2018

Teacher Assessments of School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

Gequana Thomas
Walden University

Walden University

College of Education

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Gequana Thomas

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee
Dr. Anissa Harris, Committee Chairperson, Education Faculty
Dr. Laura Onafowora, Committee Member, Education Faculty
Dr. Keith Wright, University Reviewer, Education Faculty

Chief Academic Officer
Eric Riedel, Ph.D.

Walden University
2018

Abstract

Teacher Assessments of School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

by

Gequana Thomas

MA, University of Phoenix, 2009

BS, Winthrop University, 2005

Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

June 2018

Abstract

Discipline is of increasing concern to school stakeholders in districts around the world. It is especially concerning in a district of a southern U.S. state, where a zero tolerance policy calls for the removal of disruptive students from the classroom. Students, teachers, administrators, and other district officials may benefit from effective implementation of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), a positive discipline program that includes educators using data for instructional and discipline decision making. In the local district, little is known about the teachers' opinions regarding the PBIS implementation. The purpose of this project study was to gain insight on the teachers' assessment of the implementation of PBIS at Middle School A (MSA) and Middle School B (MSB) to benefit the PBIS program at MSA. The research questions addressed teachers' assessments of the PBIS implementation. Based on the theory of operant conditioning, a quantitative cross-sectional survey design was used to collect data using the PBIS Self-Assessment Survey. Survey data were analyzed descriptively and inferentially using an 1-way ANOVA. Applying the appropriate subscales of the survey instrument, MSA teachers scored the Classroom Setting System as *in place* and each of the other three systems (i.e. School-wide, Non-Classroom, and Individual Student Systems) as *partially in place*. MSA teachers (n = 22) also scored their PBIS systems higher than the teachers did at MSB (n = 22). Through the application of the resulting policy recommendation that indicates positive changes for MSA's PBIS program, student academic achievement and behavior may improve. In addition, through policy implementation, stakeholders in other districts may improve the implementation fidelity of their PBIS program with the objective of positively influencing students.

Teacher Assessments of School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

by

Gequana Thomas

MA, University of Phoenix, 2009

BS, Winthrop University, 2005

Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

June 2018

Dedication

This project study is dedicated to my students. My hopes are that my work contributes to you being afforded the best education possible. This project study is also dedicated to all educators. The work you do to provide for and develop the minds of our young people is immeasurable.

Acknowledgments

I owe thanks for the success of my project to my family, my professors, and my Lord and Savior. To my family, thanks for stepping in and helping to take care of home while I worked. As a single mother, the help was needed and much appreciated. Dr. Anissa Harris, my current chairperson, thank you for your continued support throughout this process. I know I nagged you with countless questions, but you never complained. I really appreciate the help and support from Dr. Laura Onafowora, my committee member, and Dr. Keith Wright, my university research reviewer, as well. Lastly, I thank you, Lord, for the courage and strength you bestowed upon me to conquer this task. Thank you all.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Section 1: The Problem

Introduction

Amid growing pressure on U.S. school systems to provide students with safe learning environments, educators have adopted many prevention-based models to address school discipline. Many policy makers in school districts across the country have implemented Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) to combat some of the growing discipline problems they are facing (OSEP Technical Assistance Center, 2016). PBIS is a program meant to reduce behavior problems and provide positive learning environments for students (OSEP Technical Assistance Center, 2016). Horner and McIntosh (2016) explained that programs that are based on prevention models, such as PBIS, are used to establish positive learning environments. These programs help students learn what is expected and provide a system to increase positive behavior of students (Horner & McIntosh, 2016). In a study, behavior data was analyzed, and the researchers revealed that the implementation of PBIS reduces office discipline referrals (ODR), increases parental involvement in schools, and can also help close the achievement gap among minority and majority students (Bradshaw, Mitchell, & Leaf, 2010).

In a school district in a southern U.S. state, discipline is a growing issue. Despite the implementation of PBIS, ODRs to administrators for discipline were increasing. This school district has a population of around 59,000 people. To support student learning and behavior, the use of data to guide decision making is emphasized in PBIS (OSEP Technical Assistance Center, 2016). Therefore, for PBIS to be

effective, school officials must track student behavior. The district in this study was able to track student behavior using PowerSchool (2016). PowerSchool is a secure Internet-based student management system that provides grade management, behavior management, and attendance records (PowerSchool, 2016). Using this data collection method, school officials were able to monitor student behavior and devise a plan to target the behaviors.

Leaders of several schools within this southern school district implemented PBIS. One school, Middle School A, experienced negative results with student discipline and a lack of teacher buy-in from the PBIS program. Another school, Middle School B, experienced positive effects using the PBIS program concerning student behavior. Research was necessary to understand how Middle School B was implementing the PBIS program in order to construct a plan to enhance the PBIS program at Middle School A.

In this section, I focus on defining and providing evidence of the problem and the need for further research. I also present the guiding questions and consider the significance of the research. A discussion of the literature findings about this problem is also contained within this section.

The Local Problem

President Lyndon Johnson signed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) into law in 1965. He held that the goal of the United States should be that everyone receives a full educational opportunity (United States Department of Education, n.d.). ESEA included grants for staff of underprivileged schools to buy

textbooks and library books and scholarships for low-income college students (United States Department of Education, n.d.). The law also included the creation of special education centers (United States Department of Education, n.d.).

On January 8, 2002, President George W. Bush signed the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001, a reauthorization of ESEA. NCLB lawmakers changed the role of the federal government in K-12 education by measuring student achievement to focus on school success (Jorgensen & Hoffman, 2003). The major component of NCLB was accountability. Accountability was to be accomplished and maintained through high stakes testing of all students against the state standards (Cortiella, 2006). NCLB lawmakers also established the standard of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). The goal of AYP was for schools to move toward having 100% of their students meet state standards by 2014 (Cortiella, 2006). If schools failed to meet AYP, several steps could be taken by educators to assist them with reaching their goals (Cortiella, 2006). Many factors contributed to a school not meeting AYP, including classroom discipline. Although neither ESEA nor NCLB were reauthorized legislatively during the 2014 to 2015 sessions, local and state education agencies adhered to NCLB guidelines until the approval of the Every Student Succeeds Act (2015) was enacted.

In 2012, President Barack Obama's administration allowed many states flexibility with meeting the requirements of NCLB. This flexibility gave the approved states some relief from the NCLB requirements in exchange for state-developed plans that are both rigorous and comprehensive (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.). These plans were designed to assist students with attaining success by closing achievement

gaps, increasing equity, improving quality of instruction, and increasing outcomes for all students (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.). Forty-three states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico were approved for ESEA flexibility (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.). In July 2012, the state in which this district is located was granted a waiver. Education officials in the state had also requested a 1-year extension of ESEA flexibility through the end of the 2014-2015 school year (South Carolina Department of Education, 2014).

President Obama signed The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) on December 10, 2015. ESSA is a reauthorization of ESEA. This law was an extension of the key areas of progress from ESEA and NCLB and focus was placed on preparing all students for college or a career after high school graduation (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.). ESSA lawmakers formulated provisions that upholds protections for disadvantaged and high-needs students, requires all students be taught to high academic standards, and increases access to high quality preschool (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.). ESSA also maintains the accountability expectations of NCLB to create positive change in low performing schools (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.). Currently, staff of the U.S. Department of Education are working with states and districts to begin implementing the new law (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.).

Despite the implementation of a district-wide discipline code at the project site, there were still a high number of discipline problems in the classroom as well as high expulsion rates, according PowerSchool records for the district. The problem with poor behavior is that it impedes the learning process in the classroom (Crone, Hawken, &

Horner, 2015). Teachers spend a great deal of their time dealing with disruptive behaviors instead of focusing on instruction (Kern, Gallagher, Starosta, Hickman, & George, 2006). The negative effect results in loss of instructional time for students with disciplinary problems. Teachers cannot teach, and children cannot learn in an environment filled with chaos and disruption (Reinke, Herman, & Stormont, 2013). Research has indicated that poor student discipline is a problem in today's middle schools, and poor discipline has a negative effect on teaching and learning (Samerson, 2010). Balfanz (2009) stated that during the middle grades "students either launch toward achievement and attainment, or slide off track and placed on a path of frustration, failure, and, ultimately, early exit from the only secure path to adult success" (p. 13). Leaders of school districts must successfully implement proactive programs such as PBIS to help today's students reach adult success, in accordance with ESEA and NCLB (Balfanz, 2009).

Middle School A's school district transitioned to using PowerSchool to track discipline towards the end of the first semester of the 2011-2012 school year. From that time until the end of the school year, staff members at Middle School A wrote 1,385 ODRs, as shown in Table 1. From those referrals, there were 731 assignments to in-school suspension (ISS) and 234 assignments in out-of-school suspension (OSS). Administrators removed 33 students from the normal school environment and placed them in an alternative setting; four students were expelled from school. During the 2012-2013 school year, the ODRs written by teachers increased by 41% at the same middle school, which resulted in a 16% increase of students being assigned to ISS and a

79% increase of students being placed in OSS. During that year, there was also a 45% increase of students placed in an alternative school setting and a 75% increase of students expelled from school. During the 2013-2014 school year, ODRs increased by 9%, students placed in ISS increased by 10%, and students placed in OSS increased by 32%. However, there was an 8% decrease in students removed from their normal school setting and placed in an alternative setting, and a 57% decrease of students that were expelled from school (PowerSchool, 2016). The students who are placed into an alternative setting are enrolled in the alternative school for the entire district or enrolled in homebound services. Homebound students are taught from home or a public setting and assigned a certified teacher to teach them their core subjects for the remainder of the school year (PowerSchool, 2016). Table 1 includes the discipline data for Middle School A in this local school district.

Table 1

Middle School A Discipline Data for 2011-2015

School year	# of referrals	%	ISS	%	OSS	%	Alternative setting	Expelled
2011-2012	1385		731		234		33	4
		+4		+1		+7		
2012-2013	1958	1	845	6	418	9	48	7
				+1		+3		
2013-2014	2129	+9	926	0	553	2	44	3

2014-2015	1345	-37	607	-35	441	-20	49	2

Administrators at Middle School A implemented PBIS in the 2011-2012 school year. The numbers of ODRs and instances of ISS and OSS have increased annually. The expulsion rate also increased then decreased, but the reasons for these trends are currently unknown. During the 2014-2015, the number of ODRs decreased by 37%, as well as the incidences of ISS and OSS; however, the enrollment at Middle School A decreased by 11%. Although there was a decrease in the number of ODRs and enrollment, there was an increase in the number of students placed in alternative settings. This increase indicates the ODRs were for offenses that were more serious (PowerSchool, 2016).

Researchers have shown that positive results follow the implementation of both positive and negative consequences towards behavior in educational settings. When students experience positive consequences for behaving appropriately and negative consequences for misbehaving, their schools as a whole will see an improvement in student discipline (Bradshaw, Koth, Thornton, & Leaf, 2009; Bradshaw et al., 2010). With the implementation of a district-wide discipline code and PBIS in 2011-2012, Middle School A should have seen a reduction in ODRs and student displacement from class; but within 2 school years, the number of ODRs and student displacements has risen. Leaders of the school implemented PBIS to address the behavior concerns within the school. According to the school's principal; however, due to the negative

experience with PBIS at Middle School A, a lack of teacher buy-in has resulted. Consequently, the PBIS program was discarded.

Another middle school within the same district, Middle School B, experienced similar issues with high numbers of office referrals, suspension, and expulsions in the past; however, school officials documented positive changes with discipline after PBIS implementation. Table 2 shows the discipline data for Middle School B for the school terms from 2011 to 2015. .

Table 2

Middle School B Discipline Data for 2011-2015

School year	# of referrals	%	ISS	%	OSS	%	Alternative setting	Expelled
2011-2012	1115		514		335		31	1
2012-2013	1064	-5	422	-18	373	+11	12	2
2013-2014	1860	+75	435	+3	387	+4	37	0
2014-2015	892	-52	219	-50	216	-44	27	0

Between the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 school years, the number of instances of referrals, ISS, and students placed in alternative settings decreased at Middle School B, but the instances of OSS and expulsions increased slightly. The most challenging schools are more likely to be led by less experienced principals, which can have a negative effect on student behavior (Loeb, Kalogrides, & Horng, 2010). Prior to the commencement of the 2013-2014 school year, the district hired a new superintendent,

and Middle School B obtained a new principal. The new principal was an assistant principal in another school district in the state before becoming principal at Middle School B. According to the superintendent, the new principal had no experience as a principal prior to taking on that role at this challenging school. Also, the increase in negative discipline during that school year could have be caused by the change in administration with the school and district. Although there was an increase in negative discipline during 2013-2014, there were no students expelled from school that year. Middle School B experienced a drastic decrease in negative discipline during the 2014-2015 school year as well (PowerSchool, 2016).

Middle Schools A and B share several characteristics. Both schools are Title I schools within the same school district. According to enrollment data for November 2015, the student population of Middle School A was 51% African American, 40% Caucasian, and 5% Hispanic ($N = 778$). The student population of Middle School B In November 2015 was 86% African American, 7% Caucasian, and 6% Hispanic ($N = 375$). There were 74 certified staff members at Middle School A and 37 at Middle School B. Female teachers made up 72% of the certified staff at Middle School A and 81% of the certified staff at Middle School B, while male teachers constituted the remaining 28% of the staff at Middle School A and 19% at Middle School B (PowerSchool, 2016). The city where these schools are located has a crime index of 5, which means this city is safer than 5% of the cities in the United States (Neighborhood Scout, 2015). Both schools experience a high number of ODRs each year, with a combined almost 4,000 referrals during 2013-2014. Middle School A experienced far

more instances of students placed in ISS between 2011 and 2014 with 2,702 compared to 1,371 at Middle School B. The 2,702 ISS figure means that 2,702 school days were missed because of behavior. Aside from the students in ISS, there were a combined total of 1,205 instances of OSS at Middle School A and 1,095 at Middle School B between 2011 and 2014. In these 3 years, Middle School A expelled 14 students.

Research was needed to determine what Middle School B was doing differently that may be helpful to Middle School A. With such a high crime rate, school officials should focus on keeping students in school (Neighborhood Scout, 2015). School officials can help facilitate this matter by creating an effective PBIS program that teachers will buy-in to.

Rationale

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

In this southern school district, disruptive students are taken from the classroom through in-school and out-of-school suspension and expulsion. Removing students from the classroom does not eliminate the school's problem of high suspension and expulsion rates; student removal increases the school's problem (Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010; Skiba et al., 2008). A possible cause of this problem was the school district's approach to disciplining disruptive behaviors. The discipline policy called for *zero tolerance* for certain behaviors with mandatory consequences thus causing the high suspension and expulsion rates. Middle School A was experiencing major problems with student discipline. Administrators at Middle School A implemented school-wide PBIS to help alleviate some of the discipline problems. The program had

little effect on the number of ODRs and the number of students removed from class (PowerSchool, 2016).

The purpose of PBIS is to decrease the number of office discipline referrals, and since there had actually been an *increase*, a lack of teacher buy-in resulted. Researchers have shown that PBIS decreases ODRs if implemented correctly (Horner et al., 2009). Teachers are important stakeholders in implementing PBIS. If teachers do not fully support or buy-in to the program, the effectiveness of the program will be significantly compromised (Martin, 2013). The lack of teacher buy-in indicated there was a need for modifications in the program at Middle School A.

Another middle school in this district, Middle School B, experienced positive results with PBIS, but little is known throughout the district about how the program was being implemented. Research was needed to analyze PBIS implementation at Middle School A and Middle School B to make improvements to the program at Middle School A.

In addition to the problem locally, there were concerns with student behavior and achievement nationally. The NCLB Act (2001) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA) lawmakers required schools to implement intervention programs for behavior that allow students to reach high academic levels. The lawmakers for these federal programs also held schools accountable for the students' achievement levels (Cortiella, 2006). Researchers believed student achievement was directly related to student behavior and classroom management (Hochweber, Hosenfield, & Klieme, 2013; Marzano, 2003; Milner & Tenores, 2010).

As a result, determining the effectiveness of programs, such as PBIS, is important to schools.

Evidence of the Problem from the Professional Literature

School-wide PBIS is an operational framework for achieving the most effective and accurately implemented instructional and behavioral practices possible (OSEP Technical Assistance Center, 2016). PBIS is not a curriculum, but rather a framework for decision making. This decision making should guide selection, integration, and implementation of the best academic and behavioral practices. The goal is to improve student academic behavior outcomes (OSEP Technical Assistance Center, 2016). PBIS is a method used to establish the culture and supports children need to achieve success, both academically and socially. These practices use different ways of holding students accountable for their actions (Omojola, 2013).

Despite the implementation of PBIS in schools, many teachers still seem to struggle with behavior management, describing it as one of the most challenging aspects of their jobs (Reinke, Stormont, Herman, Puri, & Goel, 2011). In declining schools, the increases in student behavior problems are accompanied with a decrease in student achievement. An increase in disruptive behavior enables a teacher to provide effective instructional time, as they are forced to devote their time to maintaining order (Duke, 2008). Klassen and Chiu reported that teachers who experience increased stress levels from student misbehaviors report lower levels of self-efficacy in the classroom (2010). Teachers who participate in PBIS see a reduction in disruptive behavior and an improvement in classroom management; which are components found to lower

teaching anxiety and increased teacher self-efficacy (Gettinger, Stoiber, & Koscik, 2008; Sugai & Horner, 2009).

The reauthorization of ESEA, known as the NCLB Act of 2001, focused educator's attention to the problem in schools with high dropout rates and low graduation rates. With the effect of accountability, local and state education agencies worked on developing programs to engage students. Accountability is also a focus for the new education law, ESSA, that is taking the place of NCLB (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.). Although proactive programs like PBIS are not the only thing needed to raise student achievement, it helps to create an environment where effective and efficient teaching can take place and teachers can address the requirements of ESEA (Colvin, 2007).

If implemented effectively, ODRs may be reduced and the expected behavior from students may be experienced more often. This change will allow the overall teaching and learning environment of a school to be enhanced, thus improving student achievement (Colvin, 2007; Froagh, Burton, & Chapman, 2012). Acquiring knowledge about the implementation of the PBIS program at Middle School B allows Middle School A to develop an effective and efficient PBIS program that will minimize disruptive behavior from students.

Definition of Terms

Special terms associated with the problem in this project study are defined and cited here.

Behavior support systems: Four organizational supports of PBIS: (a) school-wide discipline systems, (b) nonclassroom management systems (e.g., cafeteria, hallway, playground), (c) classroom management systems, and (d) systems for individual students engaging in chronic problem behaviors (Sugai, Horner, & Lewis, 2009).

Classroom settings: Instructional settings where students are taught and supervised by teachers (Sugai et al., 2009).

Discipline referral: A written document that can be used in the early detection and monitoring of disruptive behaviors. Discipline referrals describe a behavior observed by a member of a school's staff where the student violated a school policy (Sugai et al., 2000).

Expulsions: A disciplinary action by the school district that permanently removes a student from his or her learning environment for an extended time (more than 11 school days and up to the remainder of the school year; Hoffman, 2014).

Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS): A systematic approach to establish a positive school environment and climate. PBIS is a method used to teach students the behaviors that are expected and rewarding the students for exhibiting those behaviors. (OSEP Technical Assistance Center, 2016; Spencer, 2013).

Nonclassroom setting: Times or places when students are outside of the normal classroom setting where supervision should be emphasized (i.e., hallways, cafeteria, a playground, bus; Sugai et al., 2009).

School-wide systems: The entire educational setting that involves all students, all staff, and all classroom and nonclassroom settings (Sugai et al., 2009).

Suspensions: A disciplinary action by administrators that temporarily removes a student from his or her learning environment for a specified time (Sugai et al., 2000).

Zero tolerance: A disciplinary approach that refers to a school- or district-wide policy with predetermined consequences and punishments for misbehaviors in school (National Association of School Psychologists, 2001).

Significance of the Study

The importance of this research was to bring about social change to the setting at Middle School A by evaluating the PBIS program at a similar middle school in the same district. The intent of this study was to analyze PBIS at Middle School B from the assessment of teachers and comparing them to the assessment of teachers at Middle School A. Findings from a PBIS evaluation survey could be used within the school district and even transferred to other school districts with similar demographics. The findings could be used when planning implementation of similar programs or to create training for faculty and staff to ensure successful implementation (Martin, 2013).

According to discipline data retrieved from PowerSchool from recent years, discipline is a problem at Middle School A. High expulsion and suspension rates negatively affect the school because students with discipline issues cannot stay in the classroom, which negatively affects their academic achievement (Patterson, 2013). At the beginning of the 2012-2013 school year, administrators implemented PBIS with the

teachers and students at this school, but the program was having little effect on student discipline as evident with data.

The NCLB Act (2001) lawmakers acknowledged that no child can learn in a disruptive climate. The behavior of students has to be monitored closely because students who demonstrate destructive and disruptive behavior can easily make the efforts of teachers and administrators ineffective. According to Way (2011), there is a direct connection between student behavior and an effective school. Disruptive behavior can pose a real threat to the learning and teaching process and can often turn into teachers leaving their professions.

Based on the limited data provided in Table 2, it appeared that PBIS was implemented effectively by school administrators at Middle School B, but little was known about teachers' assessment of the program at the school. The purpose of this study was to gain insight on the teachers' assessment of the implementation of PBIS at Middle School A and Middle School B in order to improve the PBIS at Middle School A. Teachers are important stakeholders in the implementation process of PBIS. The role of the teacher as a stakeholder includes assessing the PBIS program and monitoring its progress (Upreti, Liaupsin, & Koonce, 2010). When teachers do not fully support the program, its effectiveness will be compromised, as in the case at Middle School A (Upreti, Liaupsin, & Koonce, 2010). Teachers' assessments, opinions, and beliefs have been considered when researching educational issues such as, the amount of time children spend at school (Gokce, 2012), curriculum (Kilic, 2013), teacher salaries (Mishel, 2012), and other educational reforms (Dagli, 2013). The results of this

research may be used to improve the PBIS program at Middle School A and gain teacher buy-in (Martin, 2013).

Research Question

Discipline has been an issue in a school district in a southern state. Some schools have recently implemented PBIS to combat this issue. Researchers have shown that positive results follow the implementation of both positive and negative consequences towards behavior (Scott, White, Algozzine, & Algozzine, 2009). Administrators at Middle School A implemented PBIS but experienced negative results and a lack of teacher buy-in. Administrators at Middle School B, a similar school in the same district, experienced positive results with their PBIS program. Research was needed to determine the teachers' assessment of the PBIS program at Middle School B in regards to its implementation; comparing those assessments to those of the Middle School A teachers provided valuable data to target areas that need improvement at Middle School A. A plan was needed to enhance the effectiveness of the PBIS program and gain teacher buy-in at Middle School A.

The following research questions were framed to align with the purpose of this study. Data from the PBIS Self-Assessment Survey was gathered and analyzed to determine the differences in teacher perceptions on the current status and priority for improvement for the PBIS program overall and for the following four areas (as was distinguished by the subscales of the instrument): School-Wide Systems, Non-Classroom Settings, Classroom Systems, and Individual Student Systems. The research questions addressed the assessments of teachers regarding the implementation of PBIS

at Middle School A and Middle School B. For the purpose of this study, the following questions were addressed:

Overall PBIS Program

1. What are the significant differences in the teachers' overall assessments of the PBIS program's current status and priority for improvement at Middle School A and Middle School B, respectively, in a southern school district as measured by the PBIS Self-Assessment Survey?

   H_0: There are no significant differences in the teachers' overall assessments of the PBIS program's current status and priority for improvement at Middle School A and Middle School B, respectively, in a southern school district as measured by the PBIS Self-Assessment Survey.

   H_1: There are significant differences in the teachers' overall assessments of the PBIS program's current status and priority for improvement at Middle School A and Middle School B, respectively, in a southern school district as measured by the PBIS Self-Assessment Survey.

PBIS Feature: School-Wide Systems

2. What are the significant differences in the teacher assessment scores regarding the current status of PBIS School-Wide Systems among teachers at Middle School A and Middle School B?

   H_0: There are no significant differences in the teacher assessment scores regarding the current status of PBIS School-Wide Systems among teachers at Middle School A and Middle School B.

H_1: There are significant differences in the teacher assessment scores regarding the current status of PBIS School-Wide Systems among teachers at Middle School A and Middle School B.

PBIS Feature: Non-Classroom Setting Systems

3. What are the significant differences in the teacher assessments scores regarding the current status of PBIS Non-Classroom Setting Systems among teachers at Middle School A and Middle School B?

   H_0: There are no significant differences in the teacher assessment scores regarding the current status of PBIS Non-Classroom Setting Systems among teachers at Middle School A and Middle School B.

   H_1: There are significant differences in the teacher assessment scores regarding the current status of PBIS Non-Classroom Setting Systems among teachers at Middle School A and Middle School B.

PBIS Feature: Classroom Setting Systems

4. What are the significant differences in the teacher assessments scores regarding the current status of PBIS Classroom Systems among teachers at Middle School A and Middle School B?

   H_0: There are no significant differences in the teacher assessment scores regarding the current status of PBIS Classroom Systems among teachers at Middle School A and Middle School B.

H_1: There are significant differences in the teacher assessment scores regarding the current status of PBIS Classroom Systems among teachers at Middle School A and Middle School B.

PBIS Feature: Individual Student Systems

5. What are the significant differences in the teacher assessments scores regarding the current status of PBIS Individual Student Systems among teachers at Middle School A and Middle School B?

   H_0: There are no significant differences in the teacher assessment scores regarding the current status of PBIS Individual Student Systems among teachers at Middle School A and Middle School B.

   H_1: There are significant differences in the teacher assessment scores regarding the current status of PBIS Individual Student Systems among teachers at Middle School A and Middle School B.

Review of the Literature

This section was developed through an extensive review of literature, both current and past. I gathered information through a number of internet search engines, using Google, Google Scholar, and library database, using ERIC Education Resources Information Center, searches for peer-reviewed journals, periodicals, articles and books related to the topic. A variety of key words and phrases were used in my search, such as *PBIS, PBIS and achievement, achievement gap, student achievement and discipline, proactive discipline, zero tolerance, discipline approaches, school removal and academic achievement, school suspension and expulsion,* and *behavior theories.*

Theoretical Framework

This study is based on the theory of operant conditioning by B. F. Skinner who held that the best way to understand behavior was to look at the causes of an action (McLeod, 2014). Skinner's operant conditioning supports the changing of behavior with the use of reinforcements. The reinforcements should be given after a desired response is given. Skinner's theory of operant conditioning was based on the works of Thorndike (1905). Thorndike used a puzzle box to study learning in animals and proposed the theory of the Law of Effect. Skinner showed how positive reinforcement worked with a rat he placed in his Skinner box. The box contained a lever and a hungry rat. As the rat moved around the box, it would inadvertently knock the lever. Knocking the lever caused a food pellet to fall into a basin next to it. The rat eventually learned to knock the lever when put in the box a few times. The consequence of receiving food if they pressed the lever made them repeat the action repeatedly. Using his technique, Skinner was able to propose that positive reinforcement strengthens a behavior by providing a rewarding consequence (McLeod, 2014).

In the mid 1980's, the concept of positive approaches began to emerge. New and more positive ways of thinking about learning and behavior were being shaped. IDEA 1997 increased the use of positive behavior intervention plans (BIPs) for students whose behavior negatively affected their ability to learn. The 2004 reauthorization of IDEA recognized the need for a universal approach to behavior. This resulted in the creation of PBIS, which expanded the focus of behavior to prevention, skill building,

and environmental modification to the school community (Kappel, Dufresne, & Mayer, 2012).

Skinner's operant behavior is one where the consequences depend on the environmental conditions it produces; a behavior that becomes more likely to occur through positive reinforcements. Operant conditioning, usually referred to as behaviorism, is the fundamental principle of the basis of PBIS. The approach of PBIS promotes the idea of a child being rewarded for doing what the teacher expects (Marshall, 2015). The theory of operant conditioning supports the idea of PBIS that is designed to address the behavioral needs of as many students as possible by providing rewards when they are behaving appropriately. The success and academic achievement among students are imperative to educators and educational institutions (Palumbo & Sanacore, 2009). Over the past 20 years, the achievement gap has widened (Haycock, 2002). This change could be attributed to the lack of educational resources, increases in dropout rates, the severity of discipline issues, and poor achievement levels among minority students. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (2007), the academic progress of students declines during middle school. Therefore, effective classroom management and preventive discipline are imperative for supporting teaching and learning.

Approaches to Discipline

One of the most important behavior management practices is to develop a set of classroom and school rules and expectations. These practices should be developmentally appropriate, worded and stated positively, and taught methodically.

Effective rules should be appropriate for the students' age, specific, observable, positively stated, easy to understand, and enforceable (Reinke et al., 2013).

In schools, it has been found that with the increasing rate of violence among youth, there is also an increasing rate of disruptive behaviors in the classroom (Gonzales, 2013). Schools are dealing with issues that range from gang violence and drug problems to behavior management issues. Researchers Miramontes, Marchant, Heath, and Fischer (2011) suggested that proactive interventions are much more effective than reactive approaches when increasing student's academic success and their social competencies (Coffey & Horner, 2012).

Zero tolerance policies. Traditional methods of addressing problem behavior focus on denying privileges and excluding students from the educational setting. The expectation is that students should behave appropriately, and if they choose not to, punishment should follow. Consequently, this problem behavior is remedied by increasing punishments, as in creating zero tolerance policies (Colvin, 2007). Zero tolerance policies are prevalent in school districts in the United States (Skiba et al., 2008). These policies create mandatory punishments for behavioral offenses. Under the zero tolerance policies, students who commit certain offenses are punished according to the policy, and schools do not make exceptions for the consequences under any circumstance. With the adoption of these zero tolerance policies, there are far more students being suspended and expelled from school (Gonzales, 2013). Initially, the zero tolerance policies were meant to target drugs and weapons possessions. They have

since been extended to include lesser offenses that happen habitually and gang-related behavior (Fanion, 2013).

The goal of such zero tolerance policies is to have a uniform system for consequences for behaviors in order to maintain safe learning environments. The result, however, has been an increase in punishments (Gonzales, 2013). Zero tolerance policies do not aid in the overall safety of the school. These policies can also be associated with decreased academic performance, increased dropout rates, and subsequent disciplinary exclusions (Iselin, 2010). It appears that school districts have resorted to these tactics because they have failed to provide safe environments and are looking for a quick way to fix student misbehaviors rather than promoting positive behaviors and preventing unacceptable behavior through positive reinforcements. It has been found that punishment alone will not have a lasting effect on negative behavior (Kant, 2004).

Zero tolerance policies may be harmful. Under this policy, students could receive harsher punishments than they otherwise would have if no zero tolerance policy was in place. These punishments remove students from their normal learning environments and criminalize them. There is a negative correlation between school suspensions and expulsions and academic achievement. Suspensions are used to rid the school of perceived troublemakers. Consequently, eliminating these students from the school does not improve school climate (Noltemeyer, Ward, & Mcloughlin, 2015). Students who have been suspended are three times more likely drop out of school by the 10th grade than students who have never been suspended. Dropping out triples the

likelihood of incarceration late in life. In 1997, 68 percent of state prisoners where high school dropouts (Farberman, 2006). Regardless of how a child behaves, he or she must have access to a free and appropriate education (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). A free and appropriate education is not provided when students are removed from their learning environment because of suspensions and expulsions. Detentions or in-school suspensions negatively affect academic achievement as well (Fanion, 2013).

Teacher effectiveness is a strong determinant of student success, but a teacher's ability to provide learning opportunities for students who are suspended or expelled are reduced with these absences. Students who attend school regularly have higher achievement levels than those who do not attend school regularly (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009). Being out of school may also put students at risk of getting involved in criminal activity. Schools are also being required to share information with law enforcement on student infractions, which increase the referrals to the justice system, thus translating school misbehavior into criminal activity (Gonzales, 2013).

