagree   Not Sure   Agree   Strongly Agree

6. I am satisfied with the plans and decisions of my school's JD team.

Strongly disagree    Disagree    Not Sure    Agree    Strongly Agree

7. I inconsistently teach JD expectations/consequences to my students.

Strongly disagree    Disagree    Not Sure    Agree    Strongly Agree

8. I consistently model JD expectations for my students.

Strongly disagree    Disagree    Not Sure    Agree    Strongly Agree

9. I consistently reward students using the JD reward system in place at my school.

Strongly disagree    Disagree    Not Sure    Agree    Strongly Agree

10. I feel that JD rewards students displaying positive behavior at an appropriate rate.

Strongly disagree    Disagree    Not Sure    Agree    Strongly Agree

11. I feel that JD punishes students displaying negative behavior at an appropriate rate.

Strongly disagree    Disagree    Not Sure    Agree    Strongly Agree

12. I believe that JD has helped decrease student discipline problems significantly at my school.

Strongly disagree    Disagree    Not Sure    Agree    Strongly Agree

13. I believe that JD has helped improve students' attitudes toward school.

Strongly disagree    Disagree    Not Sure    Agree    Strongly Agree

14. I believe JD has helped to improve students' respectfulness toward others.

Strongly disagree    Disagree    Not Sure    Agree    Strongly Agree

15. I believe JD has helped to improve relationships among students and adults at my school.

Strongly disagree    Disagree    Not Sure    Agree    Strongly Agree

16. I believe JD has helped improve safety throughout the school.

Strongly disagree    Disagree    Not Sure    Agree    Strongly Agree

17. I feel that teachers' perceptions/opinions were considered before JD was implemented at our school.

Strongly disagree    Disagree    Not Sure    Agree    Strongly Agree

18. As a teacher, I have made preparations on my own in order to implement JD.

Strongly disagree    Disagree    Not Sure    Agree    Strongly Agree

## Appendix D: Student Social Development Survey

Directions: For each statement mark whether it is true or false for this class with this teacher. T F

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1. This teacher nearly always tells us what to do.                                | T | F |
| 2. We have to do what the teacher says in this class.                             | T | F |
| 3. The whole class helped to make the class rules.                                | T | F |
| 4. I often decide for myself what I will do and where I will do it in this class. | T | F |
| 5. We are all very friendly together in this class.                               | T | F |
| 6. When students argue in this class people get upset.                            | T | F |
| 7. Nearly all of this class feels warm and friendly toward this teacher.          | T | F |
| 8. It's okay to disagree strongly with this teacher.                              | T | F |

## Appendix E: Teacher Interview Questions

1. Tell me about JD as it was implemented in your classroom.
2. Are you satisfied/dissatisfied or neutral about JD? Why is this?
  - a) Are teachers motivated to implement JD?
  - b) To what extent and in what ways has JD positively affected teacher/staff behavior?
3. How does JD affect student behavior?
  - a) Has JD decreased student discipline problems?
  - b) Has JD improved students' attitudes towards school?
  - c) Has JD helped to improve students' respectfulness towards others?
4. How does JD affect school climate?
  - a) Has JD helped to improve relationships among students and adults in the school? Please give an example.
  - b) Has JD helped to improve safety throughout the school? Please give an example.
5. How satisfied do you think that teachers are with the JD Program?
  - a) Are teachers satisfied with the behavior expectations and guidelines set forth by JD?
  - b) Are teachers satisfied with the administration's support of JD?
6. How was JD first implemented in this school?
  - a) Did teachers have adequate training and feel prepared to implement JD?
7. How is JD currently being implemented in this school?

- a) What preparation have teachers done on their own to implement JD?
  - b) What aspects of JD hinder or facilitate its implementation?
7. What additional thoughts or concerns about JD do you have?



## Appendix F: Open Codes For Teacher Interviews

**Research question two:** What are the strengths and weaknesses of the program from the teacher perspective?

Open codes for RQ 2

Open code	Properties	Examples of participants' words
Students Behavior Student Choices Improve Relationships Foster Respect Teacher Satisfaction Student Responsibility	Improves student behavior Students make positive behavior choices Fosters respect for other students and teachers and Improves relationships Teacher satisfaction	Students make appropriate choices Students have an opportunity to "fix" their behavior Students change or modify their behavior instead of me telling them what to do. Student put more thought into how they behave. Students respond in a more mature manner Students show respect for each other even if they don't like each other. Students put more thought into how their actions and behavior effects others. Gives second chances to allow students to change their behavior Students change unwanted behavior Students are empowered to make the right decision Students and teachers are on the same side Students take responsibility for their actions I am very satisfied with the program I certainly am satisfied with the program. I don't yell as much and I'm less stressed.
Administration Support Staff Training	With no support from administration, student behavior gets worse.	We received very little support, if any, from the assistant principal. Referrals were not handled in a

School Wide Implementation	Not implemented school wide All teachers did not implement the program consistently	timely manner by the administration; behavior for these students declined.
Lack of Program Consistency	Lack of training	Some teachers' read the JD book and others did not.
Holding Conversations with Students	Teacher/ student conversations are essential	Some teachers took more of an initiative to learn the JD program than others. Everyone did not take the time to have conversations with students, which is an essential part of the program.

**Research question four:** What are the teacher's recommendations for improving the program?

*Open codes for RQ 2*

Open code	Properties	Examples of participants' words
Read the JD training book	Training	The administration must support the program.
Get staff on board	Consistent classroom practices Individual discussions	If the administration must have the expectation that everyone uses this method, they must train the teachers, and use the method themselves.
Gain support from administration	Classroom meetings Support of Administration	Teachers must have proper training to understand and implement the program.
School wide implementation	Consistently implement the program Implement School Wide	Referrals should be handled in a timely manner by the administration.
Consistent Implementation	Lessons planned according to student needs	Teachers must get in the habit of having conversations with the students.
Handle referrals when needed.		Unless JD becomes a school wide concept that is expected and administered by the school down,

		students do not get the consistency that is so important when implementing any sort of behavior method.
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#### **Axial codes and selective code based on the open codes**

Open codes	Axial codes
Improved students behavior Students make good choices  Improve relationships of teachers/students and students/students  Fosters respect High teacher satisfaction Students take responsibility	Strengths of JD
Administration support Staff training School wide implementation  Lack of program consistency  Holding conversations with students	Weaknesses of Judicious