In Florida schools, students can be arrested for minor infractions, and even if the charges are dropped, the arrest will remain on their records. When that student applies for a job, the criminal background check will show his or her arrest. Therefore minor infractions can be converted into a crime that can cost a person their livelihood (Gonzales, 2013).

Students who are usually affected by the zero tolerance policies are those of color. In America's schools, black students without disabilities are far more likely to be expelled or suspended than white students, as reported by government civil rights data

collected from 2011-2012. Black students made up only 15% of the data collected for this study, but black students were more than a third of the students suspended once, 44% of those suspended more than once, and more than a third of the students expelled (Hefling, 2014). Black students also made up more than half of the students who were involved in school-related arrests or referred to law enforcement. Last year, black students comprised 50% of school arrests in Florida (Gonzales, 2013). In addition, Iselin (2010) reported Black students are suspended more frequently and disciplined more severely for minor misconducts. Black students make up 23% of Florida school's population and 50.4% of student arrests in Florida schools (Gonzales, 2013).

Proactive approaches to discipline. Teachers and principals must use effective measures to maintain order and provide safety in today's schools. There is no evidence that frequent suspensions improve school safety or student behavior; this approach to discipline simply removes misbehaving students from their school environment (Skiba et al., 2008). School systems that implement widespread school-wide practices that are consistent, positive, and developmentally appropriate are much more likely to have lower suspension rates than schools without those practices. Schools that implement such policies are also much more likely to improve the academic achievements of their students' (Iselin, 2010).

Although there appears to be a consensus on the problems facing our schools regarding school discipline, there is much debate on how these problems need to be addressed. There is a vast amount of research that connects academic and disruptive behaviors, such as non-compliance, classroom disruption, fighting, and bullying

(Algozzine, Wang, & Violette, 2011; Anderson, 2009; Cortes, Moussa, & Weinstein, 2012). Educators have found that positive incentives, along with punishments and consequences, have improved school behavior (Scott et. al., 2009). Several educators have pointed out problems with the proactive discipline approach. Some educators believe students will only behave appropriately when the external reinforcements are present. Consequently, students will not develop any intrinsic motivators for behaving properly.

There is strong documentation, however, that shows positive results in schools that implement a mixture of both positive and negative consequences towards behaviors (Sprick, 2009). A study conducted by Spencer (2013) found that after the implementation of PBIS, there was a significant decrease in the number of office referrals for negative discipline. Negative consequences should follow problem behavior, and positive consequences should follow appropriate behavior (Colvin, 2007). Positive behavior should be taught in schools with the same approach as academic content, so students understand expected behaviors (Swain-Bradway, Swoszowski, Boden, & Sprague, 2013). Comprehensive school wide changes, through PBIS, that address student behaviors through proactive prevention and the reinforcement of positive behaviors will reduce discipline referrals and the use of suspension improvements in school safety according to Horner et al. (2009).

A study conducted by Patterson (2013) revealed that PBIS resulted in an increase of student scores for reading and math. The students studied scored statistically higher on assessments after PBIS was implemented. The researcher asserted that PBIS

has an effect on student achievement is positive. Likewise, in another study, similar results were experienced. Following the implementation of PBIS, improvements in student academic achievement, as well as improvements in attendance and reductions in behavioral incidents, were experienced (Johnson et al., 2013). In a study conducted by Kelm, McIntosh, and Cooley (2014), PBIS was introduced and implemented in a Canadian school district. The district in this case study experienced high numbers of office discipline referrals, high numbers of out of school suspensions, and decreased student achievement. The results of this study indicated a significant decrease in problematic behavior and an increase in academic achievement.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

Schools are faced with many problems including poverty, low parent involvement, low student motivation, and discrimination. To allow students to be successful in the world today, these problems have to be solved. One solution involves the schools using evidence-based approaches like PBIS to help foster and engage students in the teaching and learning process. Approaches, such as PBIS, may help identify behaviors that undermine learning, teaching, and student-staff relationships (Muscott et al., 2008). Educators have found that positive incentives, when used with punishments, have enhanced students' behavior and have positively affected schools' climates. PBIS is designed to help schools establish the kind of environment needed to accomplish the task of teaching and learning (Colvin, 2007).

PBIS was designed to address the behavior concerns of as many students as possible (Muscott, Mann, & LeBrun, 2008). PBIS has been used for over a decade to

change student discipline to a more proactive approach. The minimum expectation when implementing PBIS is that teachers teach the school wide behavior expectations, rules are posted for students to see, praise occurs more often than punishment, and procedures are in place for correcting behaviors (Conroy, Sutherland, Haydon, Stormont, & Harmom, 2009; Stormont, Lewis, Beckner, & Johnson, 2008).

PBIS prevents many occurrences within the school setting and reduces ODRs up to 50% over a 3 year period (Horner et al., 2009). Students in schools that implement PBIS are 35% less likely to receive ODRs than those students in schools without PBIS implementation (Bradshaw et al., 2010). Students in these schools also experience better relationships with other students and staff member relationships with students improve as well (Bradshaw et al., 2009).

PBIS implementation involves the commitment of several stakeholders, such as teachers, administrators, parents, and students (Martin, 2013). For PBIS to be successful in any school, the support of administration and teachers at the school is critical (Kennedy, Mimmack, & Flannery, 2012). Research indicates that teachers who support a program will implement it more effectively (Cooper, 2010; McArdle, 2011). PBIS can offer teachers the skills they need to deal with misbehaving students in the classroom while being able to keep them in the classroom to receive instruction. Teacher buy-in is important when implementing and trying to sustain PBIS (Martin, 2013). Research indicates that teacher perceptions play a major role in creating a PBIS climate (Lane et al., 2009). In a study conducted to recommend sustainability features with PBIS programs, Coffey and Horner (2012) found that teacher buy-in and

commitment were two of the most frequently reported factors by teachers that led to sustainability of PBIS programs. Another study concluded that along with leadership, a high-level of teacher buy-in is needed to support the program (Richards, Aguilera, Murakami, & Weiland, 2014).

Teachers teaching behaviors that are appropriate, rather than reacting when a problem occurs, help students experience success while in school (Morrissey, Bohanon, & Fenning, 2010). PBIS reduces challenging behaviors and leads to improvements in academic achievement (Chitiyo, Makweche-Chitiyo, Park, Ametepee, & Chitiyo, 2011).

Academic Achievement

The relationship between academic achievement and poor discipline have been studied (Austin, 2013; Larsen, Steele, & Sailor, 2006; Morrison, Anthony, Storino, & Dillion, 2001; Stewart, 2010). Larsen et al. (2006) examined the relationship between office referrals for discipline and suspension and student performance on standardized reading and math tests. The number of office referrals and suspensions a student received positively correlated with that students' low scores on standardized reading and math tests. Morrison et al. (2001) reviewed student records to determine the students who were referred to an in-school suspension program. The students who did not have any prior office referrals had higher GPAs than the students who had previous referrals. The findings of the previously mentioned studies suggest that academic performance and student misbehavior are related, and the rates of ODRs and suspensions show a relationship with how well a student performs on academic

assessments (OSEP Technical Assistance Center, 2016). In a research study conducted by Austin (2013), it was found that attendance is a key factor in determining a student's academic success. There is a significant relationship between excessive school absences and success in school (Stewart, 2010).

Research has also shown that instructional time is highly correlated with student achievement (Froagh et. al., 2012; Milner & Tenores, 2010; Reglin, Akpo-Sanni, & Losike-Sedimo, 2012; Skiba et al., 2014; Wong & Wong, 2005). The school-wide positive behavior support program implemented by Scott and Barrett (2004) in an urban elementary school resulted in office referrals and suspensions being lowered significantly. The students in the school in this study experienced 562 fewer ODRs than they experienced in the previous year, and suspensions were lowered by 55 in a 2-year period. They estimated that each student who receives an office referral loses approximately 20 minutes of instruction, and 1 day of instruction is lost with suspensions. With the reduction in office referrals and suspensions, 29.5 instructional days were gained and suspensions were reduced by 50 days (OSEP Technical Assistance Center, 2016). The relationship between attendance and student achievement is weakest when students are young and grows exponentially as a student ages; the effect of attendance on achievement increases with grade levels (Froagh et al., 2012).

School removal and academic achievement. Suspensions and expulsions reduce students' opportunities to learn (Losen & Skiba, 2010). When students are constantly suspended or expelled from school, they tend to fall behind academically,

which often causes them to drop out of school eventually or resort to criminal behaviors (Gonzales, 2013). Missed school days are unused opportunities for students to learn. Due to increased accountability for districts and schools, the relationship between student achievement and attendance is being studied at an increasing rate (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009).

Sugai and Horner (2008) suggested that suspension is ineffective when used without a proactive support system. Frequent suspensions significantly increase the risk of academic underperformance. Long term, suspensions have been found to be a strong determinant of the rates of student drop out and students not graduating on time. Suspensions and expulsions damage the learning process. Students become less bonded to school and less invested in their schoolwork and school rules; therefore, less likely to achieve academic success (Gregory et al., 2010).

Iselin (2010) summarized recent research on suspensions and alternatives to suspension. Suspensions are effective when there is a need to remove a problematic child from school. Suspensions provide temporary relief to school personnel and raises parental concern about a child's misbehaviors. However, research has shown that males are more likely to be suspended than females. Students who are suspended usually lack parental supervision while they are home. It has been found that "school wide changes that address student and school-level characteristics through proactive prevention and the reinforcement of positive behaviors are related to lower suspension rates," and "when implemented school-wide, the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports program reduces discipline referrals and the use of suspensions" (p. 6). In addition,

conflict resolution training for students school-wide reduces students' acts of violence in the school (Bradshaw, Reinke, Brown, Bevans, & Leaf, 2008; Christle, Jolivette, & Nelson, 2005; Coleman & Fisher-Yoshida, 2004; Theriot, Craun, & Dupper, 2010).

Summary

Supporting the theory of operant conditioning, a school's approach to discipline should make use of positive reinforcement, which strengthens a behavior by providing a rewarding consequence (McLeod, 2014). In summary, research on PBIS was highlighted, as well as several approaches to discipline and the effects of discipline and school removal on academic achievement to support the purpose of this study.

Implications

The purpose of this project study was to gain insight on the teachers' assessment of the implementation of PBIS at Middle School A and Middle School B in order to improve the PBIS at Middle School A. After obtaining IRB approval, the participants completed a survey. Based on the analysis of the data collected from teachers from Middle School A and B, an implementation plan for the PBIS program at Middle School A, in the form of a white paper, was developed.

A component of the white paper will include effective classroom management strategies for teachers. According to McDonald (2010), an important strategy in classroom management is developing consistent and positive relationships. Developing these relationships are also a part of the PBIS program.

Middle School A is experiencing problems with student discipline. Improving the PBIS program may decrease the incidences of student misbehavior. The proposed

project will to help restart and become the foundation of an improved PBIS program at Middle School A during the 2018-2019 school year. The implementation plan will be presented to the administrative staff at Middle School A upon project study approval.

The research findings and project can also be applied to other schools using PBIS in order to combat some of the discipline problems those schools are facing. Results from this project study could help turn PBIS into a program that minimizes the negative discipline with students district-wide.

Summary

PBIS is used to combat some of the discipline problems school districts face. Due to the pressure to provide a safe learning environment, school districts have implemented PBIS to reduce behavior problems and provide positive learning environments for students. In a southern school district, a middle school has a problem with poor behavior from students. With a zero tolerance discipline policy, students with discipline problems cannot stay in the classroom because of the disruption to the class. Removal of these students caused them to fall behind their peers academically, along with a number of other issues. Administrators at Middle School A were having trouble getting the intended results from the PBIS program to manage their discipline. Another school in the same district (Middle School B) had experienced great gains with the program. Research was needed to determine what Middle School B was doing differently.

This study was based on the theory of operant conditioning. Skinner's operant behavior is a behavior whose consequences depend on the environmental conditions it

produces; a behavior that becomes more likely to occur through positive reinforcements. Research has shown that positive results follow the implementation of both positive and negative consequences towards behavior. Research questions, focused on the PBIS program at Middle School A and Middle School B, were formulated to address the concerns.

The intent of this study was to determine the assessments of teachers of the PBIS program at Middle School A and Middle School B. The results of this study were used to improve the program at Middle School A. This study may potentially benefit the entire district as well.

In the following section, the methodology of this study is discussed. The next section includes the research design and approach that was used to conduct the study. Section 3 includes the project itself, along with the project's description and goals, rationale, literature review, implementation and evaluation. Section 4 includes reflections and conclusions from the project.

Section 2: The Methodology

Introduction

ESSA lawmakers require all students to be taught at high academic standards. Students with problematic behavior can negatively affect student academic achievement (Austin, 2013; Larsen et al., 2006; Morrison et al., 2001; Stewart, 2010). Removing these disruptive students from the classroom, however, reduces their opportunities to learn and become successful adults (Losen & Skiba, 2010). PBIS is used to improve a school's climate by reinforcing positive behavior and preventing disruptive behavior (Spencer, 2013). In Section 1, I reviewed the literature regarding approaches to discipline, academic achievement, and school removal. The purpose of this study was to analyze PBIS at Middle School B in a southern school district from the assessments of the teachers, by comparing it to teacher assessments of the PBIS program at Middle School A. The findings of this study may be used by administrators to improve the PBIS program at Middle School A, which is in the same district as Middle School B.

Research Design and Approach

I implemented a cross sectional survey design for the purpose of this project study. In quantitative research, the investigator identifies a research problem based on the need to explain why something happens (Babbie, 1990; Fink & Kosecoff, 1985; Sudman & Bradburn, 1986). In Section 1, I explained that Middle School A had some struggles with PBIS implementation that led to a demise of the program. As discussed in the review of literature in Section 1, PBIS programs are designed to address the

behavioral needs of students using a proactive approach, while significantly decreasing the number of ODRs (OSEP Technical Assistance Center, 2016). Middle School A had not experienced the intended results, which caused a lack of teacher buy-in. Middle School B, however, had positive results from their PBIS implementation. My goal was to survey teachers to compare the state of the PBIS program at Middle School A and Middle School B, in order to improve the PBIS program at Middle School A. To do so, I analyzed the teachers' survey assessments of the PBIS program at both middle schools.

Justification

I determined that a quantitative approach involving the use of a cross-sectional survey design was appropriate for this research, rather than a qualitative approach. The following section provides an explanation and justification for the research designs that I considered, rejected, and accepted for this study.

Qualitative research approaches. Qualitative research is a technique used to describe, decode, or translate an occurring phenomenon. A qualitative researcher observes, interviews, and documents analysis using a narrative (Merriam, 2009). Researchers who use qualitative research seek to address a problem where the variables are unknown and there is a need to explore (Merriam, 2009). There are typically four types of qualitative research approaches: ethnographic study, grounded theory, case study, and phenomenological study (Merriam, 2009).

Ethnographic studies focus on the interactions between people in a cultural group and how these interactions are influenced by the society (Merriam, 2009). An

ethnographic study is used when the purpose of the study is to gain an understanding of a larger issue with a group of people (Merriam, 2009). With ethnographic studies, the researcher has to gain the perspective of the participants by becoming a part of the group he or she is studying (Merriam, 2009). This is because the researcher has to be aware of any alternatives or other issues that need to be taken into consideration with the problem being studied. Observations and interviews are typically used when collecting data for ethnographic studies (Merriam, 2009).

An ethnographic study was not feasible for the purpose of this research because I cannot gain the perspectives of the group as required by this design. This study required the collection of data from two separate groups of teachers, and it was not realistic for me to become a part of both groups simultaneously. In addition, I was not seeking to gain insight on the interactions between these two groups of people, teachers at Middle School A and teachers at Middle School B, or study how their interactions were influenced by the society.

A grounded theory approach allows a researcher to generate a theory based on data obtained using qualitative techniques (Babbie, 1990; Fink & Kosecoff, 1985; Sudman & Bradburn, 1986). Researchers use a grounded theory design when they need to explain the occurrence of a process of events, activities, actions, and interactions over time (Babbie, 1990; Fink & Kosecoff, 1985; Sudman & Bradburn, 1986). A researcher uses a grounded theory approach when he or she need an explanation of a process, such as how students learn to read, or to explain the actions of people, such as the support a principal provides for their staff. Like ethnographic studies, data for

grounded theory studies can come from interviews and observations (Merriam, 2009). Other documentary materials can be used to collect data for this approach as well (Merriam, 2009). The purpose of this study was to gain insight on the teachers' assessment of the implementation of PBIS at Middle School A and Middle School B in order to improve the PBIS at Middle School A. A grounded theory approach was not appropriate, as I was not generating a theory based on the data I collected.

Phenomenological studies are commonly when researchers want to gather the ideas of individuals and what they think about their experiences (Merriam, 2009). For instance, the goal of a phenomenological study may be to discover how students in a class view their experiences within that class. While students sit in the same class, with the same teacher, at the same school, their perceptions of their experiences may be different. Phenomenologists do not define the data they collect as the truth; however, they do claim that their interpretations of the data are accurate (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). This means there is some parallel with what participants said happened and what actually occurred. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) explained that phenomenologists view their publications as an "interpretation of reality" (p. 27) and use open-ended interviews to collect data.

The definition of phenomenological studies conflicted with the purpose of this research. The intent of this study was to gain insight of the teachers' assessment of the implementation of PBIS at Middle School A and Middle School B. The teacher assessments will be used to improve PBIS at Middle School A. Although I gathered the assessments of the experiences of the teachers at Middle School A and Middle School

B, I needed to analyze the data of each set of teachers to suggest improvements for Middle School A's PBIS program. A phenomenological study would have required me to analyze each participant's experience, which is not needed for the purpose of this study (Glesne & Peshkin, 2006).

A case study is a common qualitative approach; however, case studies can also be quantitative (Merriam, 2009). Researchers use case studies to focus on small groups or individuals in a setting to document their experiences (Merriam, 2009). Case studies are useful when testing whether theories actually work in the real world (Merriam, 2009). Case studies stand apart from the other qualitative approaches because their units of analysis rather than the foci of the study (Merriam, 2009) define them. Researchers use case studies to explore bounded systems through in-depth data collection methods, such as observations, interviews, reports, documents, and audiovisual material, even surveys (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Merriam, 2009). Gathering data through multiple perspectives is a characteristic of the case study approach. The findings are synthesized through a narrative (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Merriam, 2009). Since case studies require the use multiple data collection procedures to document the experiences of the participants, this design was not applicable to this study as there was only one form of data collection.

Quantitative research approaches. This research study was prompted by the need to discover what could be done to improve PBIS at Middle School A. The research problem being studied had an issue that needed to be explained. A problem of this magnitude is appropriate for a quantitative approach (Babbie, 1990; Fink &

Kosecoff, 1985; Sudman & Bradburn, 1986). A quantitative approach was chosen for this study, rather than a qualitative approach, because qualitative approaches are suited for problems that need to be explored or better understood.

Quantitative researchers typically use an experiment or survey to collect data. Quantitative researchers usually want to generalize findings at the end of the study (Babbie, 1990; Fink & Kosecoff, 1985; Sudman & Bradburn, 1986). Quantitative approaches include experimental research, causal-comparative research, correlational research, and survey research (Babbie, 1990; Fink & Kosecoff, 1985; Sudman & Bradburn, 1986).

Experimental researchers seek to establish a cause and effect relationship between variables. In education, experimental research test whether an educational practice had an effect on the individuals in a study by providing a group of the individuals with the sample of participants with the treatment, or educational practice, and not providing it for the remainder of the sample (Campbell & Stanley, 1971). The experimental approach allows researchers to prove or disprove a hypothesis mathematically using statistical analysis (Campbell & Stanley, 1971). The purpose of this type of research is to determine if the new approach to doing things is better than the old approach. For instance, a school district may want to implement a new reading program for its middle school students. To test the program's effectiveness, an experimental researcher would administer the program a random selection of students for a period, and possibly assess the students, along with the students who did not participate in the new program, at the end of the program. The researcher will then be

able to determine if the new reading program would benefit the students in the district by generalizing their findings (Babbie, 1990; Fink & Kosecoff, 1985; Sudman & Bradburn, 1986). This research was not intended to determine the effectiveness of PBIS or establish a cause and effect relationship between the implementation of PBIS and the assessments of the teachers in the study. PBIS program was established as effective by many researchers (Bradshaw et al., 2009; Bradshaw et al., 2010; Chitiyo et al., 2011; Colvin, 2007; Horner et al., 2009). For that reason, an experimental design was not appropriate for my study.

Researchers use causal-comparative research to attempt to determine a cause and effect relationship; however, it is used when the cause and effect have already occurred and are being examined after the fact (Campbell & Stanley, 1971). With causal-comparative research, the researcher is trying to determine whether the independent variable affected the outcome, or dependent variable, by comparing two or more groups (Campbell & Stanley, 1971). This type of research is used when the researcher is determined to find the relationship between two variables or figure out which variables are connected. Researchers use this design when they are attempting to see if one variable causes a change in another variable (Campbell & Stanley, 1971). The independent variables in this study are the assessment of teachers at Middle School A and B, and the dependent variable is the implementation of PBIS. I was not seeking to determine whether the assessments of teachers at Middle School A and B, the independent variables, affected or caused a change in the implementation of PBIS. I desired to determine if there were any statistical differences between the assessments of

teachers at Middle School A and Middle School B. Therefore, the casual-comparative design was inappropriate for this study.

Researchers use correlational research to show the relationship between two or more variables, but it is not experimental. Correlational research contains one group of people and two or more variables that are controlled by the researcher (Babbie, 1990; Fink & Kosecoff, 1985; Sudman & Bradburn, 1986). The purpose of correlational research is to determine if there is a relationship between variables, through statistical analysis (Babbie, 1990; Fink & Kosecoff, 1985; Sudman & Bradburn, 1986). For instance, a researcher would use a correlational approach if he or she wanted to know if there was a relationship between the reading levels and IQs of fifth grade students. Using correlational analysis procedures, the researcher will be able to determine if the reading levels and IQs of the fifth graders are related or if one could predict the other (Babbie, 1990; Fink & Kosecoff, 1985; Sudman & Bradburn, 1986). The intent of this study was not to determine if a relationship exists between the assessments of teachers at Middle School A and B regarding the implementation of PBIS; but rather to determine if there were differences among the teacher assessments of PBIS implementation, the independent variables. As a result, a correlational design was rejected for this study.

Survey research is a quantitative procedure where researchers administer a survey to a sample or entire population to describe trends and help identify important beliefs, assessments, and attitudes of individuals (Fink, 2009). With this type of study, the researcher collects data using a questionnaire or interview and statistically analyzes

the data to describe the responses to the questions, to test research questions, or to test hypotheses (Fink, 2009). "Surveys are information collection methods used to describe, compare, or explain individual and societal knowledge, feelings, values, preferences, and behavior" (Fink, 2009, p. 1).

A survey research design differs from experimental research because there is no manipulation of variables or any treatment given to the participants by the researcher. The descriptions provided by the surveys are summarized by reporting the number or percentage of persons reporting each response (Babbie, 1990; Fink & Kosecoff, 1985; Sudman & Bradburn, 1986). The survey research design is valuable for assessing trends and opinions. According to Fink (2009), there are three good reasons for conducting surveys:

(a) A policy needs to be set or a program must be planned.

(b) You want to evaluate the effectiveness of programs to change people's knowledge, attitudes, health, or welfare.

(c) You are researcher who uses a survey to get information about how to guide studies or programs. (p. 2)

The intent of this study was to gain insight on the teachers' assessment of the implementation of PBIS at Middle School A and Middle School B in order to improve the PBIS at Middle School A. This research involved a PBIS program that had to be planned, and I used a survey to get information about how to guide that PBIS program. Therefore, the survey research design was appropriate to use for the purpose of this research.

Mixed methods research approach. Mixed methods researchers collect both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study to understand a research problem. A basic assumption is that mixed methods are employed because the combination of the two approaches will result in a more complex understanding of the problem (Sudman & Bradburn, 1986). A mixed methods approach is used when a researcher collects both qualitative and quantitative data, together, to provide a rich understanding of the problem (Sudman & Bradburn, 1986). Researchers also use a mixed methods approach when one type of data is not enough to address the research problem or answer the research questions (Sudman & Bradburn, 1986). In this particular study, only one type of data was collected. Mixed methods were rejected for this study because the intent was to gather the assessments of teachers regarding their experiences with PBIS at their school. These assessments were measured more clearly through quantitative means, using numerical data because the research problem had an issue that needed to be explained. Although this problem could have been explored, using qualitative data, I desired to improve the PBIS program at Middle School A; therefore, an explanation of the PBIS program from the teachers' assessment at both Middle School A and B provided data necessary to create a plan. The use of the predominantly numerical data suggested the application of a quantitative design (Sudman & Bradburn, 1986).

Survey research. Although a survey research design was applicable, the type of survey conducted was important. There are several types of surveys: longitudinal, case control, normative, and cross sectional (Fink, 2009). Longitudinal surveys track the participants of over an extended period in an effort to establish how their attitudes

about an issue change over time (Fink, 2009). For the purpose of this research, a longitudinal survey design was not feasible (Fink, 2009).

Normative surveys are used when the researcher is comparing groups using existing data or large databases (Fink, 2009). For example, a researcher would employ a normative survey if he was comparing a school's math scores to the national average. A normative survey did not meet the criteria of my research because I did not use any existing data to conduct my research (Fink, 2009).

Case control surveys are used when groups of individuals are selected because they have or do not have a condition that is being studied (Fink, 2009). Researchers who are testing a hypothesis between two groups—a control and case group (Fink, 2009)—usually use case control surveys. For instance, a researcher would use a case control survey to determine if a connection exists between people with skin cancer and their direct sun exposure. The researcher would need to survey people with skin cancer, the case group, and people without skin cancer, the control group. The case control design was not feasible for the purpose of this study. Both groups studied had experienced the PBIS program, and the data collected was used to enhance the PBIS program at Middle School A (Fink, 2009).

Cross-sectional surveys are administered at one point in time and can examine attitudes, beliefs, opinions, or practices of a group of people (Fink, 2009). Cross-sectional surveys describe things as they are at one point (Fink, 2009). The data gathered from this type of survey allows the researcher to plan for change using that data (Fink, 2009). This study best met the criteria for the cross-sectional survey

research approach. I collected data using a survey to gather the assessments of teachers of the PBIS initiatives at both Middle School A and B with a goal to enhance the PBIS program at Middle School A. A cross-sectional survey with closed ended, Likert-type, responses was used to collect data for this study (Fink, 2009).

Setting and Sample

The research took place at two middle schools in a southern school district. Both Middle School A and Middle School B were used for this research. Data were collected at Middle School A to determine what aspects of PBIS, if any, were being implemented. Data were also collected at Middle School B because a PBIS program at the middle level was implemented with positive results. Permission to conduct research was granted by the district's superintendent. Teachers and staff at Middle Schools A and B who experienced PBIS in some capacity served as the population for this study; individuals who were not certified teachers or staff members, therefore, were excluded from the study.

I gained access to the participants through the district's email system: I constructed an email to introduce the research, its purpose, and all information relative to participating, as well as any potential risks or benefits; and a district administrator from each school launched the email through the district portal. According to Babbie (1990), with survey response rates, the entire population should be sampled for a census study when the population is fewer than 200 individuals. The population at Middle School A was 74 individuals ($n = 74$), and the population at Middle School B was 37 individuals ($n = 37$) creating a combined population of 111 individuals ($N = 111$). Per

submitted responses to the initial item in the survey, four of these 111 participants were not certified teachers or staff members (i.e one from Middle School A and three from Middle School B). These participants were then excluded from the eligible participant pool resulting in population sizes for Middle School A and Middle School B of 73 (n = 74 - 1) and 34 (n = 37 - 3), respectively. The total eligible population was 107 (n = 111 - 4).

The email included consent notices along with directions for completing the survey. Upon receipt, potential participants decided if they were willing to participate. The potential participants were not rushed into participating. Prospective participants had 2 weeks to complete their surveys online. The instructions indicated that participation in the survey expressed willingness to participate. Introducing the study to the staff at Middle School A and B in the email allowed me to appeal to the potential participants to increase the response rate. All teachers were given the opportunity to participate by completing the survey electronically. Of the population, all of those who responded to the survey and met the eligibility requirements formed the final sample for this study; each submitted survey was analyzed. Twenty-five teachers from Middle School A (n = 25), and 29 teachers from Middle School B (n = 29), responded to the survey creating a total response of 54 participants (n = 54). However, four of these respondents were not qualified to participate in the study. Of the resulting sample of 50 teachers and staff members, 48% were from Middle School A (n = 25 - 1 = 24) and 52% were from Middle School B (n = 29 - 3 = 26).

Of the 50 eligible participants that began the survey, six respondents did not give any responses (i.e. two from Middle School A and four from Middle School B). After subtracting the 6 unusable data sets from the 50 surveys, 44 usable data sets existed: 22 from Middle School A (n = 25 - 2) and 22 from Middle School B (n = 26 - 4). Table 3 displays a summary of the data sets submitted, discarded, and analyzed.

Table 3

Summary of Data Sets Submitted (n = 54)*, Discarded* (n = 10)*, & Analyzed* (n = 44) *in the Study*

	Middle School *n*		
Descriptor	A	B	Total
Respondents	25	29	54
Ineligible respondents	(1)*	(3)*	4
Incomplete data sets	(2)*	(4)*	6
Total usable data sets	22	22	44

*Indicates discarded data sets subtracted from the total

Using the online Sample Size Calculator from Creative Research Systems (2012), it was determined that to maintain a confidence level of 95% and a confidence interval of 5, a sample of 61 was needed from Middle School A, and a sample of 34 was needed from Middle School B. The low sample size for this study is a perceived limitation of this research study.

Protection of Participants Rights

To protect the individuals involved in this research, the participants were treated as autonomous agents. I did not have access to their identity. They were treated fairly without any physical, psychological, economic, or legal harm. Participants provided consent by completing the survey instrument, and individuals could have withdrawn from the research at any time. Participants did not disclose any personal information. Participants submitted their surveys anonymously online. Only the administrator had initial access to their email addresses; however, the administrator does not know who participated in the survey.

Since the instrument being used for research in this study was a survey that participants completed electronically, there were no unwanted solicitation, intrusion, or observation in public places. Participation in this study was not damaging to any of the participants' well-being, including their financial standing, employability, or reputation.

There were no additional coercion to participate between the researcher and participants. When emailing the surveys, there were no indications that participation in the study would directly or indirectly give any participant an occupational advantage or would they be imposed to an occupational penalty. I am employed in the district where the research took place, at Middle School A; however, I am in no way a direct supervisor of the participants or a coordinator or constituent for PBIS at either of the research sites. Therefore, participants had no grounds for fear of reprimand. The proposed research did not include any treatment for the participants, so there was no

risk of a misunderstanding as a result of experimental deception and no risk of any minor or major negative effects to the participants' health.

I did adhere to the principles of respect of persons, beneficences, and justice in the Belmont Report – Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research (National Institute of Health, 2011). There was no inclusion of students, and the welfare of the participants was protected. I received a Certificate of Completion from The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research, as required by Walden University, that ensures I fully understood what was considered ethical when conducting my research and the importance of protecting the rights of the participants in my study (IRB Approval Number: 12-17-15-0325252).

Instrumentation and Materials

I collected data for this study with the PBIS Self-Assessment Survey. My intentions were to find out the teachers' assessments of PBIS. To do this, a survey served as the best way to collect the data needed. The results of this survey gave me insight on what was needed to enhance the PBIS program at Middle School A.

Description and Variables

Data were administered and collected with the PBIS Self-Assessment Survey using willing participants at Middle Schools A and B. The PBIS Self-Assessment Survey was revised in 2009 by Sugai, Horner, and Todd. The self-administered survey is divided into four behavior support systems: school-wide discipline systems, nonclassroom management systems (e.g., cafeteria, hallway, and playground), classroom management systems, and systems for individual students engaging in

chronic problem behaviors. The *school-wide support system* includes all students, all staff members, and all settings within the school. The *nonclassroom setting support system* includes particular times or places where supervision is emphasized such as the hallways, cafeteria, playground, and bus. The *classroom support system* is the instructional setting where teachers supervise and teach a group of students. The *individual student support system* includes any specific support for students who have chronic behavior problems. Each support system had two subscales: the status and the priority for improvement. The PBIS Self-Assessment Survey can be scored collectively and also by each of the four behavior support systems. These factors correlated with this study's five research questions.

The PBIS Self-Assessment Survey was used to identify staff attitudes towards the implementation status for all systems related to PBIS. The survey provided a way for all staff to provide feedback to the school leadership team on how PBIS was implemented. The survey questions related to the status and priority of improvement of the PBIS program were used to answer the research questions, respectively. The results of this survey were effective in identifying staff priorities for improving the PBIS program, which was suitable for this study.

Each survey question related to one of the four systems of the implementation of PBIS in the school; school-wide discipline systems, nonclassroom management systems (e.g., cafeteria, hallway, and playground), classroom management systems, and systems for individual students engaging in chronic problem behaviors. The survey consisted of questions regarding aspects of PBIS implementation including (a)

initiatives that are in place to address the behavior of students, (b) implementation of practices for teaching appropriate behavior and providing consequences, (c) any potential barriers to implementation of PBIS, and (d) the perceived benefits, or lack thereof, to students.

The PBIS Self-Assessment Survey was published on the PBIS website, where permission had been given to educators implementing PBIS; however, permission to use the survey was also granted by a correspondent from the organization (see Appendix B). The PBIS Self-Assessment survey is located in Appendix C.

Validity and Reliability

The PBIS Self-Assessment Survey is valid and reliable (Hagan-Burke et al., 2005; Safran, 2006). Hagan-Burke et al. (2005) evaluated the two subscales of the Self-Assessment survey for internal consistency. This study revealed that the current status and the improvement priority scores for internal consistency were high ($\alpha = .88$ and .94, respectively). Safran (2006) evaluated the use of the Self-Assessment Survey to guide the development of PBIS in terms of its reliability and validity. Safran used statistical analyses that focused on total scale/subscale reliability and construct validity. Safran used Cronbach's alpha to calculate the measures of internal consistency reliability for the eight subscales and the total scale scores of status and improvement priority. He found that total scale reliability for status had a moderate to high reliability ($\alpha = .85$) and the total scale improvement priority had a high reliability ($\alpha = .94$). A coefficient of 1.0 equates to perfect reliability, and internal consistency scores above .80 indicates high reliability. These results suggested that the instrument did assess the cohesiveness

of the two subscales that measured the components, or four behavior support systems, of PBIS. For further evidence of the reliability and validity of the survey instrument, complete studies for state agencies that have used the instrument for similar purposes are posted on the PBIS website.

Electronic Version

The PBIS Self-Assessment Survey was converted into an online survey using Survey Monkey for the purpose of this project. According to documented studies, *t*-test, Chi-square, and Cochran-Mantel-Haenszel tests showed there was no significant difference on any features pertaining to the benchmark of quality documents and the administration methods of the survey. Therefore, the Self-Assessment Survey is valid when it is administered using diverse methods (Childs, George, & Kincaid, 2011).

Directions for completing the survey were included with the survey and explained in the email. The participants completed the survey independently by clicking on the link in the email; the instructions indicated the participant should have allowed 20-25 minutes to complete the survey. The link took the participants to the instrument in Survey Monkey. The participants based their rating, for each closed ended question, on their individual experiences in the school, as indicated in the instructions. Raw data is stored within Survey Monkey.

Data Collection

Participants individually completed the surveys, found in Appendix C, to answer the research questions. The surveys consisted of the same pre-determined

questions for each participant, using a quasi-interval, or Likert-type, scale with continuous equal intervals.

Teachers had the option to participate. I gained access to the population by having an administrator at both research sites distribute a pre-approved email to all teachers at their respective schools. Participants completed their surveys electronically. Teachers who participated did so anonymously; thus, all retrieved data sets were deidentified for download and analysis. Participants had 2 weeks to complete the survey from the day it was emailed to both schools. Towards the end of the 2 weeks, only two teachers from Middle School A and 19 teachers from Middle School B had responded. On the ninth day, the administrators sent a reminder email to their respective staff members. The survey links actually stayed open for 17 days. At that point, the links to the surveys were closed, so data exportation could begin.

Data Analysis

After the collection of data from Middle School A and B, the results were analyzed using the explicit directions from the developers of the survey (Horner et al., 2009). Once each survey link was closed, two types of data were extracted from Survey Monkey: the question summary data and the collection of individual's responses. The question summary data were analyzed first. These data provided a summary of each question, including a tally of each response from the participants and summary percentages. The survey results were summarized to produce a visual of the overall responses from the teachers for each of the four PBIS implementation systems. After compiling a summary of the results, summary bar graphs were created to show the total

item summary percentages for each of the choices. The summary bar graphs provided a visual to ascertain the current status and priority level of improvement for each system of PBIS at both schools.

A collection of each individual's responses was analyzed next. Time was spent scoring and coding the data before analysis. The data were extracted in a Microsoft Excel format. The survey consisted of four sections, one for each of the behavior systems of PBIS. Each section had a number of sub-questions, numbered using letters, for the participants to answer.

Coding Process

Questions were coded with a number and letter combination. Question 1 pertained to the current status and improvement priority level of the School-Wide System, and this scale had 18 sub-questions. The sub-questions were coded 1A through 1R. Question 2 had nine sub-questions that pertained to the Non-Classroom System scale, and they were coded 2A through 2I. The 11 sub-questions in Question 3, concerning the Classroom System scale, were coded 3A through 3K. The eight sub-questions in Question 4, concerning the Individual Student System scale, were coded 4A through 4H. This coding process helped to reduce the large amount of data into an understandable form.

When the survey was created in Survey Monkey, Likert-type, or number codes were assigned to each response. For the current status variable, *in place* was assigned the number 3, *partially in place* was 2, and *not in place* was 1. For the priority level of improvement variable, *high* was assigned the number 3, *medium* was 2, *low* was 1, and

already in place was 4. The responses were coded to organize them as well. Figure 1 provides an example of the coding for sub-question D of the Classroom System.

Participant	3D1	3D2	3D3	3D4	3D5	3D6	3D7
1	1					3	
2		2			2		
3	1					3	
4			3	1			

Figure 1. Exemplar of response coding during data analysis. The question is highlighted in blue. The first number denotes the question number. The letter denotes the sub-question. The second letter is the participant's response. The numbers in each column under the header row indicate the participant's Likert scale response ($1 < n < 4$) to each item.

In Figure 1, the first respondent felt the aspect of Question D in the Classroom System section was *not in place* with a *high* priority level of improvement, as indicated by the *1* in the 3D1 column and the *3* in the 3D4 column. Respondent 4 felt the aspect of the Classroom System was *in place* with a low priority level of improvement, as indicated with a 3 in the 3D3 column and a 1 in the 3D4 column.

RQ1 Analysis

Descriptive analysis. In order to answer RQ1, to determine the teachers' assessments of the PBIS program's current status and priority level of improvement at Middle School A and Middle School B, the data were descriptively analyzed from the survey responders. A descriptive analysis is used to provide simple summaries about the data in a study. Descriptive statistics helps to simplify large amounts of data by reducing the data into a manageable form (Trochim, 2006). The data were analyzed

using the question summaries of the overall responses from each school for each system of PBIS. The question summary data included a tally of the individual responses for each of the possible choices for the entire survey. A total summary percentage was calculated using the question summary data for the current status and priority level of improvement for each of the four behavior systems: the School-Wide System, the Non-Classroom Setting System, the Classroom Setting System, and the Individual Student System. The summary percentages helped to produce bar graphs that gave an idea as to whether the teachers believed the systems were in place, partially in place, or not in place. With these summaries, strengths and weaknesses in the programs at both schools were determined. The descriptive analysis also included the calculations of the mean and standard deviations for each of the four systems of PBIS at each school.

Response summary for Middle School A. Examining the data collected from the teacher surveys was helpful in determining the current status of both PBIS programs. According to the Self-Assessment Survey, and shown in Table 4, teachers at Middle School A reported that the majority of the items included in each of the systems of PBIS are *in place*. Table 4 shows the percentages of the total items selected as *in place*, *partially in place*, and *not in place* by teachers at Middle School A.

Table 4

Self-Assessment Survey Total Item Percentages as Reported by Teachers at Middle School A (n = 22)

	Total items *n*	Not in place %	Partially in place %	In place %
School-Wide system	18	18	26	56
Non-Classroom system	9	16	25	59
Classroom system	11	3.7	32.6	63.6
Individual student system	8	27	34	39

Note. Values represent respondent percentages of total items in each system.

Teachers from Middle School A reported that 82% of the items in the School-Wide System and 84% of the items in the Non-Classroom Setting System are *partially in place* or *in place* with their PBIS program. In the Classroom Setting, teachers felt as though the majority of the items within the system are *in place*, and less than 4% are *not in place*. With the Individual Student System, teachers reported that a combined 61% of the items are *partially in place,* or *not in place*. For each of the systems of PBIS, teachers felt there is a high priority level of improvement. Summary bar graphs for the current statuses and priority levels of improvement are located in Appendix D.

For analysis purposes, the responses were converted to a 1 to 3 Likert scale. For the current status variable, the following values were assigned: 1 for *not in place*, 2 for *partially in place*, and 3 for *in place.* Those values were imperative to calculate the mean score and standard deviation. The standard deviation gives an indication of the

average distance away from the mean. Therefore, a low standard deviation would indicate that most scores cluster around the mean, and a high standard deviation would mean the scores are spread out over a wider range. A high standard deviation would mean the data are widely spread, which is less reliable than data that are clustered around the mean with a low standard deviation (Triola, 2012).

Using the total summary responses for each of the systems, strengths and weaknesses were determined. For School-Wide Systems, the total possible score was 18 items times 22 teacher responses or 396. For Non-Classroom Systems, the total possible score was 9 items times 18 teacher responses or 162. For the Classroom and Individual Student Systems, the total possible scores were 11 or 8 times 17 teacher responses or 187 and 136, respectively. The totals to determine the features in each system that has the three highest number of responses in the *in place* response section, to determine the strengths, and the three lowest number of responses in the *not in place* response section, to determine the areas in need of improvement for both schools. Table 5 catalogues the total summary of responses for each of the systems at Middle School A. The table displays the total number of responses for the subquestions for each system of PBIS. The disaggregation for each subquestion is presented in later tables.

Table 5

Self-Assessment Survey Summary Responses as Reported by Teachers at Middle School A (n = 22)

PBIS system	Not in place (1)	Partially in place (2)	In place (3)	No response	Total items *n*	*M*	*SD*
School-Wide	70	104	222	0	18	2.3835	0.353
Non-Classroom	26	41	95	4	9	2.4195	0.369
Classroom	7	61	119	5	11	2.5989	0.263
Individual Student	37	46	53	5	8	2.1103	0.567

According to the survey respondents, the School-Wide System of PBIS at Middle School A had a mean of 2.3835 (*SD* = .353). The participants felt this system of PBIS is *partially in place* at Middle School A, since the mean is close to the assigned value of *2*. The School-Wide System involves all students, all staff, and all settings within the school. The School-Wide System includes proactive strategies that are implemented throughout the entire school to create a positive environment. Table 6 displays the teachers' assessments of the School-Wide System of PBIS.

Table 6

Responses for the School-Wide System as Reported by Teachers at Middle School A (n = 22)

Questions	Not in place	Partially in place	In place
A small number (e.g. 3-5) of positively & clearly stated student expectations or rules are defined.	0	5	17
Expected student behaviors are taught directly.	1	3	18
Expected student behaviors are rewarded regularly.	3	11	8
Problem behaviors (failure to meet expected student behaviors) are defined clearly.	1	5	16
Consequences for problem behaviors are defined clearly.	0	5	17
Distinctions between office v. classroom managed problem behaviors are clear.	0	8	14
Options exist to allow classroom instruction to continue when problem behavior occurs.	0	8	14
Procedures are in place to address emergency/dangerous situations.	0	0	22
A team exists for behavior support planning & problem solving.	8	8	6
School administrator is an active participant on the behavior support team.	4	5	13
Data on problem behavior patterns are collected and summarized within an on-going system.	6	5	11
Patterns of student problem behavior are reported to teams and faculty for active decision-making on a regular basis (e.g. monthly).	9	5	8
School has formal strategies for informing families about expected student behaviors at school.	2	5	15
Booster training activities for students are developed, modified, & conducted based on school data.	17	2	3
School-wide behavior support team has a budget for (a) teaching students, (b) on-going rewards, and (c) annual staff planning.	11	5	6
All staff are involved directly and/or indirectly in school-wide interventions.	3	10	9
The school team has access to on-going training and support from district personnel.	3	10	9
The school is required by the district to report on the social climate, discipline level or student behavior at least annually.	2	4	16
Totals	70	104	222

In the School-Wide System, procedures are in place to address emergency/dangerous situations, expected student behaviors are taught directly, a small number of positively and clearly stated expectations or rules are defined, and consequences for problem behaviors are defined clearly. These are several strengths for the PBIS program because most teachers indicated these items were *in place* according to Table 6. However, results indicate that there are no booster training activities for students that are developed and conducted based on the school data; there is no budget for teaching students, on-going rewards, and annual staff planning; there is no team that existed for behavior support planning and problem solving; and patterns of problem behavior are not reported for active decision-making. These items are considered weaknesses of the School-Wide System because most teachers indicated they were *not in place*, as reported in Table 6.

The Non-Classroom Setting System had a mean of 2.4195 (*SD* = .369). The mean indicates the Non-Classroom Setting System is *partially in place,* as the average is closer, mathematically, to the rating for *partially in place.* The Non-Classroom Setting System includes the particular times or places where supervision is emphasized (i.e., hallways, cafeteria, bus, and playground). Teachers indicated, according to the summary percentages, most of the components in the School-Wide and Non-Classroom Setting are *in place*—therefore, well supported. The details of the teachers' assessments are included in Table 7.

Table 7

Responses for the Non-Classroom Systems as Reported by Teachers at Middle School A (n = 18*)

Questions	Not in place	Partially in place	In place
School-wide expected student behaviors are taught in non-classroom settings.	3	7	8
Supervisors actively supervise (move, scan, & interact) students in non-classroom settings.	0	8	10
Rewards exist for meeting expected student behaviors in non-classroom settings.	7	5	6
Physical/architectural features are modified to limit (a) unsupervised settings, (b) unclear traffic patterns, and (c) inappropriate access to & exit from school grounds.	2	2	14
Scheduling of student movement ensures appropriate numbers of students in non-classroom spaces.	0	2	16
Staff receives regular opportunities for developing and improving active supervision skills.	6	6	6
Status of student behavior and management practices are evaluated quarterly from data.	7	5	6
All staff are involved directly or indirectly in management of non-classroom settings.	1	3	14
Totals	26	41	95

*Four participants did not answer this question of the survey, which changed the number of respondents (*n* = 18).

According to the data, at Middle School A the school-wide expected student behavior to nonclassroom settings, the scheduling of student movement ensures appropriate numbers of students in nonclassroom settings, and all staff are involved in the management of nonclassroom settings. Teachers also reported that physical and architectural features are modified to limit unsupervised areas, unclear traffic patterns, and inappropriate access to the school grounds. Each of these items are strengths of the Non-Classroom System. There are some items, however, that could be considered

weaknesses within the PBIS program. For the Non-Classroom Setting System, Middle School A does not have rewards that exist for meeting expectations in the nonclassroom setting for students, does not implement regular opportunities for staff to develop and improve their active practices for data. Each of these elements are areas in need of improvement at Middle School A because most teachers indicated these items were *not in place,* as detailed in Table 7.

The Classroom System consists of instructional settings where teachers supervise and teach groups of students. The Classroom System of PBIS at Middle School A had a mean of 2.5989 (*SD* = .263). The mean indicates the teachers felt the Classroom System was *in place,* as the mean score is close to the rating of *3* for *in place*, at Middle School A. Much like the School-Wide and Non-Classroom Setting Systems, the mean indicate teachers feel most of the items for this system from the survey are *in place*. The teacher responses are shown in Table 8.

Table 8

Responses for the Classroom System as Reported by Teachers at Middle School A (n = 17*)

Questions	Not in place	Partially in place	In place
Expected student behavior & routines in classrooms are stated positively & defined clearly.	0	0	17
Problem behaviors are defined clearly.	0	1	16
Expected student behavior & routines in classrooms are taught directly.	0	3	14
Expected student behaviors are acknowledged regularly (positively reinforced) (>4 positives to 1 negative).	1	5	11
Problem behaviors receive consistent consequences.	1	7	9
Procedures for expected & problem behaviors are consistent with school-wide procedures.	1	5	11
Classroom-based options exist to allow classroom instruction to continue when problem behavior occurs.	0	6	11
Instruction & curriculum materials are matched to student ability (math, reading, language).	0	7	10
Students experience high rates of academic success (≥ 75% correct).	2	12	3
Teachers have regular opportunities for access to assistance & recommendations (observation, instruction, & coaching).	1	7	9
Transitions between instructional & non-instructional activities are efficient & orderly.	1	8	8
Totals	7	61	119

*Five participants did not answer this question of the survey, which changed the number of respondents (*n* = 17).

From the data collected, expected student behavior and routines are stated positively and defined clearly, problem behaviors are defined clearly, and expected student behavior and routines are taught directly in the classroom at Middle School A. Students

are not experiencing high rates of academic success, problem behavior do not receive consistent consequences, and teachers do not have regular access to opportunities to receive assistance and recommendations, such as coaching or observations; which are weaknesses in the Classroom System of PBIS because the majority of the teachers indicated these items are *partially in place*.

The Individual Student System had a mean of 2.1103 (*SD* = .567). The participates felt the Individual Student System of PBIS was *partially in place*, as the mean is close to the rating of *2* for *partially in place*. This system includes supports that are in place to deal with students who engage in chronic problem behaviors. Table 9 details the teacher assessments of the Individual Student System at Middle School A.

Table 9

Responses for the Individual Student System as Reported by Teachers at Middle School A (n = 17*)

Questions	Not in place	Partially in place	In place
Assessments are conducted regularly to identify students with chronic problem behaviors.	4	7	6
A simple process exists for teachers to request assistance.	1	6	10
A behavior support team responds promptly (within 2 working days) to students who present chronic problem behaviors.	3	9	5
Behavioral support team includes an individual skilled at conducting functional behavioral assessment.	5	5	7
Local resources are used to conduct functional assessment-based behavior support planning (~10 hrs/week/student).	7	3	7
Significant family &/or community members are involved when appropriate & possible.	2	5	10
School includes formal opportunities for families to receive training on behavioral support/positive parenting strategies.	10	4	3
Behavior is monitored & feedback provided regularly to the behavior support team & relevant staff.	5	7	5
Totals	37	46	53

*Five participants did not answer this question of the survey, which changed the number of respondents (n = 17).

According to teachers' assessments, there is a simple process for teachers to request assistance and significant family and/or community members are involved with the Individual Student System at Middle School A. Efforts to improve this system should include implementing formal opportunities for families to receive training on behavior support and positive parenting strategies, responding promptly to students

who present chronic behavior problems, and monitoring the behavior students to provide feedback to the behavior support team.

Response summary for Middle School B. According to the Self-Assessment Survey, and shown in Table 10, teachers at Middle School B reported that the majority of the items included in each of the systems of PBIS are *partially in place*. The table displays the percentages of the total items selected as *in place*, *partially in place*, and *not in place* by teachers at Middle School B.

Table 10

Self-Assessment Survey Total Item Percentages as Reported by Teachers at Middle School B (n = 22)

	Total items *n*	Not in place %	Partially in place %	In place %
School-Wide System	18	35	40	25
Non-Classroom System	9	32	39	28
Classroom System	11	23	48	29
Individual Student System	8	53	30	17

Note. Values represent respondent percentages of total items in each system.

Teachers from Middle School B reported that 35% of the items in the School-Wide System, 32% in the Non-Classroom System, and 23% in the Classroom System are *not in place* with their PBIS program. In each of these systems, teachers felt as though the majority of the items within the system are *partially in place*. With the

Individual Student System, teachers reported that 53% of the items are *not in place*. For each of the systems of PBIS, teachers felt there was a high priority level of improvement. Summary bar graphs for the current statuses and priority levels of improvement are located in Appendix D.

For School-Wide Systems, the total possible score was 18 items times 22 teacher responses or 396. For Non-Classroom Systems, the total possible score was 9 items times 21 teacher responses or 189. For the Classroom and Individual Student Systems, the total possible scores were 11 or 8 times 21 teacher responses or 231 and 168, respectively. Table 11 catalogues the total summary of responses for each of the systems at Middle School B. The table displays the total number of responses for the subquestions for each system of PBIS. The disaggregation for each subquestion is presented in later tables.

Table 11

Self-Assessment Survey Summary Responses as Reported by Teachers at Middle School B (n = 22)

PBIS System	Not in place (1)	Partially in place (2)	In place (3)	No response	Total items *n*	*M*	*SD*
School-Wide	140	158	98	0	18	1.8939	0.482
Non-Classroom	61	74	54	1	9	1.9945	0.081
Classroom	53	112	66	1	11	2.0562	0.45
Individual student	89	50	29	1	8	1.642	0.645

Middle School B's School-Wide System of PBIS had a mean of 1.8939 (*SD* = 0.482) as opposed to the mean of 2.3835 at Middle School A. These results indicate teachers feel the School-Wide System is close to being *partially in place*. As indicated, the number of items scored *partially in place* and *not in place* by teachers suggests many weaknesses within this system. Table 12 describes the teachers' assessments of the School-Wide System.

Table 12

Responses for the School-Wide System as Reported by Teachers at Middle School B (n = 22)

Questions	Not in place	Partially in place	In place
A small number (e.g. 3-5) of positively & clearly stated student expectations or rules are defined.	4	9	9
Expected student behaviors are taught directly.	4	12	6
Expected student behaviors are rewarded regularly.	11	10	1
Problem behaviors (failure to meet expected student behaviors) are defined clearly.	7	8	7
Consequences for problem behaviors are defined clearly.	6	11	5
Distinctions between office v. classroom managed problem behaviors are clear.	7	10	5
Options exist to allow classroom instruction to continue when problem behavior occurs.	7	14	1
Procedures are in place to address emergency/dangerous situations.	4	9	9
A team exists for behavior support planning & problem solving.	6	12	4
School administrator is an active participant on the behavior support team.	7	9	6
Data on problem behavior patterns are collected and summarized within an on-going system.	11	7	4
Patterns of student problem behavior are reported to teams and faculty for active decision-making on a regular basis (e.g. monthly).	14	5	3
School has formal strategies for informing families about expected student behaviors at school.	4	9	9
Booster training activities for students are developed, modified, & conducted based on school data.	12	7	3
School-wide behavior support team has a budget for (a) teaching students, (b) on-going rewards, and (c) annual staff planning.	14	7	1
All staff are involved directly and/or indirectly in school-wide interventions.	10	5	7
The school team has access to on-going training and support from district personnel.	10	7	5
The school is required by the district to report on the social climate, discipline level or student behavior at least annually.	2	7	13
Totals	140	158	98

According to Table 12, Middle School B positively and clearly states student expectations and rules; has procedures in place to address emergency and dangerous situations; reports the school climate, discipline level, and student behavior to the district; and has formal strategies for informing families about expected student behaviors at school. These components are strengths of the School-Wide System at Middle School B because teachers revealed they are *in pla*ce. Teachers also revealed that student behaviors are not rewarded regularly, there is no option for classroom instruction to continue when problem behavior occurs, and the support team does not have a budget for PBIS. Each of these components are weaknesses of the program at Middle School B.

The Non-Classroom Setting System had a mean of 1.9945 (*SD* = .081). Teachers indicated most of the components of this system are *partially in place,* as the mean is close to the rating of *2* for *partially in place*. The details of the teachers' assessments are included in Table 13.

Table 13

Responses for the Non-Classroom Setting System as Reported by Teachers at Middle School B (n = 21*)

Questions	Not in place	Partially in place	In place
School-wide expected student behaviors apply to non-classroom settings.	4	10	7
School-wide expected student behaviors are taught in non-classroom settings.	4	13	4
Supervisors actively supervise (move, scan, & interact) students in non-classroom settings.	5	10	6
Rewards exist for meeting expected student behaviors in non-classroom settings.	12	8	1
Physical/architectural features are modified to limit (a) unsupervised settings, (b) unclear traffic patterns, and (c) inappropriate access to & exit from school grounds.	4	6	11
Scheduling of student movement ensures appropriate numbers of students in non-classroom spaces.	3	8	10
Staff receives regular opportunities for developing and improving active supervision skills.	8	7	6
Status of student behavior and management practices are evaluated quarterly from data.	12	7	2
All staff are involved directly or indirectly in management of non-classroom settings.	9	5	7
Totals	61	74	54

*One participant did not answer this question of the survey, which changed the number of respondents (*n* =21).

According to Table 13, teachers reported that physical and architectural features are modified to limit unsupervised areas; unclear traffic patterns; and inappropriate access to the school grounds; and the scheduling of student movement ensures appropriate numbers of students in nonclassroom settings. Each of these items are strengths of the Non-Classroom System at Middle School B. There are some items, however, that could

be considered weaknesses within the PBIS program. Teachers reported that rewards do not exist for meeting expected behavior, school-wide expected behaviors are not taught in nonclassroom settings, and the status of student behavior are not evaluated from the data. These components were scored *partially in place* or *not in place* by most of the teachers at Middle School B.

The Classroom System of PBIS had mean of 2.0562 (*SD* = .45). As with the School-Wide and Non-Classroom Systems, the Classroom System is *partially in place*, suggesting the need for some improvement. Table 14 details the teachers' assessments.

Table 14

Responses for the Classroom Setting System as Reported by Teachers at Middle School B (n = 21*)

Questions	Not in place	Partially in place	In place
Expected student behavior & routines in classrooms are stated positively & defined clearly.	1	10	10
Problem behaviors are defined clearly.	3	10	8
Expected student behavior & routines in classrooms are taught directly.	1	12	8
Expected student behaviors are acknowledged regularly (positively reinforced) (>4 positives to 1 negative).	7	8	6
Problem behaviors receive consistent consequences.	8	9	4
Procedures for expected & problem behaviors are consistent with school-wide procedures.	5	12	4
Classroom-based options exist to allow classroom instruction to continue when problem behavior occurs.	4	13	4
Instruction & curriculum materials are matched to student ability (math, reading, language).	4	10	7
Students experience high rates of academic success (≥ 75% correct).	9	9	3
Teachers have regular opportunities for access to assistance & recommendations (observation, instruction, & coaching).	6	8	7
Transitions between instructional & non-instructional activities are efficient & orderly.	5	11	5
Totals	53	112	66

*One participant did not answer this question of the survey, which changed the number of respondents (*n* = 21).

From the data collected, expected student behavior and routines are stated positively and defined clearly, expected student behavior and routines are taught directly in the classroom at Middle School B, instruction and curriculum materials are

matched to the students' ability, and teachers have regular access to assistance and recommendations. Students are not experiencing high rates of academic success, problem behavior do not receive consistent consequences, procedures for expected behaviors are not consistent with the school-wide procedures, and there are no classroom based options for instruction to continue when problem behavior occurs. These are considered weaknesses in the Classroom System of PBIS because the majority of the teachers indicated these items are *partially in place* or *not in place*.

The Individual Student System at Middle School B had a mean of 1.642 (*SD* = .645). The mean indicates this system is not supported by the PBIS program at Middle School B and is need of much improvement. The teacher assessments are detailed in Table 15.

Table 15

Responses for the Individual Student System as Reported by Teachers at Middle School B (n = 21*)

Questions	Not in place	Partially in place	In place
Assessments are conducted regularly to identify students with chronic problem behaviors.	10	8	3
A simple process exists for teachers to request assistance.	6	8	7
A behavior support team responds promptly (within 2 working days) to students who present chronic problem behaviors.	13	6	2
Behavioral support team includes an individual skilled at conducting functional behavioral assessment.	10	5	6
Local resources are used to conduct functional assessment-based behavior support planning (~10 hrs/week/student).	12	6	3
Significant family &/or community members are involved when appropriate & possible.	6	10	5
School includes formal opportunities for families to receive training on behavioral support/positive parenting strategies.	15	5	1
Behavior is monitored & feedback provided regularly to the behavior support team & relevant staff.	15	4	2
Totals	89	50	29

*One participant did not answer this question of the survey, which changed the number of respondents (*n* = 21).

According to teachers' assessments, there is a simple process for teachers to request assistance and the support team includes an individual skilled at conducting functional behavioral assessments in the Individual Student System at Middle School B. According to the data, this system of PBIS is not supported because there are many weaknesses. Efforts to improve this system should include implementing formal opportunities for families to receive training on behavior support and positive parenting

strategies and implementing opportunities for community involvement when appropriate. Improvements to this system should also include responding promptly to students who present chronic behavior problems, and monitoring the behavior students to provide feedback to the behavior support team.

Comparison summary. Several similarities and differences exist between both middle schools. The data indicates both schools have a small number of positively stated behavior expectations and procedures in place to address emergencies in their School-Wide Systems. Neither school has a budget in place for rewards and staff planning. Middle School A should incorporate implementing formal strategies for informing their families about expected student behavior in their improvement plan. This component is a strength of the School-Wide System at Middle School B, but it is not a strength at Middle School A.

The strengths of the nonclassroom, classroom, and individual student systems of PBIS at Middle School A are comparable to those of Middle School B. Although the data collected from the Self-Assessment surveys reflect Middle School A's PBIS program as *in place* and Middle School B's PBIS program as *partially in place*, the discipline data, previously reported, suggest otherwise. Middle School B has a behavior support team in place with at least one individual who is skilled at conducting functional behavioral assessments, and their teachers have regular opportunities to access assistance and recommendations in the form of observations, instruction, and coaching. These components are strengths of Middle School B's PBIS program but are

not strengths of Middle School A's PBIS program; therefore, enhancements to these components should be included in Middle School A's improvement plan.

The results indicate that PBIS is *in place* at Middle School A but only *partially in place* at Middle School B, which is an anomaly. The success of a PBIS program is measured by the number of ODRs written by the faculty in the school. Middle School B's ODRs have decreased within the past years, which translates to a successful PBIS program. However, Middle School A's ODRs have not, which indicate an unsuccessful program. This indicates more research is needed.

RQ2-RQ5 Analysis

Inferential analysis. The one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) answers the question do differences exists between two or more groups on one dependent variable? To answer this question, the ANOVA tests a claim that the populations being researched have the same mean. Other factors that justify the appropriateness of using the ANOVA are the use of samples of quantitative data, the separate samples are independent of each other, and the different samples from the population are categorized in only one way. RQ2-RQ5 ask if there is a statistical difference between one dependent variable (the implementation of PBIS), one independent variable with two levels (the assessments of teachers at Middle School A and Middle School B), and no covariate; therefore, an ANOVA statistical analysis was appropriate to use (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). The ANOVA compared the means between both groups, teachers at Middle School A and teachers at Middle School B, to determine if there were any significant differences between the means (Explorable, 2015; Triola, 2012).

RQ2-RQ5. The purpose of this study was to analyze PBIS at Middle School B in a southern school district from the accounts of the teachers, by comparing it to teacher accounts of the PBIS program at Middle School A. To accomplish this, I needed to gain insight on the teachers' assessment of the implementation of PBIS at Middle School A and Middle School B in order to improve the PBIS at Middle School A. In order to determine what needed to improve with PBIS at Middle School A, an inferential statistical test was performed to determine if there were any differences among the assessments of the teachers at Middle School A and B. To answer RQ2, RQ3, RQ4, and RQ5, interval data, on a 1 to 3 point Likert scale, from the survey questions were analyzed. The one-way ANOVA was performed using the Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS, Version 23) software for accuracy. The ANOVA was used to test for the statistical differences in the teacher assessment scores regarding the current status of the School-Wide (RQ2), Non-Classroom Setting (RQ3), Classroom Setting (RQ4), and Individual Student (RQ5) Systems of PBIS between Middle School A and Middle School B, as shown in Table 16.

Table 16

Relation Between Research Questions and Survey Questions

Research question	Behavior system	Survey question
RQ2	School-Wide	2
RQ3	Non-Classroom	3
RQ4	Classroom	4
RQ5	Individual student	5

Data gathered from Question 2 of the survey, with 18 sub-questions regarding the School-Wide Systems, answered RQ2. Data from Question 3 of the survey, with nine sub-questions regarding the Non-Classroom Setting, answered RQ3. Responses from teachers on Question 4 of the survey, with 11 sub-questions concerning the Classroom Setting, answered RQ4. Data from Question 5 of the survey, with eight sub-questions about the Individual Student System, answered RQ5.

It is only appropriate to use a one-way ANOVA if the data satisfies six assumptions (A1-A6) that are required to get a valid result from the ANOVA, according to Laerd Statistics (2013). Laerd's A1 states the dependent variable has to be measured at the interval or ratio level. This assumption is satisfied as the dependent variables are measured at the interval level. A2 states the independent variables should consist of two or more categorical groups. The independent variables of this study are the teachers at Middle School A and Middle School B, thus satisfying this assumption. A3 requires there to be no relationship between the observations in each group. This assumption is satisfied because there are no participants in more than one group.

Laerd's A4-A6 were tested in SPSS (version 23). A4 states there should be no significant outliers in the data. Figure 2 details the results from testing this assumption.

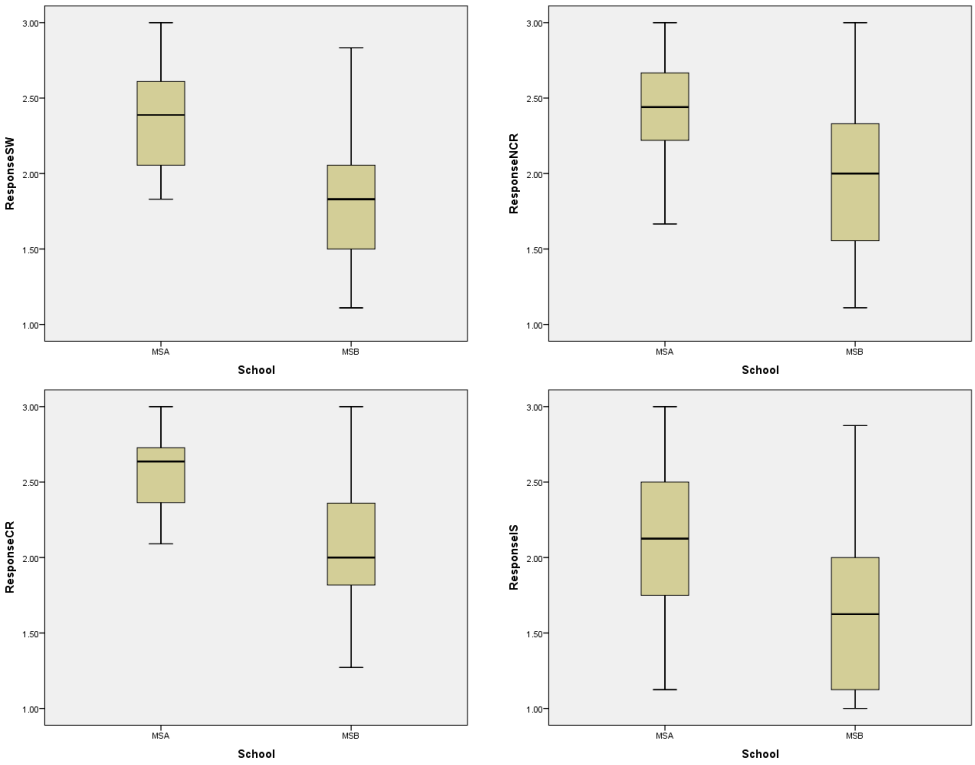


Figure 2. Box plots for each system of PBIS to test for outliers.

There were no outliers in any of the data sets, as assessed by boxplots. Outliers would have been illustrated as circular dots outside of the boxplots. A5 requires the dependent variable to be approximately distributed for each category of the independent variables. Table 17 catalogues the test for this assumption.

Table 17

Tests for Normality for Middle School A and Middle School B

	Middle school	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	*df*	Sig.	Statistic	*df*	Sig.
School-Wide	A	.132	17	.200*	.965	17	.721
	B	.118	21	.200*	.957	21	.453
Non-Classroom	A	.119	17	.200*	.959	17	.606
	B	.126	21	.200*	.972	21	.775
Classroom	A	.158	17	.200*	.958	17	.601
	B	.121	21	.200*	.981	21	.938
Individual student	A	.146	17	.200*	.944	17	.370
	B	.138	21	.200*	.920	21	.088

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

The significance column under the Shapiro-Wilk is needed in order to determine if the data in each behavior system are normally distributed. If the data are normally distributed, the value should be more than .05 ($p > .05$). The data for each system are normally distributed for each system of PBIS, as assessed by Shapiro-Wilk test ($p > .05$). A6 states there also need to be homogeneity of variances. Table 18 details the results of the Levene's test.

Table 18

Test of Homogeneity of Variances for Middle School A and Middle School B

	Levene's Statistic	*df*1	*df*2	*Sig.*
School-Wide	1.892	1	42	.176
Non-Classroom	1.386	1	37	.247
Classroom	4.687	1	36	.037
Individual student	.000	1	36	.984

If Levene's test is statistically insignificant ($p > .05$), the assumption of homogeneity of variances was not violated. However, if Levene's test is statistically significant ($p < .05$), the assumption of homogeneity of variances was violated. There was homogeneity of variances, as assessed by Levene's test for equality of variances, for the School-Wide ($p = .176$), Non-Classroom ($p = .247$), and Individual Student ($p = .984$) systems of PBIS. However, the assumption of homogeneity of variances was violated for the Classroom ($p = .037$) system of PBIS.

Because of the heterogeneity of variances with the Classroom system, a Welch ANOVA was completed instead of the one-way ANOVA. A Welch ANOVA is appropriate in all cases where there are normally distributed data that violates the assumption of homogeneity of variance. One-way ANOVAs are not appropriate for this situation as they could produce errors that are inflated for small sample sizes (Statistics how to, 2017).

RQ2. To answer the research question of whether there was a significant difference between the teacher assessments of PBIS in regards to the School-Wide System at Middle School A and Middle School B, an ANOVA was conducted with the schools as the between subjects factor and the responses to the questions regarding the School-Wide Systems of PBIS as the within subjects factor. Table 19 displays the marginal means and standard errors for the School-Wide Systems at both schools.

Table 19

Marginal Means for the School-Wide System of PBIS

					95% Confidence interval for mean			
Middle school	*N*	$\bar{x}$	*sd*	SE	Lower bound	Upper bound	Min	Max
A	22	2.3779	.34886	.07438	2.2232	2.5326	1.83	3.00
B	22	1.8929	.49602	.10505	1.6730	2.1129	1.11	2.83
Total	44	2.1354	.48965	.07382	1.9866	2.2943	1.11	3.00

Middle School A had an estimated mean of 2.4 (*SD* = 0.35), while Middle School B's estimated mean is 1.9 (*SD* = 0.5). These results are comparable to the descriptive results showing both schools' systems as *partially in place*. As shown in Table 20, the results of the analysis revealed there were significant differences.

Table 20

One-Way ANOVA on School-Wide System of PBIS

Source	Sum of squares	*df*	Mean square	*F*	Sig.
Between groups	2.587	1	2.587	14.069	.001
Within groups	7.722	42	.184		
Total	10.309	43			

Note. $p = .001$; $p < .05$

The implementation of PBIS is statistically significantly different for Middle School A and Middle School B, $F(1, 42) = 14.069$, $p = .001$. The effect size was calculated at .251 using the partial eta squared. The between groups mean square ($MS = 2.587$) measures the interaction between the two groups of teacher responses, while the within groups mean square ($MS = .184$) measures the interaction within the individual teacher responses. The *F* ratio ($F = 14.069$) is the ratio of the two groups-between groups mean square divided by within groups mean square. If the null hypothesis were true, the *F* ratio value would be close to 1.0. A large *F* ratio means the variation between the group means was significant. The significance level is .001 ($p = .001$), which is below 0.05, making the probability of the difference happening by chance one out of 1000. The significance level ensures the statistic is reliable. As shown in Table 20, the group means were statistically different ($p < .05$); therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Post hoc tests were not conducted because there were only two variables.

According to the results of the ANOVA, there are significant differences in the mean scores of the School-Wide Systems of PBIS between both schools. The results indicate the teachers at Middle School A scored their School-Wide System of PBIS higher than the teachers at Middle School B, which opposes the idea of Middle School B having the model PBIS program.

RQ3. To answer the research question of whether there was a significant difference between the teacher assessments of PBIS in regards to the Non-Classroom Setting System at Middle School A and Middle School B, a ANOVA was employed with the schools as the between subjects factor and the responses to the questions regarding the Non-Classroom Setting Systems as the within subjects factor. Table 21 displays the marginal means and standard errors for the Non-Classroom Setting Systems at both schools.

Table 21

Marginal Means for the Non-Classroom System of PBIS

					95% Confidence interval for mean			
Middle school	*n*	$\bar{x}$	*sd*	SE	Lower bound	Upper bound	Min	Max
A	18	2.4247	.38682	.09117	2.2324	2.6171	1.67	3.00
B	21	1.9626	.49976	.10906	1.7351	2.1901	1.11	3.00
Total	39	2.1759	.50285	.08052	2.0129	2.3389	1.11	3.00

Middle School A had an estimated mean of 2.4 (*SD* = 0.39), while Middle School B's estimated mean is 2.0 (*SD* = 0.5). These results are also comparable to the descriptive results showing both schools' systems as *partially in place*. As shown in Table 22, the results of the analysis revealed there were significant differences.

Table 22

One-Way ANOVA on Non-Classroom System of PBIS

Source	Sum of squares	*df*	Mean square	*F*	Sig.
Between groups	2.070	1	2.070	10.158	.003
Within groups	7.539	37	.204		
Total	9.609	38			

Note. $p = .003$; $p < .05$

The implementation of PBIS is statistically significantly different for Middle School A and Middle School B, $F(1, 37) = 10.158$, $p = .003$. The effect size was calculated at .201 using the partial eta squared. The between groups mean square ($MS = 2.070$) measures the interaction between the two groups of teacher responses, while the within groups mean square ($MS = .204$) measures the interaction within the individual teacher responses. The *F* ratio ($F = 10.158$) is the ratio of the two groups-between groups mean square divided by within groups mean square. If the null hypothesis were true, the *F* ratio value would be close to 1.0. A large *F* ratio means the variation between the group means was significant. The significance level is .003 ($p = .003$), which is below 0.05,

making the probability of the difference happening by chance three out of 1000. The significance level ensures the statistic is reliable. As shown in Table 22, the group means were statistically different ($p < .05$); therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Post hoc tests were not conducted because there were only two variables.

According to the results of the ANOVA, there are significant differences in the mean scores of the Non-Classroom Systems of PBIS between both schools. The results indicate the teachers at Middle School A scored their Non-Classroom System of PBIS higher than the teachers at Middle School B, which contradicts the idea of Middle School B having the model PBIS program.

RQ4. To answer the research question of whether there was a significant difference between the teacher assessments of PBIS in regards to the Classroom Systems at Middle School A and Middle School B, an ANOVA was conducted with the schools as the between subjects factor and the responses to the questions regarding the Classroom Systems as the within subjects factor. Table 23 displays the marginal means and standard errors for the Classroom Systems at both schools.

Table 23

Marginal Means for the Classroom System of PBIS

Middle school	*n*	$\bar{x}$	*sd*	SE	95% Confidence interval for mean		Min	Max
					Lower bound	Upper bound		
A	18	2.5987	.26340	.06388	2.4632	2.7341	2.09	3.00
B	21	2.0556	.45099	.09841	1.8504	2.2609	1.27	3.00
Total	39	2.2986	.46348	.07519	2.1462	2.4509	1.27	3.00

Middle School A had an estimated mean of 2.6 (*SD* = 0.26), while Middle School B's estimated mean is 2.1 (*SD* = 0.45). These results are comparable to the descriptive results showing Middle School A as close to *in place* and Middle School B as *partially in place*. The Classroom System of PBIS was the only system to violate the homogeneity of variances assumption. Therefore, the results of the one-way ANOVA could not be interpreted. The Welch ANOVA is the alternative and can be used when the data violates the assumption of homogeneity of variances (Laerd Statistics, 2013). It was only necessary to interpret the Welch ANOVA to answer RQ4. As shown in Table 24, the results of the analysis revealed there were significant differences.

Table 24

Welch ANOVA on Classroom System of PBIS

		Statistic[a]	*df*1	*df*2	Sig.
Classroom	Welch	21.420	1	33.067	.000

a. Asymptotically *F* distributed.

The implementation of PBIS is statistically significantly different for Middle School A and Middle School B, Welch $F(1, 33.067) = 21.420$, $p < .0005$. The significance level is .0005 ($p = .000$), which is below 0.05, making the probability of the difference happening by chance less than 5 out of 10000. The significance level ensures the statistic is reliable. As shown in Table 24, the group means were statistically different ($p < .05$); therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Post hoc tests were not conducted because there were only two variables.

According to the results of the ANOVA, there are significant differences in the mean scores of the Classroom Systems of PBIS between both schools. The results indicate the teachers at Middle School A scored their Classroom System of PBIS higher than the teachers at Middle School B, which opposes the idea of Middle School B having the model PBIS program.

RQ5. To answer the research question of whether there was a significant difference between the teacher assessments of PBIS in regards to the Individual Student Systems at Middle School A and Middle School B, an analysis of the ANOVA was

employed with the schools as the between subjects factor and the responses to the questions regarding the Individual Student Systems. Table 25 displays the marginal means and standard errors for the Individual Student Systems at both schools.

Table 25

Marginal Means for the Individual Student System of PBIS

					95% Confidence interval for mean			
Middle school	*n*	$\bar{x}$	*sd*	SE	Lower bound	Upper bound	Min	Max
A	17	2.1176	.56332	.13662	1.8082	2.4073	1.13	3.00
B	21	1.6452	.56666	.12365	1.3873	1.9032	1.00	2.88
Total	38	1.8566	.60618	.09834	1.6573	2.0558	1.00	3.00

Table 25 displays the marginal means for both schools. Middle School A had an estimated mean of 2.11 (*SD* = .56), while Middle School B's estimated mean is 1.65 (*SD* = .57). These results are also comparable to the descriptive results showing Middle School A's system as *partially in place*, while Middle School B's system is close to being *partially in place*. As shown in Table 26, the results of the analysis revealed there were significant differences.

Table 26

One-Way ANOVA on Individual Student System of PBIS

Source	Sum of squares	*df*	Mean square	*F*	Sig.
Between groups	2.097	1	2.097	6.564	.015
Within groups	11.499	36	.319		
Total	13.596	37			

Note. $p = .015$; $p < .05$

The implementation of PBIS is statistically significantly different for Middle School A and Middle School B, $F(1, 36) = 6.564$, $p = .015$. The effect size was calculated at .154 using the partial eta squared. The between groups mean square ($MS = 2.097$) measures the interaction between the two groups of teacher responses, while the within groups mean square ($MS = .319$) measures the interaction within the individual teacher responses. The F ratio ($F = 6.564$) is the ratio of the two groups-between groups mean square divided by within groups mean square. If the null hypothesis were true, the F ratio value would be close to 1.0. A large F ratio means the variation between the group means was significant. The significance level is .015 ($p = .015$), which is below 0.05, making the probability of the difference happening by chance 15 out of 1000. The significance level ensures the statistic is reliable. As shown in Table 26, the group means were statistically different ($p < .05$); therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Post hoc tests were not conducted because there were only two variables.

According to the results of the ANOVA, there are significant differences in the mean scores of the Individual Student Systems of PBIS between both schools. The results indicate the teachers at Middle School A scored their Individual Student System of PBIS higher than the teachers at Middle School B, which also contradicts the idea of Middle School B having the model PBIS program.

Summary of Findings

The purpose of the study was to analyze PBIS at Middle School B from the accounts of the teachers, by comparing it to the teacher accounts of the PBIS program at Middle School A. The first research question asked what are the differences in the teacher assessments of PBIS at Middle School A and Middle School B. The remaining research questions asked if there is a statistical difference between the assessments of teachers regarding PBIS implementation at both schools.

Based on the research questions, hypotheses were tested, and the results were presented. Middle School A was struggling to get the intended results from PBIS, while Middle School B's program was thriving. Based on the results, teachers at Middle School A scored the Classroom System of PBIS as *in place* and each of the other three systems as *partially in place*. Teachers at Middle School B scored all four of the behavior systems as *partially in place*. For each category, teachers at Middle School A scored their PBIS systems higher than the teachers at Middle School B did. According to the ANOVA results, there are statistical differences between both groups of teachers in each behavior system. According to OSEP Technical Assistance Center, ineffective PBIS systems may cause a decline in ODRs if teachers are not applying the established

consequences to negative behaviors (2016). The success of a PBIS program is measured by the number of ODRs written by the faculty in the school. Many teachers, who do not buy into the program, know they are being evaluated on how many ODRs they write. This causes, consequently, those teachers to refuse to send students to the office, even when their behavior merits such action. This could potentially be the case at Middle School B, as teachers feel the PBIS program, as a whole, is only *partially in place*. On the other hand, the results at Middle School A indicate the teachers perceive the program as *in place*, but they could be unfamiliar as to what PBIS actually looks like. This indicates more research is needed.

Both schools have components that are *partially in place* and *not in place*, according to the teachers. These components could use some improvement to strengthen the PBIS program as a whole. The program's strengths and weaknesses will be communicated to the administrative staff at Middle School A and Middle School B to be used in their improvement process. These results suggest further research is needed, at both schools.

Assumptions, Limitations, Scope, and Delimitations

It was assumed that all teachers at Middle School A and B would receive the email and were aware of how to access the survey by clicking on the link. In the event all members of the population did not consent to participating, certain factors could have limited my ability to draw inference.

By selecting the PBIS Self-Assessment survey to collect data, I took steps to reduce measurement error with the results. The PBIS Self-Assessment survey has been

used since 2003 to make improvements to PBIS programs. The survey developers included instructions for collecting and analyzing the data from the survey. The selection of a proven reliable and valid survey with clear questions encouraged the participants to respond and answer correctly. I was careful to follow the directions included with the survey to eliminate errors with the results. To check for errors, I completed the analysis procedures twice.

According to a sample size calculator, to maintain a confidence level of 95% and a confidence interval of 5, 61 participants were needed for the sample at Middle School A, and 34 participants were needed for the sample at Middle School B (Creative Research Systems, 2012). As discussed, there were only 22 usable data sets from each research site. Consequently, this is a limitation of this study. This study is a case study about a local venue. Although the data and results could be valuable to others, the specific findings are not generalizable because the sample size is too low.

In this research, I sought out to address the problem Middle School A was having with student discipline and their failing PBIS program. The research was limited to the assessments of the teachers employed at Middle School A and Middle School B. By collecting data using teacher assessments at the middle schools, I was able to gain insight on how to help Middle School A implement a successful program as well.

Conclusion

Section 2 of this project study outlined the research methodology, including the design and approach, setting and sample, and how data were collected and analyzed. For the purpose of this study, a cross-sectional survey design was used, and participants

responded to close-ended survey questions. The data were collected from willing participants and analyzed following the procedures from the survey, along with an ANOVA statistical analysis. Participants were not exposed to any risks and appropriate measures were employed to protect their privacy.

The goal of this study was to enhance the PBIS program at Middle School A. Managing student behavior using a program such as PBIS benefit the overall student achievement at this school. The literature base for the project is described, in detail, in Section 3. Reflections and conclusions are in Section 4.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

In Section 1, I reviewed the professional literature pertaining to PBIS and other discipline approaches used in U.S. schools. In Section 2, I discussed the research methodology and findings. The results of the data collection led me to design a policy recommendation in the form of an implementation plan. In this section, I discuss the project, in detail, including a description and the goals to be accomplished through the completion of this project, a rationale for choosing this genre for my project, a review of professional literature, and a rich discussion of the implementation of my project.

Description and Goals

The policy recommendation for PBIS derived directly from the problem at Middle School A. This school had a severe problem with discipline and struggled to implement PBIS successfully (PowerSchool, 2016). The data collected as part of my research yielded several findings, including the strengths and weaknesses of the PBIS program at Middle School A. I concluded, per the analysis of my findings, to be successful, Middle School A should focus on the areas in need of improvement and redefine the areas of strength in the current PBIS program.

The steps to implementing a successful PBIS program include establishing a leadership team, securing administrative and staff support, conducting a self-assessment, creating an implementation plan, and establishing a way to collect data to evaluate the program (OSEP Technical Assistance Center, 2016). According to the data, Middle School A does not currently have a PBIS leadership team, which means

there is no one in place to create, monitor, and adjust an implementation plan for the PBIS program. Thus, establishing a leadership team and putting an implementation plan in place should be school leaders' priority.

The anticipated outcome of the policy recommendation is the successful implementation of PBIS, with decreased ODRs. The outcome of an implementation plan is the "development of local capacity for sustainable, culturally and contextually relevant, and high fidelity implementation of multi-tiered practices and systems of support" (OSEP Technical Assistance Center, 2016, para. 1). With the development of an implementation plan, the leadership team at Middle School A has the potential to create a sustainable PBIS program similar to that of Middle School B and change the school culture. The policy recommendation could be an implementation plan for the program, which may create school-wide consistency and be the structure needed to improve PBIS.

Rationale

The purpose of this project study was to gain insight on the teachers' assessment of the implementation of PBIS at Middle School A and Middle School B in order to improve the PBIS at Middle School A. I focused the project study on using data analysis to identify whether elements of PBIS were in place at Middle School A. My goal, as a researcher, was to gain the insight of teachers on PBIS implementation to ascertain what needed to improve. Based on data analysis, I developed a policy recommendation for the PBIS program implementation at Middle School A. The findings of my research suggest there are differences between the PBIS program at

Middle School A and Middle School B that are attributable to factors other than chance. Therefore, Middle School A could potentially benefit from focusing on the areas of the program that are in need of improvement and defining the areas of strength.

Setting up this school-wide system will involve certain steps: (a) develop a leadership team, (b) strengthen administrative support procedures, (c) develop new procedures for staff support, (d) strengthen self-assessment procedures (e) develop an implementation plan for the school wide PBIS, and (f) strengthen data collection procedures to support evaluation of the program (OSEP Technical Assistance Center, 2016). See Table 27 for a comparison of the two schools using these steps.

Table 27

Comparison of School-Wide PBIS Set-Up Status of Middle Schools A and B

	School	
Step	MSA	MSB
Establishing a leadership team	✘	✓
Securing administrative support	✓	✓
Securing staff support	✘	★
Conducting self-assessment	✓	✓
Creating implementation plan	✘	✓
Establishing a way to collect data for evaluation	✓	✓

Note. MSA = Middle School A and MSB = Middle School B. Items marked "✘" indicate a deficiency. Items not applicable to the study are marked "★."

I used the PBIS Self-Assessment Survey to assess the program during my research at Middle School A and Middle School B (OSEP Technical Assistance Center, 2016). Administrators at both schools use PowerSchool to collect discipline data, as the program is used district-wide. Middle School A and Middle School B has administrative support, based on the analysis of my study data. The steps that are needed for Middle School A to successfully implement PBIS, based on my analysis, are to establish a leadership team, secure staff support, and strengthen the implementation plan. A policy recommendation may provide a systematic plan for long-term change and the structure needed to improve the PBIS program.

Review of the Literature

Life has changed for U.S. children over the past 50 years. There have been changes in family structures, in the media, with technology, and with political decision making (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2013). The consequences of these changes, both positive and negative, are varied. Today's students are more technologically advanced and are exposed to far more information than their parents (Dahlgren & Hyatt, 2008). Because of these changes, teachers can employ a vast amount of research-based strategies to ensure learning is taking place as well (Dahlgren & Hyatt, 2008). However, family problems and mass media are causing children to not pay as much attention as their parents and grandparents did in school (Dahlgren & Hyatt, 2008). Children are not always as compliant as their parents and grandparents were either (Dahlgren & Hyatt, 2008). Disruptive environments, no matter the cause, threaten each child's chance at academic and social success (Dahlgren & Hyatt, 2008).

The need for school systems to provide students with safe learning environments has increased the need for prevention-based models for discipline. Many schools' officials have adopted PBIS to deal with their discipline issues, including Middle School A (OSEP Technical Assistance Center, 2016). PBIS was implemented at Middle School A during the 2011-2012 school year; however, the program diminished due to a lack of teacher buy-in and an increase in negative discipline from the students. I conducted survey research to compare the assessments of teachers at Middle School A with those of teachers from Middle School B, who had implemented a successful PBIS program. The outcomes of my research provided the basis for a policy recommendation to improve the current PBIS program at Middle School A and maximize its effectiveness.

I conducted a Google search and a search of Walden University Library resources for current implementation models for PBIS in schools, suggestions for sustaining PBIS, and policy recommendations. In doing so, I discovered a number of links to models and a plethora of information on constructing policy recommendations. In my searches, I used search terms such as *policy recommendation advantages*, *PBIS implementation ideas*, *PBIS schools*, *PBIS manuals*, *classroom management strategies*, *sustaining PBIS*, and *the role of classroom management*.

Policy Recommendations

A critical component of a strong and positive school climate is a school-wide discipline policy. School officials should focus on setting a policy that has clear, consistent, and appropriate expectations with consequences in place to prevent and

address misbehavior. School officials should also take deliberate steps to cultivate an expectation of continuous improvement driven by data and analysis to ensure fairness and equity for all students (US Department of Education, 2014). Based on the findings from my study, Middle School A will benefit from a policy recommendation for PBIS to combat its problem with discipline. School policies for schools are the governing documents by which a school operates. School policies are important because they govern the everyday occurrences in the building, and they are typically written with a specific audience in mind and is straight to the point (Meador, 2017a).

A policy recommendation is a written policy prepared to influence policy decisions and "serve to inform people about how research and evidence can help make the best decisions" (Breen, 2012, p. 2). Policy recommendations offer authoritative perspective on solutions to a problem (Herman, 2013). Academic researchers should write policy recommendations based on the findings of their research. With policy recommendations, people in influential positions can use the recommendations to endorse real change to policy and society. According to the developers of the PBIS program, there are steps involved in setting up the PBIS school-wide system: establishing a leadership team, securing administrative and staff support, conducting a self-assessment, creating an implementation plan, and establishing a way to collect data to evaluate the program (OSEP Technical Assistance Center, 2016). The creation of a leadership team and an implementation plan could be the results of my policy recommendation.

When developing a policy recommendation, there are several things to consider. First, I must develop the objective and decide on the target audience for my policy recommendation. At that point, I should be clear about the current policy, identify its shortfalls and reasons for improvement based on my findings. I will then be able to recommend policy updates and changes to the policy (Breen, 2012; Musandu, 2013).

Positive Discipline Approaches

In a theoretical, empirical, and legal analysis of reactive discipline strategies, such as zero tolerance weapons policies, Mongan and Walker determined they are not empirically supported or theoretically sound (2012). The "key to good discipline is timing" (Dahlgren & Hyatt, 2008, p. 6). The time to discipline a child is before minor behavior infractions turn into major ones. The effort is takes to manage a student who is exhibiting troublesome behavior reactively and punitively deflects a teacher's instructional time and contributes to their burnout (Aloe, Shisler, Norris, Nickerson, & Rinker, 2014). Changing discipline practices can improve school climate and help improve student achievement (Colombi & Osher, 2015). A major assumption in schools is that expected behavior is already a part of what a student should know. Contrary to that belief, even the most well-behaved child does not know how to act in our classrooms and schools until they are taught to do so (Dahlgren & Hyatt, 2008). Positive Discipline offers strong reinforcement for appropriate behaviors; however, the appropriate behaviors must be taught.

School-wide PBIS refers to a systems change process for an entire school. The underlying theme is teaching behavioral expectations in the same manner as any core

curriculum subject (Baker & Ryan, 2014). PBIS practices are founded on the assumption and belief that all children can exhibit appropriate behavior. It is best practices to intervene before targeted behaviors occur (OSEP Technical Assistance, 2016).

PBIS Set-Up

Many districts and schools are implementing tiered interventions, such as PBIS, to prevent and address misbehavior (OSEP Technical Assistance Center, 2016). The best place to begin when considering PBIS is to examine the school's mission, vision, and values. Establishing PBIS does not equate to abandoning what works in the school, but rather embedding successful initiatives along with establishing structures and supporting annual plans (Hubbuch & Stucker, 2015).

The first step in setting up a PBIS school-wide system is to establish a leadership team. Practitioners regard effective teaming, administrative support, and staff buy-in as the most important elements of successful PBIS implementation (Lane, Oakes, & Magill, 2014; McIntosh, Predy, Upreti, Hume, & Turri, 2013). According to my research, Middle School B has an established leadership team and Middle School A does not. Middle School A also lacks the presence of an individual involved with PBIS that is skilled at conducting functional behavioral assessments, which correlates with two of the weakness of the PBIS Individual Student System. Consequently, the first recommendation in my project will be to establish a PBIS leadership team. This team should be comprised of school administrators; classified, special education, and regular education teachers; and even parents (OSEP Technical Assistance Center, 2016). Once

a leadership team is established, the implementation of the PBIS plan within my policy recommendation can take place.

Successful implementation of PBIS relies on support from the administration. Weaknesses in Middle School A's Non-Classroom and Classroom Systems are the lack of regular opportunities for developing and improving active supervision skills with the staff and regular opportunities for teachers to gain assistance and recommendations from administration in the form of coaching, observations, and instruction. Principals should be openly committed to PBIS, by engaging in implementation plans and providing leadership, resources, and commitment to coaching the faculty and staff (Lane et al., 2014). In order for staff members to buy-in, they need to see the principals as active participants. Also, staff members need to be secure in the process of implementing a systems change (Baker & Ryan, 2014). Middle School A has administrative support, however, staff support needs to be established. Once a leadership team is in place, a plan to gain staff support can be implemented. The leadership team must pay close attention to ensuring the procedures that are put in to place are socially valid to sustain staff buy-in (Burns et al., 2013). A few suggestions to gain staff support could be involving the staff in the decision making process, communicating with the staff about the changes to be made, and providing process training and education in the form of professional development (OSEP Technical Assistance Center, 2016).

Strengthening the implementation plan is another important step in strengthening PBIS. According to the PBIS OSEP Technical Assistance Center, PBIS

programs should focus on three to five behavioral expectations that are positively stated and easy to remember. These expectations should apply to all students, no matter where they are within the school (Hubbuch & Stucker, 2015; Simonsen et al., 2013). A matrix should be created to display these expectations, along with what the expectations looks like, sound like, and feel like in all areas. Consistency from class to class and adult to adult is important (OSEP Technical Assistance Center, 2016). Middle School A has already established a set of expectations and created a matrix. Weaknesses of the Classroom and Non-Classroom Systems of PBIS are that problem behaviors do not receive consistent consequences and booster training activities for students are not developed, modified, and conducted on a consistent basis. My policy recommendation is focused around those expectations that are already established and include a plan to determine how behavioral expectations and routines will be taught in and around the school.

Data systems for behavior are important. Similar to monitoring data for academic achievement purposes, it is important to develop systems to collect and analyze data for behavior trends (Hubbuch & Stucker, 2015). Results of the Self-Assessment survey indicate that behavior is not monitored, and feedback is not provided regularly to the staff. Also, the status of student behavior and management practices are not evaluated from data, and the patterns of student problem behavior are not reported to teams and faculty for active decision making on a regular basis. Each of the aforementioned statements are weaknesses in the School-Wide, Non-Classroom, and Individual Student Systems. Therefore, the last important step for setting up a

school-wide PBIS program is to strengthen policies for collecting ODR data, and transmitting the data to the staff. Many teachers do not use, and may not even know about, the function within the system to create a classroom referral (PowerSchool, 2016). The district where Middle School A is located uses to PowerSchool for attendance, grading, and discipline purposes. Teachers and staff are able to use a function within PowerSchool for ODRs. Therefore, the collection of ODR data will occur through PowerSchool. This function allows teachers to use PowerSchool to write the ODR, and it is sent directly to the administrator. The administrator can take immediate action after receiving the notification.

Coupled with the ODR data collection, there should also be a determination of teacher versus office managed behaviors. Teachers and staff should understand how adults will respond to problem behavior and there should be a shared responsibility for taking action (Hubbuch & Stucker, 2015). My policy recommendation also includes a plan for deciding what behaviors warrant an office referral versus a classroom referral (OSEP Technical Assistance Center, 2016). Classroom referrals should be written when the teachers can handle the offenses (Meador, 2017b). Office referrals should be written when behaviors are more severe and disrupt the classroom and school environment. A student should not be sent to the office for violating a single offense; however, it is important to document these minor issues, as they may become major if repeated.

PBIS Implementation

Tiered supports. PBIS is a framework for a curriculum of supports beginning with a foundation of widespread strategies for all students. The expectation is that

nearly 80% of students will respond positively to proactive strategies that provide systemic reinforcements and training of expected social behavior, whereas the other 20% of students will benefit from more targeted supports (Stormont, Reinke, Herman, & Lemke, 2012). There are three tiers within PBIS implementation. The first is Primary Prevention, which are the universal strategies that will work for nearly 80% of the students. Primary Prevention reduces new cases of problem behavior, reduces the amount of work caused by large numbers of ODRs for minor problems, and provides a way to determine which students need more intensive interventions (OSEP Technical Assistance Center, 2016).

The next two tiers will work for the majority of the remaining 20% of students. The second tier is Secondary Level Prevention, and this tier will work for any students who require booster trainings to help them remember the behavioral expectations. The targeted students for this group should be those who visit the office two to five times per year. This tier is designed to provide interventions to support the students who do not seem to respond to the Primary Prevention because they require more support than is available for all students (Lane, Oakes, Jenkins, Menzies, & Kahlberg, 2014). Students in this tier would participate in targeted interventions that teach the students to use new skills as a replacement for problem behaviors (OSEP Technical Assistance Center, 2016).

The third tier is Tertiary Level Prevention, and its designed to focus on the needs of the students who exhibit patterns of problem behavior. This tier is more individualized and should involve the student and people who know him or her (Lane et

al., 2014). These people will work together to address the student's specific needs to promote positive changes. The goal is to diminish the problem behaviors and increase the student's adaptive skills (OSEP Technical Assistance Center, 2016).

The classroom. Creating a safe place for student success in the classroom begins with the teacher's ability to manage the classroom (Holloman & Yates, 2013). Many teachers struggle with managing student behavior in the classroom. Teachers indicate that classroom management is the most challenging aspect of their job and the area in which they receive the least amount of training (Reinke et al., 2011). Teachers play a crucial role in supporting the behavior of students; however, many teachers are not aware of the best practices that might increase positive outcomes for students with behavior problems. This lack of knowledge can be attributed to a lack of support, training, and evidence (Stormont, Reinke, & Herman, 2011). Therefore, a need for interventions that focuses on building a teacher's knowledge and skills to promote developmentally appropriate and effective strategies in the classroom.

The developers of PBIS have set goals and identified features that will help ensure success in reaching those goals; however, they do not describe specific practices and programs for schools. This allows a school to create practices and programs that fit their needs and characteristics (Northeast Foundations for Children, Inc., 2009). To ensure effective implementation, the school staff needs to know what to do and how to do it. The staff also needs resources to accomplish the task of providing positive behavior support (Dunlap, Goodman, McEvoy, & Paris, 2010). A need for staff training and other interventions will help with the efficacy of PBIS at Middle School A.

Classroom PBIS should mirror school-wide PBIS. Each classroom in a school building should imitate school-wide behavior expectations and rules and should be specific to that particular classroom. The expectations should be posted on a bulletin board or poster in a place that can be easily spotted by students (Reinke et al., 2011). Classroom reward systems and strategies for discipline should be consistent with that of all systems in the school. The classroom teacher should provide instruction within a classroom management system that is universal and consistent from class to class (Dunlap et al., 2010).

Classroom rules should be aligned to the behavior expectations. Classroom rewards should knowledge student behavior, and all routines should support classroom management. Routines should be established and taught for everything in the classroom from entering the classroom to turning in papers to exiting the classroom (Dunlap et al., 2010). A proposal for a set of classroom rules and procedures will be made in my policy recommendation.

Sustainability. Sustainability is referred to the continued implementation of a practice with ongoing fidelity (Matthews, McIntosh, Frank, & May, 2013). The sustainability of PBIS implementation will be successful if it is easier to implement year after year and PBIS activities are part of the school-wide process with benefits to everyone (Dunlap et al., 2010). Successful implementation requires consistency with behavioral expectations and consequences. Consistency is enhanced when the PBIS team looks at data, makes decisions, and reports back to the faculty and staff (Evanovich & Scott, 2016). Sharing PBIS data with the staff has benefits to

sustainability (Dawson, Kilroy, & Yacobacci, 2015). Monthly meetings or emails can be used to share what the staff is doing right, what is working well, and could also be beneficial in pointing out areas in need of improvement.

It is also recommended to do informal self-checks and more formal assessments of PBIS with fidelity annually. These self-checks and other assessments are important to making sure the plan is being implemented as it is intended. They also help when drawing conclusions about student responsiveness to PBIS, and they are imperative when the leadership needs to allocate resources for professional development and student interventions (Bruhm, Gorsh, Hannan, & Hirsch, 2014).

One way to lose great momentum with PBIS is disorganization. Information and important documents can get lost and become problematic for the sustainability of the program. To assist with the organization, a leadership team should be built, and the team should keep meeting notes, agendas, minutes, action plans, and any other important does in a specific place (Dunlap et al., 2010). This task could be accomplished simply by creating a notebook each year using a three ring binder.

Project Description

I developed a recommendation for the implementation of PBIS at Middle School A based on the data collection and analysis. The recommendation will be converted to an implementation plan and shared with the administrators at Middle School A. At this point, the school can develop a leadership team for PBIS and proceed with fine tuning the document prior to sharing it with the staff. The document can also

be shared with other stakeholders, such as the school board, district personnel, parents, and other staff members.

Potential Resources and Existing Supports

While completing this project study, I identified several resources and supports that are already in place to assist with the implementation of this project. Administrators at Middle School A tried to implement PBIS, but due to certain factors, the program was not successful. However, Middle School A does have a behavioral matrix and a set of behavior expectations, which was one of the strengths of the program. The established matrix and behavioral expectations served as useful resources for the project. The administrative staff is supportive of the successful implementation of PBIS, as it coincides with district initiatives to improve behavior and increase academic success for students.

Potential Barriers

Potential barriers have been identified. PBIS was implemented at Middle School A. Teachers did not buy-in to the program with its previous implementation. Teacher buy-in is imperative to the successful implementation of PBIS, and the lack of buy-in could be a barrier (Richards, Aguilera, Murakami, & Weiland, 2014). A program such as PBIS also requires funding. A lack of funding was found to be a weakness in the PBIS program, according to the data, and could be a barrier as well.

Proposal for Implementation and Timetable

I developed a policy recommendation for PBIS implementation. This document provides a plan to successfully implement PBIS, backed by research. The goal of this

project is to have a plan for the program, which will create school-wide consistency and be the structure needed to improve PBIS.

The policy recommendation will be presented to the administrators at Middle School A. I will propose the recommendation be converted to an implementation plan and presented to the leadership team, after its establishment. The leadership team can present the implementation plan to the rest of the teachers and staff at the beginning of the school year.

Roles and Responsibilities of Student and Others

As a part of this project study, I developed a policy recommendation to aid in the improvement of the PBIS program at Middle School A. I will be presenting the recommendation to the administrators at the school, with a recommendation for its contents to be converted to a manual for use as a guide for PBIS implementation. I will also distribute a formative evaluation form to the administrators for their completion after reviewing the policy recommendation. Although I may be able to assist in the process after completion of this program, the conversion of the recommendation to a manual will be the responsibility of the PBIS leadership after its establishment.

Project Evaluation Plan

I produced a policy recommendation for PBIS implementation. The evaluation for the project focuses on the project itself, not whether the implementation of PBIS met or will meet its goals. A formative evaluation will be used to evaluate the policy recommendation. Formative evaluations are used during the infancy of a program or project and can be used to provide information about how to modify or revise for

improvement. A formative evaluation can be used for progress monitoring purposes and can provide staffs with ongoing feedback for program modifications (Stetler et al., 2006). After completion of the project, administrators at Middle School A will receive the policy recommendation for their review, along with a survey form (see Appendix E) to evaluate the policy recommendation. The responses from this evaluation will be used to determine if the information in the policy recommendation is easy to understand and relevant to Middle School A. The responses will also be used to determine if the policy recommendation would be used in the school. The survey form will be used to evaluate whether or not the recommendations were understood and could be implemented in the school.

Project Implications

The policy recommendation project may benefit the students, teachers, and staff at Middle School A. The recommendation will serve as a guide, backed by research, to help teachers successfully implement PBIS at the school. The project may be especially important to the students at Middle School A because a successful implementation of PBIS could promote a positive learning environment for them and aid in their academic success.

Local Community

PBIS has been proven to decrease the number of ODRs, suspensions, and expulsions in schools all over the country. Successful implementation at Middle School A could create these results as well. In fact, schools that implement PBIS successfully benefit from an increased level of school safety (Sprague, Colvin, & Irvin, 1995). In

addition to the students receiving the support they need at school, the collaboration of students, staff, families, and the community will improve the school overall, strengthen families, build community support, and increase student achievement and success in all areas (Meyer, Frys, & Augustyn, 2013).

Far-Reaching

The policy recommendation can be utilized as a model for other school district looking to implement PBIS in their schools. The policy recommendation can be used to derive an action plan for suit the needs of the schools. As PBIS is implemented on more campuses around the state and country, a shift may occur where more students are achieving academic success because they are able to stay in school, due to a decrease in the rates of ODRs. PBIS implementation will also result in teachers receiving more professional development on behavior and classroom management. This project study can potentially be a bridge between research and practice by detailing practices for implementing research in real world educational settings (Horner, Freeman, Nelson, & Sugai, n.d.).

Conclusion

The purpose of my project was to create a plan for the PBIS program at Middle School A that will create school-wide consistency and be the structure needed to improve PBIS. This section included a thorough review of literature, which analyzes how research supports my project. I also discussed the potential resources, supports, and barriers for the project. A proposal for the implementation of this project and a description of how the project will be evaluated using an established rubric is also

included. This project has the potential to promote social change, both locally and far-reaching. The next section focuses on my reflections of this doctoral program and project study and my conclusions.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Introduction

I addressed PBIS implementation by developing a policy recommendation. In the literature section, I focused on justifying a policy recommendation as the project option, positive discipline approaches, and PBIS implementation. In section 4 I evaluate the quality of the policy recommendation including limitations. I will also share my insights and reflections of the project study related to scholarship, project development, and leadership. The project's potential effect for social change and suggestions for future research related to the problem will also be discussed.

Project Strengths and Limitations

In this project study, I used a cross sectional survey design to address the local problem with discipline. Using study findings, I developed a policy recommendation to address the problem. Middle School A had a declining PBIS program, which is intended to have a positive effect on student discipline (see OSEP Technical Assistance Center, 2016). The policy recommendation was based on data collection and analysis described in Section 2.

The policy recommendation serves as a guide for the staff at Middle School A to help reestablish implementation of the PBIS program for the 2016-2017 school year. The document may aid in strengthening the implementation of PBIS, which may enhance teacher buy-in. Another strength of this project includes minimal cost, as the recommendation could be converted to a manual, in digital form, and disseminated to the staff via e-mail. Additionally, this project allows for the continued input from

stakeholders and gives the teachers and staff at Middle School A a document that can be modified if further research reveals a change needs to occur.

Recommendations for Remediation of Limitations

PBIS is a nation-wide program, and the general components of the program can be applied at every institution (OSEP Technical Assistance Center, 2016). This project study cannot be generalized to other settings, however. The components of PBIS at Middle School A and the implementation plan were created to meet the needs at Middle School A. School officials who wish to implement PBIS could use the policy recommendation as a guide for their programs and adjust the specifics to meet the needs of their institutions, however.

Furthermore, teacher buy-in and subsequent professional development may affect the implementation of the plan. Teacher buy-in was a concern with the initial implementation of PBIS at Middle School A. Reintroducing PBIS and adding professional development may pose an initial threat to the potential success of the program. When teachers feel their opinions are valued, they are more inclined to participate (Martin, 2013). A possible remedy is to encourage teacher insight on professional development and changes to the PBIS program as much as possible.

Scholarship

In my journey, I became skilled at soliciting many literary resources that enhanced my project study. The in depth analysis of the scholarly writings allowed me to formulate my problem statement and research questions. The methodology stage proved challenging. The transformation of the survey from a paper and pencil to an

online format, along with coordination of the data collection, tested my time management skills. The data analysis stage was quite challenging as well. I spent many hours analyzing data and formulating my results.

The process of creating a project based on the findings of my research allowed me to create a document to help move the PBIS program forward at Middle School A. The analysis of the data made this phase much easier. As I formulated my findings, a clear direction for my project came about. I developed a project that may improve the overall atmosphere and have a positive effect on discipline at the school. I will be able to share my findings with the local schools in my district, including Middle School B which was a vital part of my data collection and analysis. It is my hope that more schools in the district will adopt the PBIS program for the betterment of the students in the district.

This journey as a whole tested my faith, and each semester challenged me. Before making the decision to commence this journey, I had to consider my family, career, and available time. The accomplished tasks provided me with the necessary skills to become a scholarly professional in the education community.

Project Development and Evaluation

Prior to the development of the policy recommendation, I conducted research to shape the problem, identify the type of data to be collected and analyzed, and identify the project objectives. I developed project objectives after a critical review of the findings. Evaluation during the development of the project was a repetitive process. I changed my initial project proposal after input from my doctoral committee. The

problem Middle School A has with discipline and the findings from my research at both Middle School A and Middle School B played a significant role in the project development. It was my goal to solve the problem Middle School A had with discipline by improving the implementation of PBIS.

In order to change the problem with student discipline at Middle School A, it was necessary to analyze the components and implementation of PBIS at Middle Schools A and B. To gain a perspective of PBIS implementation at Middle School A and Middle School B, I included participants from both schools. There were 44 participating teachers. After reflecting on my doctoral study, I believe that an increase in the number of participants could have strengthened the results of the study. My sample size was low for both populations. The low sample size was a limitation of my study.

Leadership and Change

To reflect on the idea of leadership and my role as an educational leader, it is important to define the characteristics of educational leaders. Leadership is an essential component of a school's success (Meador, 2017c). Leaders understand that situations change and are not afraid to change with them (Meador, 2017c). Teacher leadership is not only about pedagogical competence. Being a leader involves being able to influence change in schools and its students and teachers (Meador, 2017c).

Change takes time. The starting point for any change is a clear vision. "Current leadership literature frequently characterizes the leader as the vision holder, the keeper of the dream" (Mendez-Morse, 1993, para. 13). While completing the project study, I

was able to implement my leadership skills gained through the doctoral program at Walden University to assist in effecting change in local schools.

Analysis of Self as Scholar

My doctoral journey at Walden University was a path with many obstacles, but I have created knowledge based on practice and reflection. My project was based on the knowledge I gained from reviewing literature and collecting and analyzing data. The skills I have acquired will help me facilitate collaboration, solve problems, and communicate effectively in the future, I believe.

As I reflect on my journey, I am able to pinpoint areas where I struggled during this process. One area I struggled with was being able to create a timetable for my study. It seemed that I always thought my progress would move a little faster than it actually did. I did not take into account the amount of time I needed to allow to receive feedback and make appropriate revisions. The creation of the actual project took more time than I anticipated as well. I also struggled with my writing at times. I hope to continue to improve my writing skills by writing more with my students in the classroom.

Analysis of Self as Practitioner

I have been indecisive as to what route I wanted my career to take. Even the decision of earning my doctoral degree was a sizable task. The coursework for this degree gave me an opportunity to practice and apply my knowledge. To meet the requirements of this program, I had to commit to social change. My commitment to social change, coupled with this project, allowed me to research a part of education that

interests me. I think I am now able to pinpoint the direction I want my career to take as a result.

Analysis of Self as Project Developer

My project study helps to connect theory to practice, and I have created new knowledge based on the direct practice and my reflections. My project development helped me develop skills necessary to facilitate collaboration and communicate effectively. One challenge I came across is time. My life as a mother, teacher, and coach caused me to fall behind on my timeline for completion. A strength for me was the actual creation of the project. There is a vast amount of information available on PBIS implementation that I used to assist with the creation of my policy recommendation.

The Project's Potential Effect on Social Change

The purpose of this study was to gain insight on the teachers' assessment of the implementation of PBIS at Middle School A and Middle School B in order to improve the PBIS at Middle School A. My goal, as a researcher, was to gain the insight of teachers on PBIS implementation to ascertain what needed to improve. Improving the PBIS program at Middle School A would help with the problem with student discipline.

My research revealed the overall need to develop a policy recommendation by identifying elements of PBIS that are in place or not in place at Middle School A. Based on the results of the study, a recommendation was developed and presented to the administrators at Middle School A. Because of this study, social change is encouraged by providing teachers with a plan for implementation of PBIS that allows

for consistency throughout the school. PBIS proven effect on the school climate will promote a positive change with its discipline problem (OSEP Technical Assistance Center, 2016). With an improved PBIS program, negative discipline should decline, which will have a positive effect on attendance and student achievement (Noltemeyer, Ward, & Mcloughlin, 2015).

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

Schools are faced with many challenges including negative discipline. A solution to this problem is the use of evidence-based approaches like PBIS (Swain-Bradway et al., 2013). However, the research conducted at Middle School A cannot stop here. In fact, the school should continue to collect discipline data and use it to drive the implementation process of PBIS. The PBIS leadership team should also continue to survey teachers regarding the implementation of PBIS and use that data to work towards making every improvement possible.

This project study developed a policy recommendation for PBIS implementation at Middle School A. Although the project is catered to the needs of Middle School A, other campuses could use the project as a model. Collaboration between the leadership team at Middle School A and other campus administrators would aid in improving the discipline problems district wide.

Conclusion

Reflection and conclusions of this project bring together over four years of hard work. With the help of teachers and administrators, I created a recommendation for PBIS implementation. Although continued improvements to the program must take

place, this recommendation takes Middle School A several steps in the positive direction.

My transformation into a practitioner-scholar is an on-going process. As an educator, it is important that I participate in the decision making for educational and social reform in my school and community. I am committed to applying what I have learned to effect positive social change.

References

Algozzine, B., Wang, D., & Violette, A. S. (2011). Reexamining the relationship between academic achievement and social behavior. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions. 13*(1), 3-16. doi: 10.1177/1098300709359084

Aloe, A. M., Shisler, S. M., Norris, B. D., Nickerson, A. B., & Rinker, T. W. (2014). A multivariate meta-analysis of student misbehavior and teacher burnout. *Educational Research Review*, 12, 30-44. Retrieved from http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1747938X14000141

Anderson, E. A. (2009). *The effectiveness of a proactive school-wide discipline plan on office discipline referrals at the elementary school level* (Doctoral dissertation). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2014.05.003

Austin, D. D. M. (2013). *Effect of a counseling intervention program on tenth grade students' attendance, discipline referrals, and academic achievement* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest. (UMI No.3552680)

Babbie, E. (1990). *Survey research methods* (2nd ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Baker, B., & Ryan, C. (2014*). The PBIS team handbook: Setting expectations and building positive behavior*. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing.

Balfanz, R. (2009). *Putting middle grade students on the graduation path: A policy and practice brief.* Westerville, OH: National Middle School Association.

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. (2013). Primary sources: America's teachers on teaching in an era of change (3rd ed.). A project of Scholastic, Inc., and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Retrieved from www.scholastic.com

Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (2007). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theories and methods (Laureate Custom Ed.).* Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Bradshaw, C. P., Koth, C. W., Thornton, L. A., & Leaf, P. J. (2009). Altering school climate through school-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports: Findings from a group-randomized effectiveness trial. *Prevention Science*, *10*(2), 100-115. doi: 10.1007/s11121-008-0114-9

Bradshaw, C., Mitchell, M., & Leaf, P. (2010). Examining the effects of school-wide positive behavior interventions and support on student outcomes: Results from a randomized controlled effectiveness trail in elementary schools. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 12*(3), 133-148. doi: 10.1177/1098300709334798

Bradshaw, C. P., Reinke, W. M., Brown, L. D., Bevans, K. B., & Leaf, P. J. (2008). Implementation of school-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) in elementary schools: Observations from a randomized trial. *Education and Treatment of Children*, *31*(1), 1-26. doi: 10.1353/etc.0.0025

Breen, L. (2012). *10 guidelines for writing policy recommendations*. Dublin, Ireland: Centre for Ageing Research and Development.

Bruhm, A., Gorsh, J., Hannan, C., & Hirsch S. E. (2014). Simple strategies for reflecting on and responding to common criticisms of PBIS. *Special Education Leadership, 27*(1), 13-25. (EJ1088832)

Burns, M. K., Egan, A. M., Kunkel, A. K., McComas, J., Peterson, M. M., Rahn, N. L., & Wilson, J. (2013). Training for generalizations and maintenance in RtI implementation: Front-loading for sustainability. *Learning Disabilities Research and Practice, 28*, 81-88. doi: 10.1111/ldrp.12009

Campbell, D. T., & Stanley, J. S. (1971). *Experimental and quasi-experimental designs for research.* Boston, MA: Houghton-Mifflin.

Childs, K.E., Kincaid, D., & George, H.P. (2011). *The Revised School-Wide PBS Benchmarks of Quality (BoQ)*. OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. Retrieved from http://www.pbis.org/evaluation/evaluation_briefs/mar_11_(1).aspx

Chitiyo, M., Makweche-Chitiyo, P., Park, M., Ametepee, L., & Chitiyo, J. (2011). Examining the effect of positive behavior support on academic achievement of students with disabilities. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, *11*(3), 171-177. doi:10.1111/j.1471-3802.2010.01156.x

Christle, C.A., Jolivette, K., & Nelson, C.M. (2005). Breaking the school to prison pipeline: Identifying school risk and protective factors for youth delinquency. *Exceptionality*, *13*, 69-88. doi: 10.1207/s15327035ex1302_2

Coffey, J. H., & Horner, R. H. (2012). The sustainability of schoolwide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports. *Council for Exceptional Children, 78*(4), 407-422. doi: 10.1177/001440291207800402

Coleman, P.T., & Fisher-Yoshida, B. (2004). Conflict resolution at multiple levels across the lifespan: The Work of the ICCCR. *Theory into Practice*, *43*(1), 31-38. doi: 10.1207/s15430421tip4301_5

Colombi, G., & Osher, D. (2015). Advancing school discipline reform. *Education Leaders Reports, 1*(2). Retrieved from http://www.nasbe.org

Colvin, G. (2007). *Seven steps for developing a proactive schoolwide discipline plan*. NY: Corwin Press.

Conroy, M., Sutherland, K., Haydon, T., Stormont, M., & Harmon, J. (2009). Preventing and ameliorating young children's chronic problem behaviors: An ecological classroom-based approach. Psychology in the Schools, 46, 3-17. doi:10.1002/pits.20350

Cooper, M. A. (2010). *Stakeholder perceptions on the influence of positive behavior interventions and supports on academic achievement and the educational environment of middle school students.* Wilmington University (Delaware). ProQuest Dissertations Publishing. (UMI No. 3426977)

Cortes, K. E., Moussa, W. S., & Weinstein, J. M. (2012). *Making the grade: The impacts of classroom disruption and class size on academic achievement.* Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/264891911

Cortiella, C. (2006). *NCLB and IDEA: What parents of students with disabilities need to know and do.* Minneapolis, MN: University of Minneapolis, National Center on Educational Outcomes. (ED495910)

Creative Research Systems. (2012). *Sample size calculator.* Retrieved from https://surveysystem.com/sscalc.htm

Crone, D. A., Hawken, L. S., & Horner, R. H. (2015). *Building positive behavior support systems in school: Functional behavioral assessment* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Dagli, G. (2013). A comparative case study: Opinions of ministry of education, teachers, parents, and managers of union about education reforms in North Cyprus. *Educational Sciences: Theory and Practice, 13*(1), 131-135. (EJ1016600)

Dahlgren, R., & Hyatt, J. (2008). *Time to teach: Encouragement, empowerment, and excellence in every classroom.* Hayden Lake, ID: The Center for Teacher Effectiveness.

Dawson, O. R., Kilroy, A., & Yacobacci, A. (2015). Operational, now what? Sustaining high quality methods of PBIS implementation. *Georgia Association for Positive Behavior Support Conference.* Retrieved from https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1115&context=gapbs

Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. (1979). *The Belmont Report: Ethical principles and guidelines for the protection of human subjects of research.* Retrieved from http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/belmont.html

Duke, D. L. (2008). Diagnosing school decline. *Phi Delta Kappan, 89*(9), 667-671. doi: 10.1177/003172170808900912

Dunlap, K., Goodman, S., McEvoy, C., & Paris, F. (2010). *School-wide positive behavioral interventions & supports: Implementation guide.* Michigan Department of Education. Retrieved from http://www.michigan.gov/mde/

Evanovich, L.L., & Scott, T. M. (2016). Facilitating PBIS implementation: An administrator's guide to presenting the logic and steps to faculty and staff. *Beyond Behavior, 25*(1), 4-8. doi: 10.1177/107429561602500102

Every Student Succeeds Act § 1177, 20 U.S. C. § 6301 (2015).

Explorable. (2015). *ANOVA: Analysis of variance.* Retrieved from https://explorable.com/anova

Fanion, L. (2013). *The effects of zero tolerance policies on student dropout rates.* Southern Education Foundation. Retrieved from http://www.southerneducation.org/150-Menu-Test/150-Home.aspx

Farberman, R. (2006). Zero tolerance can have unintended effects, APA report finds. *American Psychology Association, 37*(9). Retrieved from www.apa.org

Fink, A. (2009). *How to conduct surveys: A step-by-step guide* (4th Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Fink, A., & Kosecoff, J. (1985). *How to conduct surveys: A step-by-step guide*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Froagh, A. J., Burton, L., & Chapman, D. W. (2012). Does increasing instructional time lead to higher student achievement? Evidence from India. *Asian Education and Development Studies, 1*(3), 208-221. doi: 10.1108/20463161211270446

Gettinger, M., Stoiber, K., & Koscik, R. (2008). Effects of a preparation program focused on accommodating children with challenging behaviors. *Teacher Education & Special Education, 31*(3), 164-181. doi: 10.1177/0888406408330624

Glesne, C., & Peshkin, A. (1992). *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction*. White Plains, NY: Longman.

Gokce, F. (2012). Opinions of teachers and parents about time spent by students at school, lesson hours, break times, holidays and school terms. *Educational Sciences: Theory and Practice, 12*(4), 2555-2560. (EJ1002862)

Gonzales, S. (2013). *How zero tolerance rules turn bad behavior into a crime*. Retrieved from http://stateimpact.npr.org/florida

Gregory, A., Skiba, R. J., & Noguera, P. O. (2010). The achievement gap and the discipline gap: Two sides of the same coin? *Educational Researcher, 39*(1), 59-68. doi: 10.3102/0013189X09357621

Hagan-Burke, S., Burke, M., Martin, E., Boon, R., Fore, C., & Kirkendoll, D. (2005). The internal consistency of the Effective Behavior Support Survey. *Education and Treatment of Children, 28,* 400-413. doi: 10.1177/1063426610377329

Haycock, K. (2002). State policy levers: Closing the achievement gap. *The State Education Standard, 3,* 6-13. (EJ655350)

Hefling, K. (2014). Black students punished more than whites: Will new discipline guidelines work? *Associated Press.* Retrieved from http://www.csmonitor.com

Herman, L. (2013). *Tips for writing policy papers: A policy lab communications workshop*. Retrieved from http://law.stanford.edu

Hochweber, J., Hosenfeld, I., & Klieme, E. (2013). Classroom composition, classroom management, and the relationship between student attributes and grades. *Journal of Educational Psychology.* doi:10.1037/a0033829

Hoffman, S. (2014). Zero benefit: Estimating the effect of zero tolerance discipline policies on racial disparities in school discipline. *Educational Policy, 29*(1), 69-95. doi: 10.1177/0895904812453999

Holloman, H., & Yates, P. H. (2013). Cloudy with a chance of sarcasm or sunny with high expectations: Using best practice language to strengthen positive behavior intervention and support efforts. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 15*(2), 124-127. doi: 10.1177/1098300712459905

Horner, R., Freeman, R., Nelson, C. M., & Sugai, G. (n.d.). Using information in state or district level implementation. *PBIS Newsletter Article, 2*(2). Retrieved from http://www.pbis.org

Horner, R.H., & McIntosh, K. (2016). Reducing coercion in schools: The impact of school-wide positive behavioral interventions and supports. In T. J. Dishion & J. J. Synder (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Coercive Relationship Dynamics,* 330-340. Oxford University Press.

Horner, R. H., Sugai, G., Solkowski, K., Eber, L., Nakasato, J., Todd, A. W., & Esperanza, J. (2009). A randomized, wait-list controlled effectiveness trial assessing school-wide Positive Behavior Support in elementary schools. *Journal*

of Positive Behavior Interventions, 11(3), 133-144. doi:10.1177/1098300709332067

Hubbuch, C., & Stucker, K. (2015). Keeping it positive by design. *Principal Leadership, 16*(2), 40-44. Retrieved from https://www.chrishubbuch.com/publications/

Iselin, A. (2010). *Research on school suspension*. Center for Child and Family Policy. Retrieved from http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED540121.pdf

Johnson, L. E., Wang, E. W., Gilinsky, N., He, Z., Carpenter, C., Nelson, M., & Scheuermann, B. K. (2013). Youth outcomes following implementation of universal SW-PBIS strategies in a Texas secure juvenile facility. *Education and Treatment of Children, 36*(3), 135-145. (EJ1014505)

Jorgensen, M., & Hoffman, J. (2003). *History of the No Child Left Behind act of 2001 (NCLB)*. Assessment Report, Pearson Education Inc. 2003.

Kant, A. (2004). Effective strategies for addressing challenging behavior in schools. *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice, 1*(3). (EJ853239)

Kappel, B., Dufresne, D., & Mayer, M. (2012) *From behavior management to positive behavioral support*. Report, Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Developmental Disabilities. Retrieved from https://mn.gov/mnddc/positive_behavior_supports/pdf/From-Behavior-Management-to-Positive-Behavioral-Supports.pdf

Kennedy, M. J., Mimmack, J., & Flannery, K. B. (2012). Innovation in data-driven decision making within SWPBIS systems: Welcome to the gallery walk. *Beyond Behavior,* 8-14. doi: 10.1177/107429561202100303

Kelm, J. L., McIntosh, K., & Cooley, S. (2014). Effects of implementing school-wide positive behavioural interventions and supports on problem behavior and academic achievement in a Canadian Elementary School. *Canadian Journal of School Psychology.* doi: 10.1177/0829573514540266

Kern, L., Gallagher, P., Starosta, K., Hickman, W., & George, M. (2006). Longitudinal outcomes of functional behavioral assessment-based intervention. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, *8*(2), 67-78. doi: 10.1177/10983007060080020501

Kilic, C. (2013). Turkish primary school teachers; Opinions about problem posing applications: Students, the Mathematics curriculum and Mathematics textbooks. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 38*(5). doi: 10.14221/ajte.2013v38n5.10

Klassen, R. M., & Chiu, M. M. (2010). Effects on teachers' self-efficacy and job satisfaction: Teacher gender, years of experience, and job stress. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 102*(3), 741-756. doi: 10.1037/a0019237

Laerd Statistics. (2013). *One-way ANOVA in SPSS Statistics*. Lund Research Ltd. Retrieved from https://statistics.laerd.com

Lane, K. L., Oakes, W. P., Jenkins, A., Menzies, H. M., & Kalberg, J. R. (2014). Identifying students for secondary and tertiary prevention efforts: How do we determine which students have tier 2 or tier 3 needs? *Preventing School Failure, 58*(3), 167-177. doi: 10.1080/1045988X.2014.895573

Lane, K. L., Oakes, W. P., & Magill, L, (2014). Primary prevention efforts: How do we implement and monitor the tier 1 component of our comprehensive integrated, three-tiered (CI3T) model? *Preventing School Failure, 58*(3), 143-158. doi: 10.1080/1045988X.2014.893978

Lane, K., Kalberg, J., Bruhn, A., Driscoll, S., Wehby, J., & Elliott, S. (2009). Assessing social validity of school-wide positive behavior support plans: Evidence for the reliability and structure of the Primary Intervention Rating Scale. *School Psychology Review, 38,* 135-144. (EJ833838)

Larsen, S. R., Steele, M. M., & Sailor, W. (2006). The relationship of school-wide positive behavior support to academic achievement in an urban middle school. *Psychology Review*. doi: 10.1002/pits.20177

Loeb, S., Kalogrides, D., & Horng, E. (2010). Principal preferences and the uneven distribution of principals across schools. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 32(2), 205-229. doi: 10.3102/0162373710369833

Losen, D. J., & Skiba, R. J. (2010). *Suspended education: Urban middle schools in crisis*. Retrieved from https://www.civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/

Marshall, M. (2015). *Discipline, PBIS, and Behaviorism.* Discipline Without Stress. Retrieved from https://withoutstress.com/discipline-pbis-and-behaviorism/

Martin, D. C. (2013). Teacher perceptions and satisfaction with PBIS in a southern Georgia school district. *Electronic Theses and Dissertations.* Retrieved from http://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/etd

Marzano, R. (2003). *Classroom management that works: Research based strategies for every teacher.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Matthews, S., McIntosh, K., Frank, J., & May, S. L. (2013). Critical features predicting sustained implementation of school-wide positive behavioral interventions and supports. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 16*(3). doi: 10.1177/1098300713484065

McArdle, L. (2011). High school teacher attitudes toward implementing positive behavior support systems. Loyola University Chicago. (Doctoral dissertation). ProQuest Dissertations. (UMI No. 3473313)

McDonald, T. (2010). Positive learning framework: Creating learning environments in which all children thrive. *Reclaiming Children and Youth, 19*(2), 16-20. (EJ895346)

McIntosh, K., Predy, L. K., Upreti, G., Hume, A. E., & Turri, M. C. (2013). Perceptions of contextual features related to implementation and sustainability of school-wide positive behavior support. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 1*, 1-13. doi: 10.1777/1098300712470723

McLeod, S. A. (2014). Skinner - Operant Conditioning. Retrieved from http://www.simplypsychology.org

Meador, D. (2017a). *5 tips for writing meaningful policy and procedures for schools.* ThoughtCo. Retrieved from https://www.thoughtco.com

Meador, D. (2017b). *The ultimate teacher's guide to discipline referrals.* ThoughtCo. Retrieved from https://www.thoughtco.com

Meador, D. (2017c). *What makes a school administrator an effective leader?* ThoughtCo. Retrieved from https://www.thoughtco.com

Mendez-Morse, S. (1993). Vision, leadership, and change. *Issues…About Change, 2*(3). Austin, TX: Southeast Educational Development Laboratory. Retrieved from http://www.sedl.org/about/

Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation.* San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons.

Meyer, B., Frys, S., & Augustyn, J. (2013). *Expanding PBIS into the community: National PBIS leadership forum*. Illinois PBIS Network. Retrieved from http://www.pbis.org

Milner IV, H. R., & Tenores, F. B. (2010). Classroom management in diverse classrooms. *Urban Education, 45*(5), 560-603. doi:10.1177/0042085910377290

Miramontes, N. Y., Marchant, M., Heath, M. A., & Fischer, L. (2011). Social validity of a Positive Behavior Interventions and Support model. *Education and Treatment of Children, 34*(4), 445-468. doi: 10.1353/etc.2011.0032

Mishel, L. (2012). The compensation question: Are public school teachers underpaid? Analysis and opinion. *Economic Policy Institute,* 6. (ED537327)

Mongan, P., & Walker, R. (2012). The road to hell is paved with good intentions: A historical, theoretical, and legal analysis of zero-tolerance weapons policies in American schools. *Preventing School Failure, 56*, 232-240. doi: 10.1080/1045988.2011.654366

Morrissey, K., Bohanon, H., & Fenning, P. (2010). Positive behavior support: Teaching and acknowledging expected behaviors in an urban high school. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, *42*(5) 26-35. doi: 10.1177/004005991004200503

Morrison, G. M., Anthony, S., Storino, M., & Dillon, C. (2001). An examination of the disciplinary histories and the individual and educational characteristics of students who participate in an in-school suspension program. *Education and Treatment of Children, 24,* 276-293. (EJ643026)

Musandu, N. (2013). *How to write actionable policy recommendations.* Research to Action. Retrieved from http://www.researchtoaction.org

Muscott, H., Mann. E., & LeBrun, M. (2008). Positive behavioral interventions and supports in New Hampshire: Effects of large-scale implementation of school-wide positive behavior support on student discipline and academic achievement. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 190-205. doi:10.1177/1098300708316258

Muscott, H. S., Szczesiul, S., Berk, B., Staub, K., Hoover, J., & Perry-Chisholm, P. (2008). Creating home-school partnerships by engaging families in schoolwide positive behavior supports. *Teaching Exceptional Children, 40*(6), 6-14. doi: 10.1177/004005990804000601

National Assessment of Educational Progress. (2007). *The nation's report card: Reading assessments*. Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pdf/main2007

National Association of School Psychologists. (2001). *Zero tolerance and alternative strategies: A fact sheet for educators and policymakers*. Retrieved from http://www.nasponline.org

National Center for Education Statistics. (2009). *Why does attendance matter?* Every school day counts: The forum guide to collecting and using attendance data. Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov

National Institutes of Health (NIH), (2008). Office of Extramural Research, Protecting Human Research Participants tutorial (Updated 2011). Retrieved from phrp.nihtraining.com/index.php

Neighborhood Scout. (2015). *Crime rates for Sumter, SC.* Retrieved from www.neighborhoodscout.com/sc/sumter/crime/

Noltemeyer, A. L., Ward, R. M., & Mcloughlin, C. (2015). Relationship between school suspension and students outcomes: A meta-analysis. *School Psychology Review, 44*(2), 224-240. doi: 10.17105/spr-14-0008.1

Northeast Foundation for Children, Inc. (2009). *PBIS and the responsive classroom approach.* Retrieved from https://www.responsiveclassroom.org

Omojola, S. (2013). It's time to fix school disciple practices and policies. *Ed Source: Highlighting Strategies for Student Success.* Retrieved from http://edsource.org

OSEP Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports. (2016). *Effective schoolwide interventions*. Retrieved from http://www.pbis.org/

Palumbo, A., & Sanacore, J. (2009). Helping struggling middle school literacy learners achieve success. *Clearing House, 82*(6), 275-280. doi: 10.3200/TCHS.82.6.275-280

Patterson, S. S. (2013). *The impact of Positive Behavior Intervention Support on academic achievement.* (Doctoral Dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest (UMI No. 3601279)

PowerSchool. (2016). Pearson Education, Inc. Retrieved from https://powerschool.sumterschools.net/admin/home.html

Reglin, G., Akpo-Sanni, J., & Losike-Sedimo, N. (2012). The effect of a professional development classroom management model on at-risk elementary students' misbehaviors. *Education*, *133*(1), 3-18. (EJ996967)

Reinke, W. M., Herman, K. C., & Stormont, M. (2013). Classroom-level positive behavior supports in schools implementing SW-PBIS: Identifying areas for enhancement. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 15*(1), 39-50. doi:10.1177/1098300712459079

Reinke, W.M., Stormont, M., Herman, K.C., Puri, R., & Goel, N. (2011). Supporting children's mental health in schools: Teacher perceptions of needs, roles, and barriers. *School Psychology Quarterly, 26,* 1-13. doi: 10.1037/a0022714

Richards, M. G., Aguilera, E., Murakami, E. T., & Weiland, C. A. (2014). Inclusive practices in large urban inner-city schools: School principal involvement in positive behavior intervention programs. *National Forum of Educational Administration and Supervision Journal, 32*(4).

Safran, S. (2006). Using the Effective Behavior Supports Survey to guide development of schoolwide positive behavior support. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 8,* 3-9. doi: 10.1177/10983007060080010201

Samerson, J. S. (2010). *Middle school discipline: Its effects and the perceived impacts of alternative intervention programs.* (Doctoral Dissertation). Retrieved from ERIC. (UMI No. 3405004).

Scott, J. S., White, R., Algozzine, B., & Algozzine, K. (2009). Effects of Positive Unified Behavior Support on instruction. *International Journal of School Disaffection, 6*(2), 41-48. (EJ853217)

Scott, T. M., & Barrett, S. B. (2004). Using staff and student time engaged in disciplinary procedures to evaluate the impact of school-wide PBS. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 6(1), 21-27. doi: 10.1177/10983007040060010401

Simonsen, B., MacSuga-Gage, A. S., Briere, D. E., Freeman, J., Myers, D. Scott, T.M., & Sugai, G. (2013). Multitiered support framework for teachers; classroom-management practices: Overview and case study of building the triangle for teachers. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 16*(3). doi: 10.1177/1098300713484062

Skiba, R. J., Chung, C., Trachok, M., Baker, T. L., Sheya, A., & Hughes, R. L. (2014). Parsing disciplinary disproportionality: Contributions of infraction, student, and school characteristics to out-of-school suspension and expulsion. *American Educational Research Journal*, *51*(4), 640-670. doi: 10.3102/0002831214541670

Skiba, R., Reynolds, C. R., Graham, S., Sheras, P., Conoley, J. C., & Garcia-Vasquez, E. (2008). Are zero tolerance policies effective in schools: An evidentiary review and recommendations. *American Psychologist, 63*(9), 852-862. doi:10.1037/0003-066X.63.9.852

South Carolina Department of Education. (2014). ESEA Waiver. Retrieved from http://ed.sc.gov

Spencer, J. (2013). *Effect of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports on school-wide discipline in a Title I intermediate school.* (Doctoral Dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest. (UMI No. 3603629)

Sprague, J., Colvin, G., & Irvin, L. (1995). *Oregon School Safety Survey (OSSS).* Institute on Violence and Destructive Behavior. University of Oregon, Eugene.

Sprick, R. (2009). Doing discipline differently. *Principal Leadership, 9*(5), 18-22.

Statistics how to: Statistics for the rest of us! (2017). Retrieved from http://www.statisticshowto.com/welchs-anova/

Stetler, C. B., Legro, M. W., Wallace, C. M., Bowman, C., Guihan, M., Hagedorn, H., Kimmel, B., Sharp, N. D., & Smith, J. L. (2006). The role of formative evaluation in implementation research and the QUERI experience. *Journal of General Internal Medicine, 21*(2), 1-8. doi:10.1111/j.1525-1497.2006.00355.x

Stewart, L. (2010). *At-Risk indicators: The impact on school success*. (Doctoral Dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest (UMI No. 3410186)

Stormont, M., Lewis, T., Beckner, R., & Johnson, N. (2008). *Implementing positive behavior support systems in early childhood and elementary settings*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Stormont, M., Reinke, W. M., & Herman, K. C. (2011). Teachers' characteristics and ratings for evidence-based behavioral interventions. *Behavioral Disorders, 37*, 19-29. doi: 10.1177/019874291103700103

Stormont, M., Reinke, W. M., Herman, K. C., & Lemke, E. (2012). *Academic and behavior supports for at-risk students: Tier 2 interventions.* New York, NY: Guilford.

Sudman, S., & Bradburn, N. M. (1986). *Asking questions.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Sugai, G., & Horner, R. H. (2009). Responsiveness-to-intervention and school-wide positive behavior supports: Integration of multi-tiered system approaches. *Exceptionality, 17*, 223-237. doi: 10.1080/09362830903235375

Sugai, G., Horner, R. H., Dunlap, G., Hieneman, M., Lewis, T. J., & Nelson, C. M. (2000). Applying positive behavior supports and functional behavioral assessment in schools. *Journal of Positive Behavior Intervention, 2*, 131-143. doi: 10.1177/109830070000200302

Sugai, G., Horner, R., & Lewis, T. (2009). *School-wide positive behavior support implementers' blueprint and self-assessment*. Eugene, OR: OSEP TA-Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

Sugai, G., Horner, R. H., & Todd, A. (2009). PBIS Self-Assessment Survey (version 3.0). *Educational and Community Supports.* University of Oregon. Retrieved from http://www.pbis.org

Swain-Bradway, J., Swoszowski, N. C., Boden, L. J., & Sprague, J. R. (2013). Voices from the field: Stakeholder perspectives on PBIS implementation in alternative educational settings. *Education and Treatment of Children, 36*(3), 31-46. Retrieved from www.pbis.org

Tabachnick, B. G., & Fidell, L. S. (2001). *Using Multivariate Statistics* (4th Ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Theriot, M.T., Craun , S.W., & Dupper, D.R. (2010). Multilevel evaluation of factors predicting school exclusion among middle and high school students. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *32*(1), 13-19. doi: 10.1016/j.childyouth.2009.06.009

Thorndike, E. L. (1905). *The elements of psychology*. New York: A. G. Seiler.

Triola, M. F. (2012). *Elementary Statistics* (Custom ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Learning Solutions.

Trochim, W. M. K. (2006). Descriptive Statistics. *Research Methods Knowledge Base.* Retrieved from http://www.socialresearchmethods.net

U.S. Department of Education. (2010). *Free appropriate public education for students with disabilities: Requirements under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.* Retrieved from http://www2.ed.gov

U.S. Department of Education. (2014). *Guiding principles: A resource guide for improving school climate and discipline*. Retrieved from http://www2.ed.gov

U.S. Department of Education. (n.d.). *No child left behind: Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).* Retrieved from http://www2.ed.gov

Upreti, G., Liaupsin, C., & Koonce, D. (2010). Stakeholder utility: Perspectives on school-wide data for measurement, feedback, and evaluation. *Education and Treatment Of Children*, *33*(4), 497-511. doi: 10.1353/etc.2010.0001

Way, S. (2011). School discipline and disruptive classroom behavior: The moderating effects of student perceptions. *Sociological Quarterly, 52*(3), 346-375. doi: 10.1111/j.1533-8525.2011.01210.x

Wong, H. K., & Wong, R. T. (2005). *How to be an effective teacher: The first days of school.* Mountain View, CA: Harry Wong Publications.

Appendix A: The Project

Implementing Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports

A Policy Recommendation White Paper

Gequana Thomas

Walden University

Table of Contents

Introduction of the Local Problem

Middle School A is located in a school district in a southern state with a student population of approximately 700 students and is seeking to reverse the issue it has with discipline. Despite the implementation of PBIS in 2011, office discipline referrals (ODRs) to administrators for discipline were increasing. Middle School A experienced negative results with student discipline and a lack of teacher buy-in from the PBIS program. From 2011 until the end of that school year in 2012, there were 1,385 ODRs written by staff members at Middle School A. From those referrals, there were 731 assignments to in-school suspension (ISS) and 234 assignments in out-of-school suspension (OSS). There were also 33 students who were removed from the normal school environment and placed in an alternative setting, and four students who were expelled from school. During the 2012-2013 school year, the ODRs written by teachers increased by 41%; which resulted in a 16% increase of students being assigned to in-school suspension (ISS) and a 79% increase of students being placed in OSS. During that year, there was also a 45% increase of students placed in an alternative school setting and a 75% increase of students expelled from school. During the 2013-2014 school year, ODRs increased by 9%, students placed in ISS increased by 10%, and OSS increased by 32%. However, there was an 8% decrease in students removed from their normal school setting and placed in an alternative setting, and a 57% decrease of students that were expelled from school.

PBIS was designed to meet the behavior concerns within the school; but, due to the negative experience with PBIS at Middle School A, a lack of teacher buy-in has

resulted. Consequently, the PBIS program was discarded. Another middle school (Middle School B) in the same district has had positive outcomes from their implementation of PBIS, and research was needed to determine what this school was doing differently that may be helpful to Middle School A.

Survey research was conducted to establish the tendency of responses from teachers to compare the state of the PBIS program at Middle School A and Middle School B, in order to improve the PBIS program at Middle School A. The findings of this research suggest there are differences between the PBIS program at Middle School A and Middle School B that are attributable to factors other than chance (School-Wide $F(1, 42) = 14.069$; Non-Classroom $F(1, 37) = 10.158$; Classroom $F(1, 33.067) = 21.420$; Individual Student $F(1, 36) = 6.564$). Therefore, Middle School A could potentially benefit from focusing on the areas of the program that are in need of improvement and defining the areas of strength. The policy recommendation focuses on utilizing data analysis to identify elements of PBIS that are in place or not in place at Middle School A.

Method

Research Questions

Middle School A implemented PBIS but experienced negative results and a lack of teacher buy-in. Middle School B, a similar school in the same district, experienced positive results with their PBIS program. A plan was needed to enhance the effectiveness of the PBIS program and gain teacher buy-in at Middle School A. The improvement of the PBIS program at Middle School A is an important component to

increasing instructional time and academic achievement for students. This policy recommendation was informed by the findings from the following research questions:

1. What are the significant differences in the teachers' overall assessments of the PBIS program's current status and priority for improvement at Middle School A and Middle School B, respectively, in a southern school district as measured by the PBIS Self-Assessment Survey?
2. What are the significant differences in the teacher assessment scores regarding the current status of PBIS School-Wide Systems among teachers at Middle School A and Middle School B?
3. What are the significant differences in the teacher assessments scores regarding the current status of PBIS Non-Classroom Setting Systems among teachers at Middle School A and Middle School B?
4. What are the significant differences in the teacher assessments scores regarding the current status of PBIS Classroom Systems among teachers at Middle School A and Middle School B?
5. What are the significant differences in the teacher assessments scores regarding the current status of PBIS Individual Student Systems among teachers at Middle School A and Middle School B?

A cross-sectional survey design was used to gather information regarding the research questions among teachers in both schools. The survey research was conducted to determine what Middle School B was doing differently with their PBIS program, in order to improve the program at Middle School A.

Data Collection

This policy recommendation, which derived directly from the problem and emerged from the findings of the survey research, is intended to become an implementation plan for the PBIS program at Middle School A that will create school-wide consistency and be the structure needed to improve the program. The study used survey data from teachers at both middle schools using the PBIS Self-Assessment Survey (SAS) to determine the current status of PBIS implementation. PBIS is comprised of four different behavior systems, and each survey question related to one of the PBIS systems: School-Wide discipline, Non-Classroom management, Classroom management, and Individual Students engaging in chronic behaviors. Results from the SAS, in combination with current literature and the implementation processes of other schools, were used in the development of this policy recommendation to outline how PBIS may be successfully implemented at Middle School A.

Analysis and Results

The data were analyzed using the question summaries of the overall responses from each school for each system of PBIS. The question summary data included a tally of the individual responses for each of the possible choices for the entire survey. Using the tally of all of the responses, percentages were calculated for each of the four behavior systems: the School-Wide System, the Non-Classroom Setting System, the Classroom Setting System, and the Individual Student System. The counts and percentages were used to answer the research questions.

RQ1 for Middle School A. To answer Research Question 1, the data from the collected surveys were descriptively analyzed using the directions from the survey itself. Teachers from Middle School A reported that 82% of the items in the School-Wide System and 84% of the items in the Non-Classroom Setting System are *partially in place* or *in place* with their PBIS program. In the Classroom Setting, teachers felt as though the majority of the items within the system are *in place*, and less than 4% are *not in place*. With the Individual Student System, teachers reported that a combined 61% of the items are *partially in place*, or *not in place*. For each of the systems of PBIS, teachers felt that improvements to each of the systems are of high priority. Teachers at Middle School A reported that most of the elements of the PBIS systems are ready or operational, while only a fraction of the components of the systems are not. Although teachers described the PBIS systems as *in place* or *partially in place*, they believe much improvement is needed to have a successful program. For example, the respondents indicated that procedures are in place to address emergency/dangerous situations. However, respondents indicated that problem behaviors are not clearly defined and consequences for problem behaviors are not clearly defined as well. Improving PBIS strategies in each of the four behavior systems of the school are important to decrease disruptions, increase instructional time, and improve student academic outcomes.

Statistical means were calculated to give a score for each system of PBIS using a Likert-type scale (1 = *not in place*, 2 = *partially in place*, and 3 = *in place*). According to the survey respondents, the School-Wide System of PBIS at Middle

School A had a mean of 2.3835 (*SD* = .353). The participants reported this system of PBIS as *partially in place* at Middle School A, since the mean is close to the assigned value of *2*. The Non-Classroom Setting System had a mean of 2.4195 (*SD* = .369). The mean indicates the Non-Classroom Setting System is *partially in place,* as the average is closer, mathematically, to the rating for *partially in place.* The Classroom System consists of instructional settings where teachers supervise and teach groups of students. The Classroom System of PBIS at Middle School A had a mean of 2.5989 (*SD* = .263). The mean indicates the teachers felt the Classroom System was *in place,* as the mean score is close to the rating of *3* for *in place*, at Middle School A. Much like the School-Wide and Non-Classroom Setting Systems, the mean indicate teachers feel most of the items for this system from the survey are *in place*. The Individual Student System had a mean of 2.1103 (*SD* = .567). The participates felt the Individual Student System of PBIS was *partially in place*, as the mean is close to the rating of *2* for *partially in place*. Statistically, the items that are included in the School-Wide, Non-Classroom, and Individual Student Systems are somewhat working in the school, and improvements can be made to increase the effectiveness of the systems. On the other hand, the Classroom System is working in the school; however, improvements can be made to the items in this system as well. The strengths and weaknesses of each system, as well as recommendations for improvements, are detailed in a later section.

RQ1 for Middle School B. According to the Self-Assessment Survey, teachers at Middle School B reported that the majority of the items included in each of the systems of PBIS are *partially in place*. Teachers from Middle School B reported that

35% of the items in the School-Wide System, 32% in the Non-Classroom System, and 23% in the Classroom System are *not in place* with their PBIS program. In each of these systems, teachers felt as though the majority of the items within the system are *partially in place*. With the Individual Student System, teachers reported that 53% of the items are *not in place*. For each of the systems of PBIS, teachers felt there was a high priority level of improvement. Teachers at Middle School B reported that most of the elements of the PBIS systems are somewhat working in the school. However, they also reported that the Individual Student System is not working at all. Although teachers described the PBIS systems as *partially in place*, they believe much improvement is needed to have a successful program.

Using the same Likert-type scale, Middle School B's School-Wide System of PBIS had a mean of 1.1607 (*SD* = 0.482) as opposed to the mean of 2.3835 at Middle School A. These results indicate teachers feel the School-Wide System is close to being *partially in place*. As indicated, the number of items scored *partially in place* and *not in place* by teachers indicates many weaknesses within this system. The Non-Classroom Setting System had a mean of 1.9945 (*SD* = .081). Teachers indicated most of the components of this system are *partially in place,* as the mean is close to the rating of *2* for *partially in place*. The Classroom System of PBIS had mean of 2.0562 (*SD* = .45). As with the School-Wide and Non-Classroom Systems, the Classroom System is *partially in place*, suggesting the need for some improvement. The Individual Student System at Middle School B had a mean of 1.5952 (*SD* = .645). The mean indicates this system is not supported by the PBIS program at Middle School B and is need of much

improvement. Statistically, the School-Wide, Non-Classroom, and Individual Student Systems are somewhat working in the school, while the Classroom System is not working in the school at all. Prior to this research, Middle School B's PBIS program was known as the ideal program in the district. The results indicated Middle School A's program is more in place than Middle School B. Teachers at Middle School B have had more experience with PBIS and teachers at Middle School A could be unfamiliar as to what PBIS actually looks like. Knowing what is working with the PBIS program at Middle School B is still essential for improving the program at Middle School A. The strengths and weaknesses of each system are detailed in a later section.

RQ2-RQ5. To answer Research Questions 2 through 5, an ANOVA was conducted with the schools as the between subjects factor and the responses to the questions regarding the particular system of PBIS as the within subjects factor. The ANOVA compared the means between both groups, teachers at Middle School A and teachers at Middle School B, to determine if there were any significant differences between the means (Explorable, 2015; Triola, 2012). The ANOVA, however, did not indicate what those differences are, if any. For the School-Wide System of PBIS, Middle School A had an estimated mean of 2.4 (SD = 0.35), while Middle School B's estimated mean is 1.9 (SD = 0.5). These results are comparable to the descriptive results showing both schools' systems as *partially in place*. The implementation of PBIS is statistically significantly different for Middle School A and Middle School B, $F(1, 42) = 14.069$, $p = .001$. The effect size was calculated at .251 using the partial eta squared. The between groups mean square (MS = 2.587) measured the interaction

between the two groups of teacher responses, while the within groups mean square (MS = .184) measured the interaction within the individual teacher responses. The F ratio (F = 14.069) is the ratio of the two groups-between groups mean square divided by within groups mean square. The data showed there are differences between the School-Wide Systems of the two schools. The differences are detailed in a later section.

For the Non-Classroom System of PBIS Middle School A had an estimated mean of 2.4 (*SD* = 0.39), while Middle School B's estimated mean is 2.0 (*SD* = 0.5). These results are also comparable to the descriptive results showing both schools' systems as *partially in place*. The implementation of PBIS is statistically significantly different for Middle School A and Middle School B, $F(1, 37) = 10.158$, $p = .003$. The effect size was calculated at .201 using the partial eta squared. The between groups mean square (*MS* = 2.070) measured the interaction between the two groups of teacher responses, while the within groups mean square (*MS* = .204) measured the interaction within the individual teacher responses. The *F* ratio (*F* = 10.158) is the ratio of the two groups-between groups mean square divided by within groups mean square. The results showed there were differences between the Non-Classroom Setting Systems of the two schools. These differences are detailed in a later section.

For the Classroom System of PBIS Middle School A had an estimated mean of 2.6 (*SD* = 0.26), while Middle School B's estimated mean is 2.1 (*SD* = 0.45). These results are comparable to the descriptive results showing Middle School A as close to *in place* and Middle School B as *partially in place*. The implementation of PBIS is statistically significantly different for Middle School A and Middle School B, Welch

$F(1, 33.067) = 21.420$, $p < .0005$. Comparisons are made between the Classroom Setting Systems of the two schools in a later section.

For the Individual Student System of PBIS Middle School A had an estimated mean of 2.11 (*SD* = .56), while Middle School B's estimated mean is 1.65 (*SD* = .57). These results are also comparable to the descriptive results showing Middle School A's system as *partially in place*, while Middle School B's system is close to being *partially in place*. The implementation of PBIS is statistically significantly different for Middle School A and Middle School B, $F(1, 36) = 6.564$, $p = .015$. The effect size was calculated at .154 using the partial eta squared. The between groups mean square (*MS* = 2.097) measured the interaction between the two groups of teacher responses, while the within groups mean square (*MS* = .319) measured the interaction within the individual teacher responses. The *F* ratio (*F* = 6.564) is the ratio of the two groups-between groups mean square divided by within groups mean square. The data indicated there are differences in the Individual Student Systems of both schools. These are detailed in a later section.

Explanation of the Results

With the survey summary percentages, strengths and weaknesses were identified. These strengths and weaknesses were then compared to one another to identify changes needed to be made at Middle School A to improve PBIS.

Descriptive Results from Middle School A. In the School-Wide System, procedures are *in place* to address emergency/dangerous situations, expected student behaviors are taught directly, a small number of positively and clearly stated

expectations or rules are defined, and consequences for problem behaviors are defined clearly. These are several strengths for the PBIS program because most teachers indicated these items were *in place*. However, results indicate that there are no booster training activities for students that are developed and conducted based on the school data; there is no budget for teaching students, on-going rewards, and annual staff planning; there is no team that existed for behavior support planning and problem solving; and patterns of problem behavior are not reported for active decision-making. Also, Middle School A does not have an established leadership team. These items are considered weaknesses of the School-Wide System because most teachers indicated they were *not in place*.

According to the data, the school-wide expected student behaviors are taught in nonclassroom settings, the scheduling of student movement ensures appropriate numbers of students in nonclassroom settings, and all staff are involved in the management of nonclassroom settings. Teachers also reported that physical and architectural features are modified to limit unsupervised areas, unclear traffic patterns, and inappropriate access to the school grounds. Each of these items are strengths of the Non-Classroom System. There are some items, however, that could be considered weaknesses within the PBIS program. For the Non-Classroom Setting System, Middle School A does not have rewards that exist for meeting expectations in the nonclassroom setting for students, and the school does not implement regular opportunities for staff to develop and improve their active practices for data. Each of these elements are areas in

need of improvement at Middle School A because most teachers indicated these items were *not in place.*

From the data collected, expected student behavior and routines are stated positively and defined clearly, problem behaviors are defined clearly, and expected student behavior and routines are taught directly in the classroom at Middle School A. Students are not experiencing high rates of academic success, problem behavior do not receive consistent consequences, and teachers do not have regular access to opportunities to receive assistance and recommendations, such as coaching or observations; which are weaknesses in the Classroom System of PBIS because the majority of the teachers indicated these items are *partially in place*.

According to teachers' assessments, there is a simple process for teachers to request assistance and significant family and/or community members are involved with the Individual Student System at Middle School A. Efforts to improve this system should include implementing formal opportunities for families to receive training on behavior support and positive parenting strategies, responding promptly to students who present chronic behavior problems, and monitoring the behavior students to provide feedback to the behavior support team.

Descriptive Results from Middle School B. In the School-Wide System, Middle School B positively and clearly states student expectations and rules; has procedures in place to address emergency and dangerous situations; reports the school climate, discipline level, and student behavior to the district; and has formal strategies for informing families about expected student behaviors at school. Middle School B

also has an established leadership team for PBIS. These components are strengths of the School-Wide System at Middle School B because teachers revealed they are *in place*. Teachers also revealed that student behaviors are not rewarded regularly, there is no option for classroom instruction to continue when problem behavior occurs, and the support team does not have a budget for PBIS. Each of these components are weaknesses of the program at Middle School B.

In the Non-Classroom Setting System, teachers reported that physical and architectural features are modified to limit unsupervised areas; unclear traffic patterns; and inappropriate access to the school grounds and the scheduling of student movement ensures appropriate numbers of students in nonclassroom settings. Each of these items are strengths of the Non-Classroom System at Middle School B. There are some items, however, that could be considered weaknesses within the PBIS program. Teachers reported that rewards do not exist for meeting expected behavior, school-wide expected behaviors are not taught in nonclassroom settings, and the status of student behavior are not evaluated from the data. These components were scored *partially in place* or *not in place* by most of the teachers at Middle School B.

From the data collected, expected student behavior and routines are stated positively and defined clearly, expected student behavior and routines are taught directly in the classroom at Middle School B, instruction and curriculum materials are matched to the students' ability, and teachers have regular access to assistance and recommendations. Students are not experiencing high rates of academic success, problem behavior do not receive consistent consequences, procedures for expected

behaviors are not consistent with the school-wide procedures, and there are no classroom based options for instruction to continue when problem behavior occurs. These are considered weaknesses in the Classroom System of PBIS because the majority of the teachers indicated these items are *partially in place* or *not in place*.

According to teachers' assessments at Middle School B, there is a simple process for teachers to request assistance and the support team includes an individual skilled at conducting functional behavioral assessments in the Individual Student System at Middle School B. According to the data, this system of PBIS is not supported because there are many weaknesses. Efforts to improve this system should include implementing formal opportunities for families to receive training on behavior support and positive parenting strategies and implementing opportunities for community involvement when appropriate. Improvements to this system should also include responding promptly to students who present chronic behavior problems, and monitoring the behavior students to provide feedback to the behavior support team.

ANOVA results. According to the results of the ANOVA, there are significant differences in the mean scores of each of the four systems of PBIS between both schools. The results indicate the teachers at Middle School A scored their School-Wide System, Non-Classroom System, Classroom System, and Individual Student System of PBIS higher than the teachers at Middle School B, which opposes the idea of Middle School B having the model PBIS program.

Review of Literature

Teachers and principals must use effective measures to maintain order and provide safety in today's schools. There is no evidence that frequent suspensions improve school safety or student behavior; this approach to discipline simply removes misbehaving students from their school environment (Skiba et al., 2008). School systems that implement widespread school-wide practices that are consistent, positive, and developmentally appropriate are much more likely to have lower suspension rates than schools without those practices. Schools that implement such policies are also much more likely to improve the academic achievements of their students' (Iselin, 2010).

Implementation of PBIS

Many districts and schools are implementing tiered interventions, such as PBIS, to prevent and address misbehavior (OSEP Technical Assistance Center, 2016). The best place to begin when considering PBIS is to examine the school's mission, vision, and values. Establishing PBIS does not equate to abandoning what works in the school, but rather embedding successful initiatives along with establishing structures and supporting annual plans (Hubbuch & Stucker, 2015).

The first step in setting up a PBIS school-wide system is to establish a leadership team. Practitioners regard effective teaming, administrative support, and staff buy-in as the most important elements of successful PBIS implementation (Lane, Oakes, & Magill, 2014; McIntosh, Predy, Upreti, Hume, & Turri, 2013). According to my research, Middle School B has an established leadership team and Middle School A

does not. Middle School A also lacks the presence of an individual involved with PBIS that is skilled at conducting functional behavioral assessments, which correlates with two of the weakness of the PBIS Individual Student System. The leadership team should be comprised of school administrators; classified, special education, and regular education teachers; and even parents (OSEP Technical Assistance Center, 2016). Once a leadership team is established, the implementation of the PBIS plan within my policy recommendation can take place.

Successful implementation of PBIS relies on support from the administration. Weaknesses in Middle School A's Non-Classroom and Classroom Systems are the lack of regular opportunities for developing and improving active supervision skills with the staff and regular opportunities for teachers to gain assistance and recommendations from administration in the form of coaching, observations, and instruction. Principals should be openly committed to PBIS, by engaging in implementation plans and providing leadership, resources, and commitment to coaching the faculty and staff (Lane et al., 2014). In order for staff members to buy-in, they need to see the principals as active participants. Also, staff members need to be secure in the process of implementing a systems change (Baker & Ryan, 2014). Middle School A has administrative support, however, staff support needs to be established. Once a leadership team is in place, a plan to gain staff support can be implemented. The leadership team must pay close attention to ensuring the procedures that are put in to place are socially valid to sustain staff buy-in (Burns et al., 2013). A few suggestions to gain staff support could be involving the staff in the decision making process,

communicating with the staff about the changes to be made, and providing process training and education in the form of professional development (OSEP Technical Assistance Center, 2016). Greene (2016) suggested validating the need for improvement by sharing data, asking teachers to be the experts, and building a cadre of teacher leaders to secure teacher buy-in.

Strengthening the implementation plan is another important step in strengthening PBIS. According to the PBIS OSEP Technical Assistance Center, PBIS programs should focus on three to five behavioral expectations that are positively stated and easy to remember. These expectations should apply to all students, no matter where they are within the school (Hubbuch & Stucker, 2015; Simonsen et al., 2013). A matrix should be created to display these expectations, along with what the expectations looks like, sound like, and feel like in all areas. Consistency from class to class and adult to adult is important (OSEP Technical Assistance Center, 2016). Middle School A has already established a set of expectations and created a matrix. Weaknesses of the Classroom and Non-Classroom Systems of PBIS are that problem behaviors do not receive consistent consequences and booster training activities for students are not developed, modified, and conducted on a consistent basis. My policy recommendation is focused around those expectations that are already established and includes a plan to determine how teachers will teach behavioral expectations and routines to students in and around the school.

Behavior Data Collection

Data systems for behavior are important. Similar to monitoring data for academic achievement purposes, it is important to develop systems to collect and analyze data for behavior trends (Hubbuch & Stucker, 2015). The collaborative use of data is the basis for any successful school improvement initiative (Love, 2009).

Results of the Self-Assessment Survey indicate that behavior is not monitored, and feedback is not provided regularly to the staff at Middle School A. Also, the status of student behavior and management practices are not evaluated from data, and the patterns of student problem behavior are not reported to teams and faculty for active decision making on a regular basis. Each of the aforementioned statements are weaknesses in the School-Wide, Non-Classroom, and Individual Student Systems. Therefore, the last important step for setting up a school-wide PBIS program is to strengthen policies for collecting ODR data, and transmitting the data to the staff. Many teachers do not use, and may not even know about, the function within the system to create a classroom referral (PowerSchool, 2016). The district where Middle School A is located uses to PowerSchool for attendance, grading, and discipline purposes. Teachers and staff are able to use a function within PowerSchool for ODRs. Therefore, the collection of ODR data will occur through PowerSchool. This function allows teachers to use PowerSchool to write the ODR, and it is sent directly to the administrator. Teachers reported that administrators do not respond promptly to students will behavior issues. This system allows administrators to be able to take immediate action after receiving the notification.

Coupled with the ODR data collection, there should also be a determination of teacher versus office managed behaviors. Teachers and staff should understand how adults will respond to problem behavior, and there should be a shared responsibility for taking action (Hubbuch & Stucker, 2015). A plan for deciding what behaviors warrant an office referral versus a classroom referral (OSEP Technical Assistance Center, 2016) is needed. Classroom referrals should be written when the offense can be handled by the teacher[s] themselves (Meador, 2017). Office referrals should be written when behaviors are more severe and disrupt the classroom and school environment. A student should not be sent to the office for violating a single minor offense; however, it is important to document these minor issues, as they may become major if repeated (Dahlgren, Malas, Faulk, & Lattimer, 2008).

Connection to Curriculum

Teachers tend to leave the teaching profession due to student misbehavior, and students tend to drop out because of low academic achievement. According to the results of the Self-Assessment Survey for Middle School A, teachers felt the students are not experiencing high rates of academic success. Implementation of PBIS is intended to improve the overall effectiveness of schools. Reduced problem behavior coupled with an improved school environment should have positive effects on the curriculum. With improved behavior, teachers and students can spend more time focusing on instruction. Results of a study performed by Madigan, Cross, Smolkowski, & Strycker (2016), revealed that PBIS improved student achievement in elementary, middle, and high schools. However, the link between PBIS and improved academic

achievement may have been due to the extended implementation of PBIS, allowing time for student achievement to be influenced by the increased instructional time.

Evaluations of PBIS have documented significant differences in academic achievement. PBIS changes factors that are associated with increased student achievement such as, increased time in school, more time for teaching and learning, and greater academic engagement due to decreased discipline issues. Schools that fully implement PBIS have significantly better results with academic achievement than schools that partially implement PBIS (Bazelon, 2016).

Two studies, in particular, have noted fewer discipline problems and increased academic success with PBIS. A study of over 100 schools that analyzed the effects of PBIS from 2002 to 2006 found that PBIS improved students' social skills, decreased the amount of time spent dealing with discipline problems, decreased the number of resources need to deal with discipline problems, and resulted in significantly higher test scores and academic achievement (Eber et al., 2009). Another study of 22 schools found that after 2 years of PBIS implementation, students achieved higher scores on their standardized math tests. Additionally, with the implementation of PBIS, the schools were able to recover hundreds of days of instructional time that were lost every school year due to suspensions (Muscott, Mann, & LeBrun, 2008). A district wide study in Oregon compared elementary and middle schools who had and had not implemented PBIS. The schools with PBIS had higher standardized test scores than the others (Putnam, Horner, & Algozzine, 2010). When implemented with fidelity, PBIS not only reduces discipline problems and instructional time lost due to suspensions and

expulsions, but it creates an environment conducive to learning and increases academic achievement.

Recommendation for Improving PBIS

Careful considerations of the findings, coupled with current literature and research, led to the development of several recommendations to improve PBIS at Middle School A. I recommend that Middle School A focus on the areas that were defined as weaknesses and redefine the areas of strengths to fully implement and sustain the PBIS program. There are several steps involved in setting up a PBIS program that will have a measurable effect on the school climate. According to the developers of the PBIS program a school must establish a leadership team, secure administrative and staff support, conduct a self-assessment, create an implementation plan, and establish a way to collect data to evaluate the program (OSEP Technical Assistance Center, 2016). Middle School A has secured administrative support and has an established system that is used to collect data. My study served as a self-assessment for the school. Therefore, Middle School A has to establish a leadership team, secure staff support, and create an implementation plan. The following steps will detail my recommendations in more detail.

Leadership Team

Academic achievement at Middle School A will improve substantially if negative behavior is decreased. Through collaborative inquiry, teachers work together to identify challenges, analyze data, and develop instructional approaches (Love, 2009). The same concept should be applied with discipline approaches. With collaborative

inquiry, in regards to discipline and its effect on academic achievement, teachers can share their expertise with each other to discover what is working and determine if any changes need to be made (Love, 2009). Donohoo (2013) encouraged teachers to take an active role in analyzing data and identifying challenges for schools. This collaborative inquiry process can be achieved through the development of a PBIS leadership team.

PBIS developers suggested creating a team of approximately 10 representatives. At the end of the 2016-2017 school year, Middle School A had an enrollment of 741 students in Grades 6 through 8. For a school as large as Middle School A, with approximately 750 students, I propose a team of 12 consisting of:

- Each assistant administrator (2)
- Regular and Special Education teachers (6)
  - One teacher from each grade level (core area teachers)
  - One special education teacher
  - Two non-core area teachers
- School Resource Officer (1)
- Guidance Counselor (1)
- Support Staff (2){Media Specialist, Paraprofessional, Custodian, etc.}

The leadership team should establish roles within the group; director, secretary, reporter, etc. The leadership team should use School-wide Information System (SWIS), a web-based program that graphs office discipline referral data. The program creates graphs for behavior incidents (per day, per week, per month, specific times of the day, location, and by specific students) that could be used to report data to the staff. The

leadership team is also responsible for creating lesson plans for teachers to teach the behavioral expectations associated with PBIS. This concept is explained further later.

Securing Staff Support

Greene (2016) suggested several ways to secure teacher buy-in that could be implemented in a professional development at the start of the year. Although my project is not to develop this professional development, there are a few suggestions that could make the professional development a success. One of the first suggestions is to validate the need for improvement with data and sharing a common goal. There is no better way to get the teachers on board with PBIS than to use the data to help open their eyes to the need. Teachers should know the number of suspensions, both out-of-school and in-school, the number of office discipline referrals written, and the amount of instructional time lost due to problem behaviors.

After presenting the data, in accordance with the collaborative inquiry process, teachers should take time to construct meaning and make sense of the data and engage in meaningful dialogue and reflection of the data (Greene, 2016; Love, 2009). This would provide an opportunity for teachers to reflect on their assumptions and beliefs to better interpret the data. Following their reflection, teachers, along with administrative support, should collaboratively determine a school-wide goal to achieve this year. Giving the staff a voice creates an opportunity to gain the support of the teachers (Greene, 2016).

Another suggestion made by Greene (2016) is to ask the experts. Teachers are the experts when discussing student behavior because they are involved with behavior

in the classroom every day. They should be offered the chance to give their advice to the administrative staff about what is working and what needs to be adjusted.

One last suggestion is to build a cadre of teacher leaders. A group of teachers should be chosen to serve on the leadership team. Successful leadership teams are typically made up of volunteers. Rather than appointing teachers and staff to the leadership team, teachers and staff should be invited to serve (Marzano et al., 2005). According to Love (2009), school leaders demonstrate leadership, have a moral commitment to ensuring equity, and model collaboration skill. These teachers should be empowered by the administrative staff to set goals, plan initiatives, ensure consistency, and be the voice of their colleagues. They should also plan incentives for students and teachers (Greene, 2016). In order to plan incentives for students or teachers, one must first know the types of incentives these groups would like. This task can be accomplished by surveying a group of teachers and a group of students to uncover their likes and dislikes (Fink, 2009).

Policy Implementation

According to the OSEP Technical Assistance Center, the first activity of PBIS should be the establishment of a consistent set of rules (2016). The leadership team should focus on 3 to 5 positively stated behavioral expectations and should use these expectations to create a behavior matrix that explains what those expectations look like, sound like, and feel like in all the nonclassroom areas. The behavior expectations and matrix are already in place at Middle School A; however, in order to implement them successfully, there has to be consistency from class to class and from adult to adult.

Therefore, all teachers should be provided with these expectations and the matrix. Posters of the key aspects should be posted in prominent places around the school as reminders for all students. Posters are colorful and attractive learning media that enhances the learning environment. Posters illustrate concepts and grab the attention of students (Osa & Musser, 2004). The matrix and poster that is already in place can be found in Appendix A-1 and A-2, respectively. The administrative staff should conduct a professional development for the teachers and staff to model the procedures that should be used to ensure consistency.

The next activity is to establish how the behavioral expectations will be consistently taught to the students at the beginning of the school year. Middle School A should use several days at the beginning of the school year to teach the expectations and show the students what is expected of them. The PBIS leadership team should provide the staff with lesson plans to be used to teach the expectations. Therefore, the leadership team should come together prior to the commencement of the school year to develop these plans. The lesson plans should be distributed and modeled in a professional development to ensure they are taught consistently to the students (OSEP Technical Assistance Center, 2016).

Teaching Schedule

Teachers and staff should comply with the following schedule for teaching behavior expectations (OSEP Technical Assistance Center, 2016).

- August 21 – 23 : PBIS Kick-Off Assembly

- August 21 – October 24 : Teach School-Wide/Classroom Expectations 2-3 times per week
- October 25 – March 26 : Teach School-Wide/Classroom Expectations at least once per week
- March 26 – June 7 : Teach School-Wide/Classroom Expectations as needed

Teachers and staff should reteach behavior expectations, using the same lesson plans from the beginning of the school year, after long breaks such as the Thanksgiving Break (November), Winter Break (January), and Spring Break (April). Developing a schedule would help the leadership maintain organization.

Classroom vs. Office Discipline Referrals

Student misbehaviors that result in a referral can be categorized two ways; as a classroom referral or an office referral. Classroom referrals are to be used for minor offenses and should be written when the offense can be handled by the teacher themselves (Meador, 2017). A student should not be sent to the office for a single offense or violation; however, it is important to document minor issues, as they may become major if a pattern develops. Repeated offenses should result in an office discipline referral to an administrator (Meador, 2017).

Middle School A already has a plan prepared to distinguish classroom referrals from office referrals.

Level 1	Level 2
• Out of Seat • Refusal to participate • Tardy (1st and 2nd offense) • Minor classroom disruptions	• Failure to respond to adult requests • Inappropriate use of electronic devices • Disruption of instructional process • Cheating/Plagiarism • Un-served teacher detentions

Figure 1. Classroom referrals are separated into two levels; Level 1 and Level 2 infractions.

When a student commits a Level 1 or 2 infraction, a classroom intervention should be written. A classroom intervention is a way to document troublesome behavior. Teachers should indicate on the form which infraction the student committed, and they should follow the consequences for the intervention. Interventions forms are provided to the staff by administration. The classroom intervention would serve as the consequence for the misbehavior and would also create documentation in the event the misbehavior becomes a chronic infraction with the student. Classroom intervention consequences for these behaviors are as follows:

- 1st Offense: Student Conference
- 2nd Offense: Notify Parent
- 3rd Offense: Submit classroom referral in PowerSchool
- 4th Offense: Refer to Administrator using an office referral in PowerSchool

Office referrals should follow the discipline code established by the district. All schools in the district use the same discipline code. However, the discipline code, which can be

found on the district's website, in the teacher handbook, and in the student handbook, is varied for specific school levels (i.e.; elementary, middle, and high school).

Refocus. Refocus is an early intervention strategy implemented by the district. It is included in this plan because it directly correlates with PBIS. Refocus relies on the withdrawal of attention from a student who is exhibiting negative behavior without removing the child from their academic environment. The teacher stops the student, reteaches him or her on what is expected briefly, checks for their understanding, and sends the student to work independently; all while not having to leave the classroom. All staff will be trained on the Refocus strategy by district officials at the commencement of the school year.

School-Wide Positive Program

Incentives should be used to reward appropriate behaviors that support the behavioral expectations. The data from my study indicated that neither middle school in the study has a budget for incentives; therefore, incentives need to be free or inexpensive. Established reward systems should be consistent school-wide, linked to the behavioral expectations, varied to maintain student interest, and include incentives for faculty/staff (OSEP Technical Assistance Center, 2016). The PBIS Leadership should collaborate with the teachers and staff to develop these incentives. This development process could be a session within the PBIS professional development. When developing a reward system, keep it simple. Teachers and staff are more likely to buy-in if it does not require a lot of work from them. They also like to be recognized for their hard work and dedication.

Classroom reward system. A school-wide program for labeling appropriate behaviors in the classroom should also be implemented. One such program is *Class Dojo*. *Class Dojo* creates a positive classroom culture and is an easy way to reach parents quickly. *Class Dojo* is free and works on any iOS, Android, Kindle Fire, and any computer. With *Class Dojo*, students can be awarded "dojo points" for doing what they are supposed to do in the classroom, such as being on task during an independent activity, being prepared for class, being helpful, showing respect, being responsible, etc. When students exhibit expected behaviors, they receive 1 dojo point. When students are not doing what they are supposed to, dojo points can be taken away (one at a time). Tiered awards should be established (and can vary from class to class), posted in the classroom, and communicated to students. For example, when a student reaches a certain number of points, there is a specific consequence:

- 10 points = a positive note home.
- 20 points = a free homework pass.
- 30 points = gets to eat lunch with a friend.
- 40 points = receives a special treat from the teacher

These awards serve as a suggestion and can be adjusted as the leadership team reviews discipline data periodically. The leadership team will provide professional development on how to use *Class Dojo* to the teachers and staff.

School-wide reward system. Not only should there be an implementation of a classroom reward system, there also needs to be a school-wide reward system. *Indian Bucks*, for example, can be used to reinforce the behaviors displayed in the Behavior

Matrix, and should be given to students when they show their PRIDE (behavioral expectations). All teachers and support staff can participate in this reward system. When a teacher or support staff witnesses a student displaying appropriate behaviors, they can reward the student with *Indian Bucks* and verbally reinforce to the student why they are receiving the incentive. When collected by students, *Indian Bucks* should be saved by the individual student. Students will be able to exchange the *Indian Bucks* for various reasons throughout the school year; retail store gifts, opportunities to participate in social activities, school supplies and materials, tickets to games, gift cards, etc. When a substitute is in a classroom, students can earn a different color *Indian Buck* that are worth double the value of the original *Indian Bucks*. *Indian Bucks* serve as a recommendation and can be modified as the Leadership Team sees fit. An example of what an *Indian Buck* could look like can be found in Appendix A-3.

Teachers like to be recognized for their efforts as well. Teachers, administrators, and staff can participate in the *Indian Bucks* to reward each other for their compliance with the behavioral expectations. Several websites give other examples about how to inexpensively reward the staff and students:

a. Free or Inexpensive Rewards for Students and Staff (Riffel, 2011).
    - http://www.txbehaviorsupport.org/Assets/free-or-inexpensive-rewards-for-students-and-staff.pdf
    - This article list many incentives schools can initiate that are free of cost or very inexpensive. The incentives are broken into categories by age levels and include incentives for adults.

b. PBIS Workshop: Low- or no- cost Incentives, Family & Community Involvement (Center for Community Engagement, 2013).
    - http://cce.astate.edu/pbis/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/PBIS-Low_no-cost-incentives_Family-involvement.pdf
    - This slideshow offers ideas for rewarding students of all ages and staff at no costs. The slideshow also offers low cost ideas and ideas that can be used to reward large groups of students at the same time.
c. Free or Inexpensive Rewards for School Personnel and Parents (Riffel, 2013).
    - http://behaviordoctor.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/2014rewardsv.pdf
    - This website offers ideas for rewarding students inexpensively at school and at home with their parents. The PBIS Leadership Team could publish a list of their own for parents to work with their children and their behavior at home.

The leadership team should survey teachers to gather an assessment of the types of rewards that would be appealing to them (Fink. 2009). After reviewing the survey data, a school-wide reward system for teachers can be put into place.

Meeting and Professional Development Schedule

The leadership team should plan to meet, as a team and with the other staff members for booster training, once a month (OSEP technical Assistance Center, 2016). The data from my study indicated that Middle School A does not provide regular

opportunities for the staff to improve or any booster training activities. A proposed meeting schedule can be found in the Appendix A-4. Leadership team meetings should include data review and action planning. Staff should be briefed on monthly data and action planning from leadership team during meetings as well. The staff should also give their input on the action planning for the program. A staff input form that can be used during or after staff meetings can be found in Appendix A-5.

Parental Involvement

Parental involvement is an important ingredient of the solution for the many problems in education (Fan & Chen, 2001; Hamlin & Flessa, 2016). When families are involved in the schools, students exhibit more positive attitudes and behavior. When students report feeling support from both home and school, they have more self-confidence, feel school is more important, and they tend to do better in school. There are several practices schools can use to get parents involved; recruit and organize family help and support, let families know the best ways to help students learn, and develop family leaders and include them in school decisions (OSEP Technical Assistance Center, 2016).

The results of my study indicated that Middle School A does not provide formal opportunities for families to receive PBIS training. A great opportunity to involve parents is during regular monthly Parent/Teacher Association (PTA) meetings. A section on PBIS should be added to meeting agenda to inform parents of PBIS, any changes that are being made to the program, and suggestions for the use of positive behavior interventions at home. The leadership team can also develop quarterly parent

newsletters to advise parents on PBIS. A sample parent letter that could be sent home to inform parents of PBIS can be found in Appendix A-6.

Conclusion

The strengths of the Non-Classroom, Classroom, and Individual Student Systems of PBIS at Middle School A are comparable to those of Middle School B. Although the data collected from the Self-Assessment surveys reflect Middle School A's PBIS program as *in place* and Middle School B's PBIS program as *partially in place*, the discipline data, previously reported, suggest otherwise. Middle School B has a behavior support team in place with at least one individual who is skilled at conducting functional behavioral assessments, and their teachers have regular opportunities to access assistance and recommendations in the form of observations, instruction, and coaching. These components are strengths of Middle School B's PBIS program but are not strengths of Middle School A's PBIS program; therefore, enhancements to these components were included in Middle School A's improvement plan. With this recommendation, Middle School A should see positive results in their PBIS program through a decrease in negative student discipline. Consequently, students at Middle School A should start to experience academic success.

References

Baker, B. & Ryan, C. (2014*). The PBIS team handbook: Setting expectations and building positive behavior*. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing.

Bazelon, D. L. (2016). *Fact sheet: Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) and school achievement.* Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law. Retrieved from https://www.gadoe.org

Burns, M. K., Egan, A. M., Kunkel, A. K., McComas, J., Peterson, M. M., Rahn, N. L., & Wilson, J. (2013). Training for generalizations and maintenance in RtI implementation: Front-loading for sustainability. *Learning Disabilities Research and Practice, 28*, 81-88. doi: 10.1111/ldrp.12009

Center for Community Engagement. (2013). PBIS Workshop: Low- or no- cost Incentives, Family & Community Involvement. Arkansas State University. Retrieved from http://cce.astate.edu

Dahlgren, R., Malas, B., Faulk, J., & Lattimer, M. (2008). *Time to teach! The source for classroom management.* Hayden Lake, ID: The Center for Teacher Effectiveness.

Donohoo, J. (2013). *Collaborative inquiry for educators: A facilitator's guide to school improvement.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Explorable. (2015). *ANOVA: Analysis of variance.* Retrieved from https://explorable.com/anova

Fan, X. & Chen, M. (2001). Parental involvement and students' academic achievement: A meta-analysis. *Educational Psychology Review, 13*(1). doi: 10.1023/A:1009048817385

Fink, A. (2009). *How to conduct surveys: A step-by-step guide* (4th Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Greene, J. (2016). *Four ways to ensure teacher buy-in*. Kickboard. Retrieved from https://www.kickboardforschools.com

Hamlin, D., & Flessa, J. (2016). Parental involvement initiatives: An analysis. *Educational Policy.* doi: 10.1177/0895904816673739

Hubbuch, C., & Stucker, K. (2015). Keeping it positive by design. *Principal Leadership, 16*(2), 40-44. Retrieved from https://www.chrishubbuch.com/publications/

Iselin, A. (2010). *Research on school suspension*. Center for Child and Family Policy. Retrieved from http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED540121.pdf

Lane, K. L., Oakes, W. P., & Magill, L, (2014). Primary prevention efforts: How do we implement and monitor the tier 1 component of our comprehensive integrated, three-tiered (CI3T) model? *Preventing School Failure, 58*(3), 143-158. doi: 10.1080/1045988X.2014.893978

Love, N. (2009). *Using data to improve learning for all: A collaborative inquiry approach.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Madigan, K., Cross, R. W., Smolkowski, K., & Strycker, L. A. (2016). Association between schoolwide positive behavioural interventions and supports and academic achievement: A 9-year evaluation. *Educational Research and Evaluation, 22*(7-8). doi: 10.1080/13803611.2016.1256783

McIntosh, K., Predy, L. K., Upreti, G., Hume, A. E., & Turri, M. C. (2013). Perceptions of contextual features related to implementation and sustainability of school-wide positive behavior support. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 1*, 1-13. doi: 10.1777/1098300712470723

Meador, D. (2017). *What makes a school administrator an effective leader?* ThoughtCo. Retrieved from https://thoughtco.com

Muscott, H., Mann. E., & LeBrun, M. (2008). Positive behavioral interventions and supports in New Hampshire: Effects of large-scale implementation of school-wide positive behavior support on student discipline and academic achievement. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 190-205. doi: 10.1177/1098300708316258

Osa, J. O., & Musser, L. R. (2004). The role of posters in teacher education programs. *Education Libraries,* 27(1). Retrieved from http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ983927.pdf

OSEP Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports. (2016). Effective schoolwide interventions. Retrieved from http://www.pbis.org/

PowerSchool. (2016). Pearson Education, Inc. Retrieved from https://powerschool.sumterschools.net/admin/home.html

Putnam, R. F., Horner, R. H., & Algozzine, R. (2006). Academic achievement and the implementation of School-wide Behavior Support. *PBIS Newsletter, 3*(1). Retrieved from http://www.pbis.org

Riffel, L. A. (2011). Free or inexpensive rewards for students and staff. *Behavior Doctor Seminars.* Retrieved from http://www.txbehaviorsupport.org

Riffel, L. A. (2013). Free or inexpensive rewards for school personnel and parents (5th ed.). *Behavior Doctor Seminars.* Retrieved from http://behaviordoctor.org

Simonsen, B., MacSuga-Gage, A. S., Briere, D. E., Freeman, J., Myers, D. Scott, T.M., & Sugai, G. (2013). Multitiered support framework for teachers; classroom-management practices: Overview and case study of building the triangle for teachers. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 16*(3). doi: 10.1177/1098300713484062

Skiba, R., Reynolds, C. R., Graham, S., Sheras, P., Conoley, J. C., & Garcia-Vasquez, E. (2008). Are zero tolerance policies effective in schools: An evidentiary review and recommendations. *American Psychologist, 63*(9), 852-862. doi:10.1037/0003-066X.63.9.852

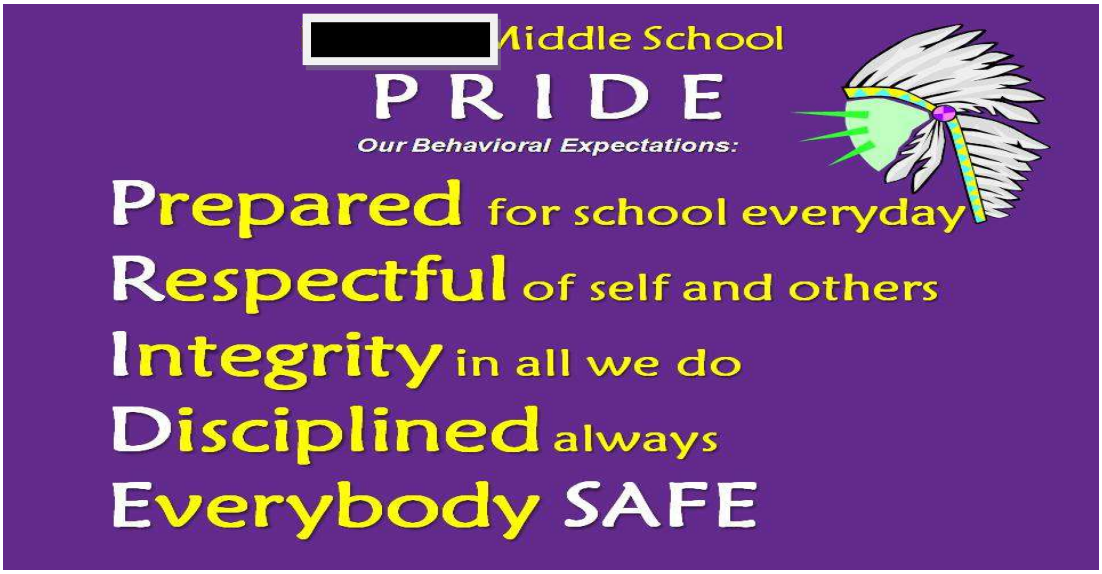
Triola, M. F. (2012). *Elementary Statistics* (Custom ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Learning Solutions.

Appendix A-1: PBIS Behavior Supports Matrix

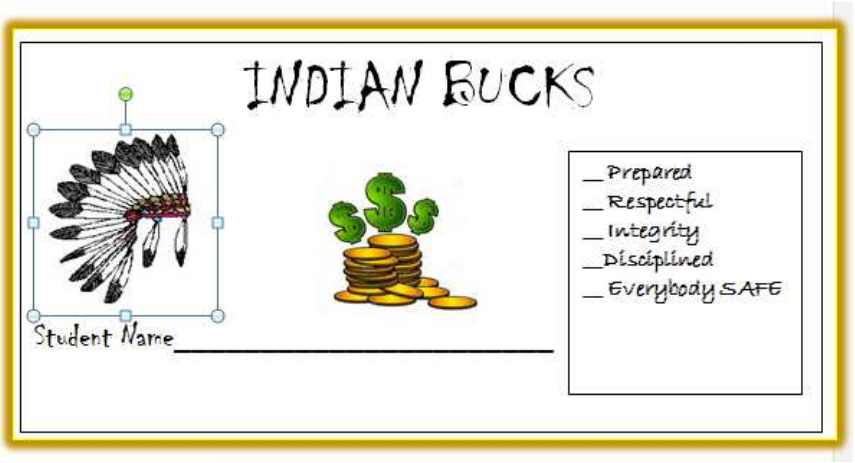
BEHAVIOUR SUPPORTS MATRIX

Location ⇒ / Expectations ⇓	Classroom	Hallways	Cafeteria	Outside/Canteen	Bus	School Events
P Prepared	• Be in class on time. • Bring materials. • Have homework ready. • Listen to announcements. • Dress appropriately.	• Always have our agenda. • Know your destination. • Walk to the right.	• Bring lunch money. • Know your lunch number. • Get all food items the first time.	• Have canteen cards. • Wear appropriate clothing. • Keep your belongings with you at all times.	• Know the bus rules. • Keep your belongings with you.	• Know your drop off time and pick up time. • Bring any money you may need. • Dress appropriately. • Have personal belongings.
R Respectful	• Honor yourself and others. • Regard the property of others. • Be polite • Appreciate differences.	• Use a quiet voice. • Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself. • Maintain personal space. • Use kind comments.	• Use table manners. • Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself. • Dispose of trash appropriately.	• Dispose of trash properly. • Use appropriate words and actions. • Maintain personal space.	• Be kind to others and their property. • Listen to the driver.	• Dispose of trash appropriately. • Appropriately respond to performance. • Use suitable language.
I Integrity	• Be honest and accountable. • Try your best everyday. • Do the right thing. • Stay on task.	• Use appropriate manners. • Demonstrate maturity. • Go where you are sent.	• Wait patiently in line. • Keep food on the tray or in mouth.	• Report problems. • Return found items. • Be honest when handling money.	• Share seats. • Report any incidents.	• Be a positive role model. • Use your manners. • Report any incidents.
D (Self) Disciplined	• Be in class on time. • Make good decisions. • Think before you act. • Dress appropriately. • Follow the rules.	• Walk on the third tile. • Walk on the right side of the hallway. • Walk directly to your destination.	• Use appropriate language and volume. • Sit in designated area. • Clean up your space.	• Follow adult directions. • Obey canteen procedures. • Line up at first signal.	• Stay seated. • Help others. • Do what is asked of you. • Follow the rules	• Represent our school in a positive way. • Enter and exit orderly. • Follow rules consistently.
E Everybody SAFE	• Report dangerous situations. • Practice healthy behaviors. • Follow safety rules • Behave appropriately.	• Walk at all time. • Wash/sanitize hands. • Chew food well. • Report spills.	• Walk at all times. • Wash/sanitize hands. • Chew food well. • Report spills.	• Avoid dangerous play. • Report hazards. • Follow safety rules.	• Remain seated. • Keep feet in front. • Remain silent. • Keep hands, feet, and objects to self.	• Arrange ride in advance. • Avoid strangers. • Follow school rules. • Report problems.

Appendix A-2: PBIS Behavioral Expectations Poster



Appendix A-3: Indian Bucks Exemplar



Appendix A-4: PBIS Calendar

AUGUST '17

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

15 Review School-Wide/Classroom Behavioral Expectations

16 1st Leadership Team Meeting

23 1st PBIS Staff Meeting

FEBRUARY '18

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28			

1 PBIS Staff Meeting

14 Leadership Team Meeting

19 Presidents' Day

SEPTEMBER '17

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

4 Labor Day

20 Leadership Team Meeting

MARCH '18

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

1 PBIS Staff Meeting

14 Leadership Team Meeting

29 PBIS Staff Meeting

30 Good Friday

OCTOBER '17

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

5 PBIS Staff Meeting

9 Columbus Day

18 Leadership Team Meeting

31 Halloween

APRIL '18

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

1 Easter Sunday

18 Leadership Team Meeting

NOVEMBER '17

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

2 PBIS Staff Meeting

11 Veterans Day

15 Leadership Team Meeting

23 Thanksgiving Day

MAY '18

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

3 PBIS Staff Meeting

13 Mother's Day

16 Leadership Team Meeting

28 Memorial Day

31 PBIS Staff Meeting

DECEMBER '17

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

7 PBIS Staff Meeting

25 Christmas Day

JUNE '18

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

17 Father's Day

JANUARY '18

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

1 New Year's Day

4 PBIS Staff Meeting

15 M.L. King Day

17 Leadership Team Meeting

JULY '18

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

4 Independence Day

Appendix A-5: PBIS Staff Input Form

Name: (optional) _____ Date:_____

1. How is PBIS working for you?

_____
_____
_____

2. What would you like to see added to it?

_____
_____
_____

3. What would you like to see changed or deleted?

_____
_____
_____

4. What interventions have you tried?

_____
_____
_____

—Which have been effective?_____
—Which have not worked?_____
—Which have you not yet tried?_____

5. Do you use any other interventions that you would like to share with the staff? Please describe.

_____
_____
_____

6. What other ideas, comments, or questions do you have?

_____
_____
_____

Please turn these in to your PBIS Representative. Thank you for your input,
Middle School A's PBIS

Appendix A-6: Parent Letter Exemplar

[redacted] Middle School

[redacted] Rd
[redacted], XX XXXXX

Office: [redacted] Principal: [redacted]

Prepared, **R**espectful, **I**ntegrity, **D**isciplined, **E**veryone Safe

August 2017

Dear [redacted] Middle School Parent & Guardians,

Now that we have been in school for 3 weeks, the Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) Team would like to share a bit more information with you about "PRIDE" at FMS. We hope your child has explained that he/she can earn Indian Bucks for appropriate behaviors and that inappropriate behaviors are documented using a Refocus form. Both of these are components of our PBIS Plan.

The first aspect of PBIS at [redacted] Middle is the school-wide expectations, which are laid out in the form of a matrix. The matrix can be found in the student agenda and on the FMS Website. These expectations have been taught to the students during focus time of the first full two weeks of school. On a daily basis, students can receive Indian Bucks for meeting the expectations of the school. Students will be able to use the Indian Bucks for various rewards which include Student Store items, attending Friday Free Time, and other options that will be announced. Throughout the year, please keep a look out for letters or emails indicating donation/needs for the PBIS program and its success.

The second aspect of PBIS at [redacted] Middle School is the Refocus form. This form is to document various infractions that might occur throughout the day. For example, talking at inappropriate times, disrespect, and not being prepared for class will result in a teacher signature on the infraction log. If an infraction occurs, the student will complete the form by writing the infraction and document any intervention used. This Refocus form is an attempt to get the students to think about what they have done and give them a chance to change their behavior.

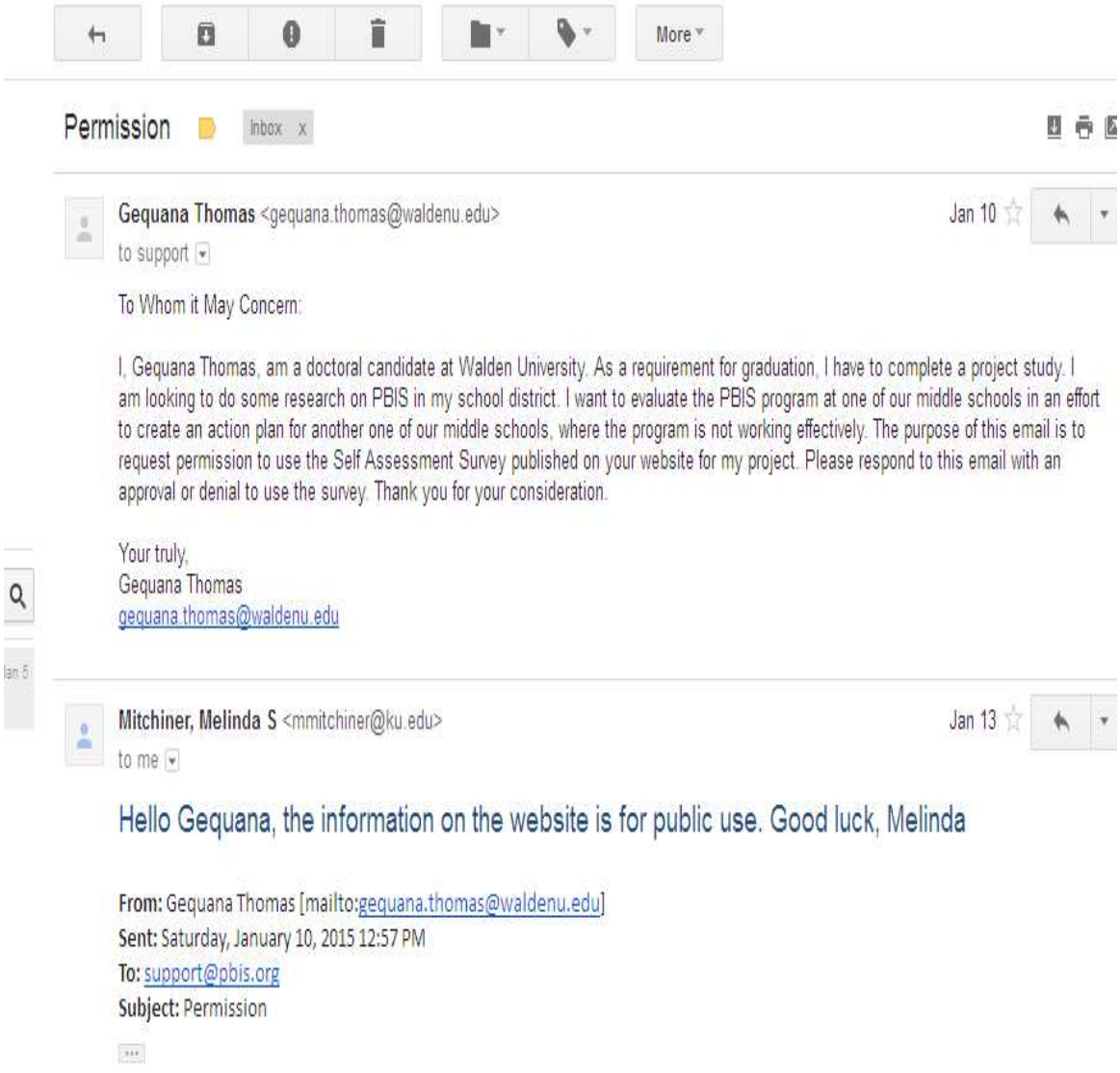
Student agendas are an easy way to stay informed about your students' assignments, upcoming events, and behavior. Making sure your child brings the agenda to and from home every day and uses it frequently will help your child maintain positive involvement with the PBIS program.

We would like your input and your involvement. Please contact us at school if you have any questions or need further information. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

[redacted] Middle School's PBIS Team

Appendix B: Permission to Use the Instrument



More

Permission Inbox x

Gequana Thomas <gequana.thomas@waldenu.edu> Jan 10

to support

To Whom it May Concern:

I, Gequana Thomas, am a doctoral candidate at Walden University. As a requirement for graduation, I have to complete a project study. I am looking to do some research on PBIS in my school district. I want to evaluate the PBIS program at one of our middle schools in an effort to create an action plan for another one of our middle schools, where the program is not working effectively. The purpose of this email is to request permission to use the Self Assessment Survey published on your website for my project. Please respond to this email with an approval or denial to use the survey. Thank you for your consideration.

Your truly,
Gequana Thomas
gequana.thomas@waldenu.edu

Mitchiner, Melinda S <mmitchiner@ku.edu> Jan 13

to me

Hello Gequana, the information on the website is for public use. Good luck, Melinda

From: Gequana Thomas [mailto:gequana.thomas@waldenu.edu]
Sent: Saturday, January 10, 2015 12:57 PM
To: support@pbis.org
Subject: Permission

Appendix C: PBIS Self-Assessment Survey

* 1. A. What is the CURRENT STATUS of the **SCHOOL-WIDE SYSTEMS** in your school (i.e. *in place*, *partially in place*, or *not in place*)?

B. For those features rated as *partially in place* or *not in place*, what is the PRIORITY LEVEL OF IMPROVEMENT for that feature (i.e. high, medium, or low)? If the item is already IN PLACE, please select THIS ITEM IS ALREADY IN PLACE.

SCHOOL-WIDE is defined as involving all students, all staff, & all settings.

	Current Status	Priority Level of Improvement
A. A small number (e.g. 3-5) of positively & clearly stated student expectations or rules are defined.		
B. Expected student behaviors are taught directly.		
C. Expected student behaviors are rewarded regularly.		
D. Problem behaviors (failure to meet expected student behaviors) are defined clearly.		
E. Consequences for problem behaviors are defined clearly.		
F. Distinctions between office v. classroom managed problem behaviors are clear.		
G. Options exist to allow classroom instruction to continue when problem behavior occurs.		
H. Procedures are in place to address emergency/dangerous situations.		
I. A team exists for behavior support planning & problem solving.		

	Current Status	Priority Level of Improvement
J. School administrator is an active participant on the behavior support team.		
K. Data on problem behavior patterns are collected and summarized within an on-going system.		
L. Patterns of student problem behavior are reported to teams and faculty for active decision-making on a regular basis (e.g. monthly).		
M. School has formal strategies for informing families about expected student behaviors at school.		
N. Booster training activities for students are developed, modified, & conducted based on school data.		
O. School-wide behavior support team has a budget for (a) teaching students, (b) on-going rewards, and (c) annual staff planning.		
P. All staff are involved directly and/or indirectly in school-wide interventions.		
Q. The school team has access to on-going training and support from district personnel.		
R. The school is required by the district to report on the social climate, discipline level or student behavior at least annually.		

* 2. A. What is the CURRENT STATUS of the **NON-CLASSROOM SYSTEMS** in your school (i.e. *in place*, *partially in place*, or *not in place*)?

B. For those features rated as *partially in place* or *not in place*, what is the PRIORITY LEVEL OF IMPROVEMENT for that feature (i.e. high, medium, or low)? If the item is already IN PLACE, please select THIS ITEM IS ALREADY IN PLACE.

NON-CLASSROOM settings are defined as particular times or places where supervision is emphasized (e.g., hallways, cafeteria, playground, bus).

	Current Status	Priority Level of Improvement
A. School-wide expected student behaviors apply to non-classroom settings.		
B. School-wide expected student behaviors are taught in non-classroom settings.		
C. Supervisors actively supervise (move, scan, & interact) students in non-classroom settings.		
D. Rewards exist for meeting expected student behaviors in non-classroom settings.		
E. Physical/architectural features are modified to limit unsupervised settings, unclear traffic patterns, and inappropriate access to & exit from school grounds.		
F. Scheduling of student movement ensures appropriate numbers of students in non-classroom spaces.		
G. Staff receives regular opportunities for developing and improving active supervision skills.		

	Current Status	Priority Level of Improvement
H. Status of student behavior and management practices are evaluated quarterly from data.		
I. All staff are involved directly or indirectly in management of non-classroom settings.		

* 3. A. What is the CURRENT STATUS of the **CLASSROOM SYSTEMS** in your school (i.e. *in place*, *partially in place*, or *not in place*)?

B. For those features rated as *partially in place* or *not in place*, what is the PRIORITY LEVEL OF IMPROVEMENT for that feature (i.e. high, medium, or low)? If the item is already IN PLACE, please select THIS ITEM IS ALREADY IN PLACE.

CLASSROOM settings are defined as particular times or places where supervision is emphasized (e.g., hallways, cafeteria, playground, bus).

	Current Status	Priority Level of Improvement
A. Expected student behavior & routines in classrooms are stated positively & defined clearly.		
B. Problem behaviors are defined clearly.		
C. Expected student behavior & routines in classrooms are taught directly.		
D. Expected student behaviors are acknowledged regularly (positively reinforced) (>4 positives to 1 negative).		
E. Problem behaviors receive consistent consequences.		
F. Procedures for expected & problem behaviors are consistent with school-wide procedures.		
G. Classroom-based options exist to allow classroom instruction to continue when problem behavior occurs.		

	Current Status	Priority Level of Improvement
H. Instruction & curriculum materials are matched to student ability (math, reading, language).		
I. Students experience high rates of academic success (> 75% correct).		
J. Teachers have regular opportunities for access to assistance & recommendations (observation, instruction, & coaching).		
K. Transitions between instructional & non-instructional activities are efficient & orderly.		

* 4. A. What is the CURRENT STATUS of the **INDIVIDUAL STUDENT SYSTEMS** in your school (i.e. *in place*, *partially in place*, or *not in place*)?

B. For those features rated as *partially in place* or *not in place*, what is the PRIORITY LEVEL OF IMPROVEMENT for that feature (i.e. high, medium, or low)? If the item is already IN PLACE, please select THIS ITEM IS ALREADY IN PLACE.

INDIVIDUAL STUDENT SYSTEMS are defined as specific supports for students who engage in chronic problem behaviors (1%-7% of enrollment).

	Current Status	Priority Level of Improvement
A. Assessments are conducted regularly to identify students with chronic problem behaviors.		
B. A simple process exists for teachers to request assistance.		
C. A behavior support team responds promptly (within 2 working days) to students who present chronic problem behaviors.		
D. Behavioral support team includes an individual skilled at conducting functional behavioral assessment.		
E. Local resources are used to conduct functional assessment-based behavior support planning (~10 hrs/week/student).		
F. Significant family &/or community members are involved when appropriate & possible.		

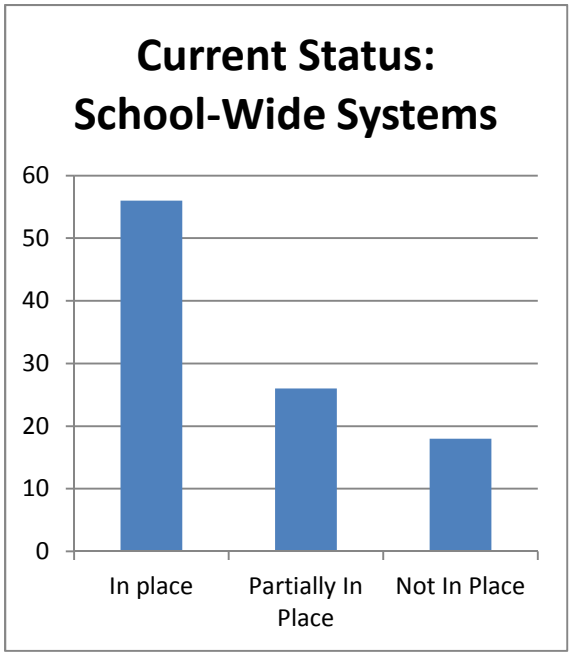
	Current Status	Priority Level of Improvement
G. School includes formal opportunities for families to receive training on behavioral support/positive parenting strategies.		
H. Behavior is monitored & feedback provided regularly to the behavior support team & relevant staff.		

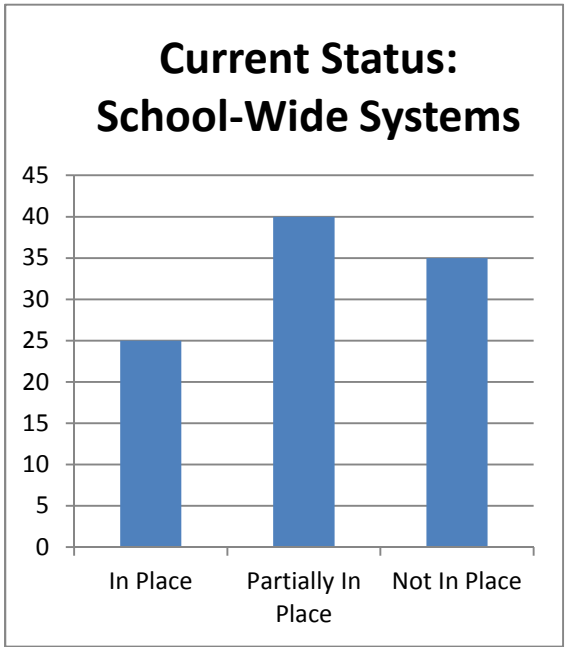
5. Please enter your email address below if you would like to receive a report of the findings following the study's completion.

Email Address

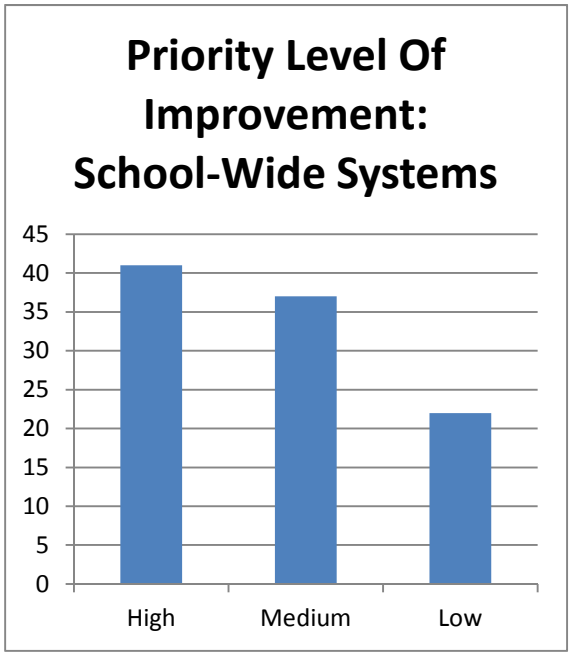
Appendix D: Summary Bar Graphs

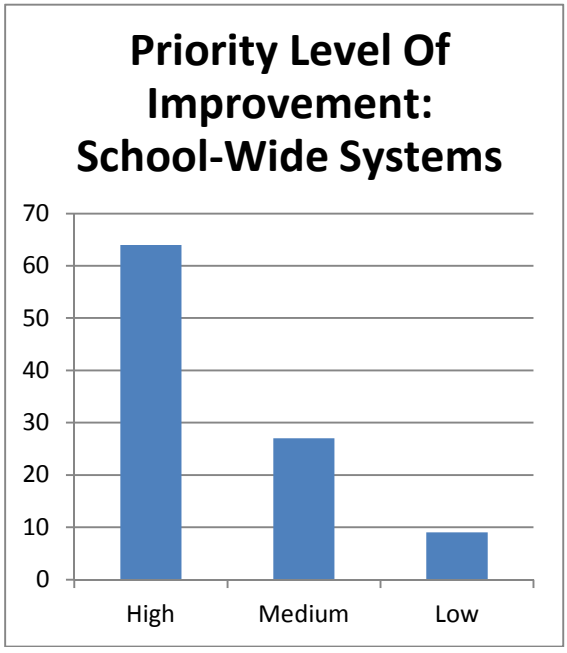
Middle School A



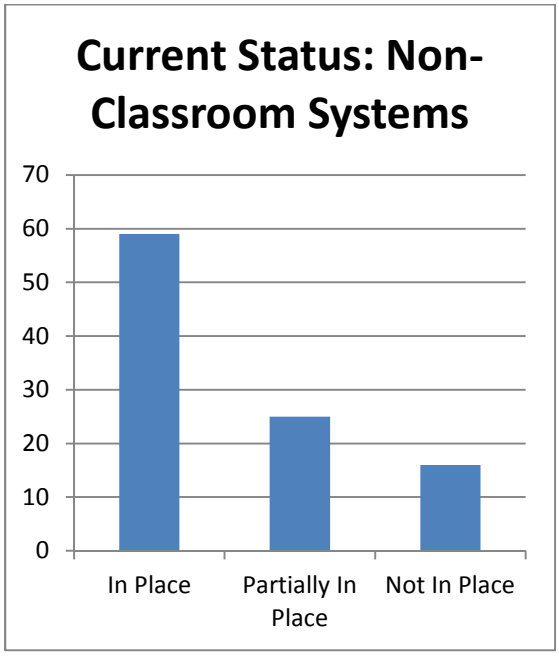


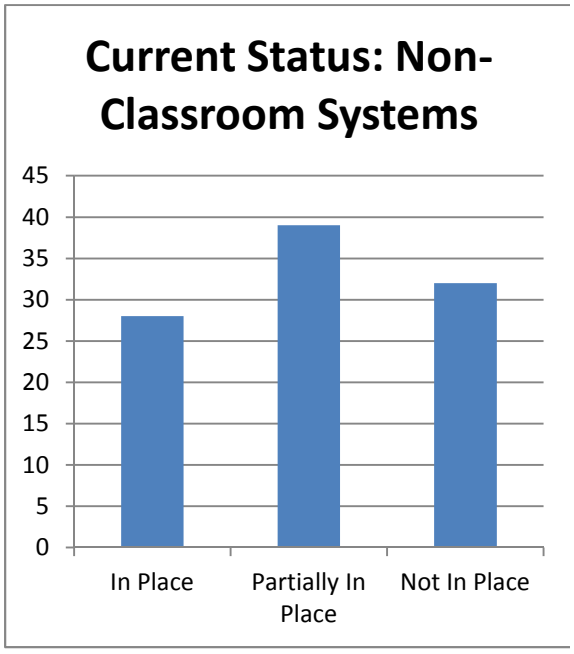
Middle School B



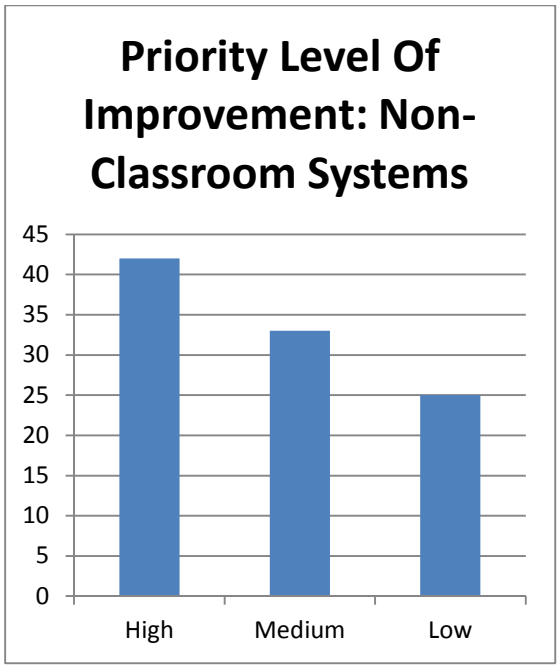


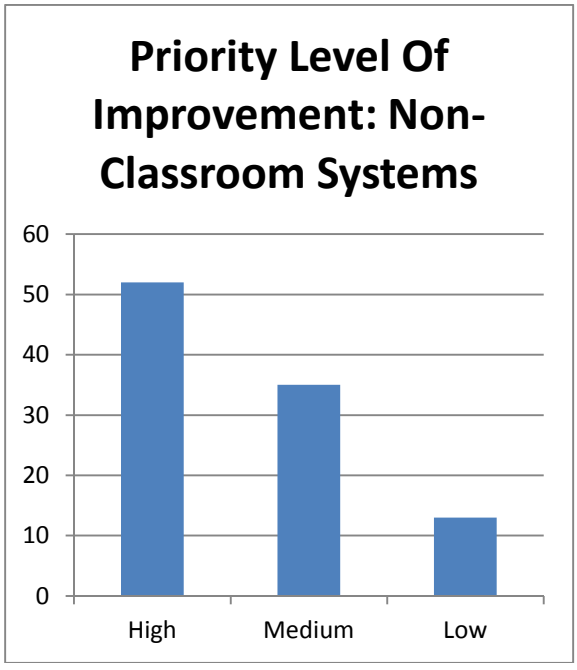
Middle School A



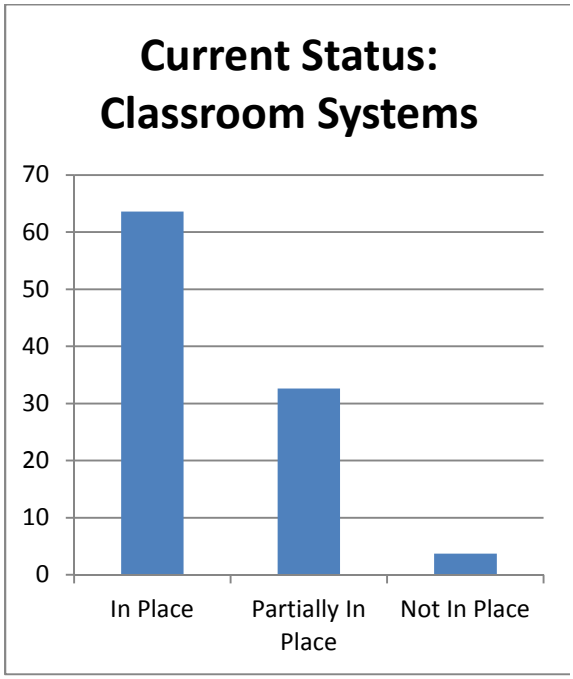


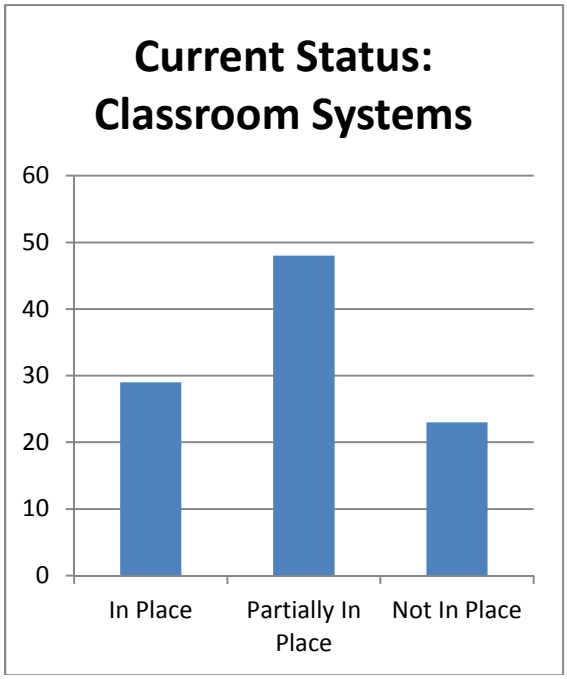
Middle School B



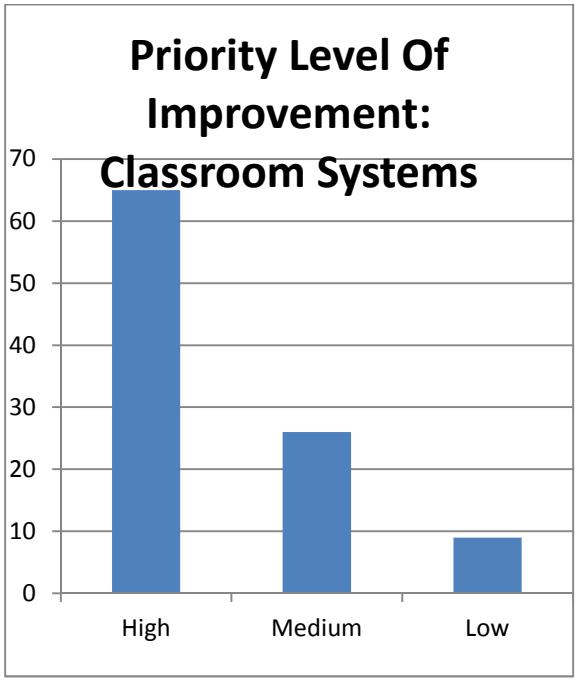


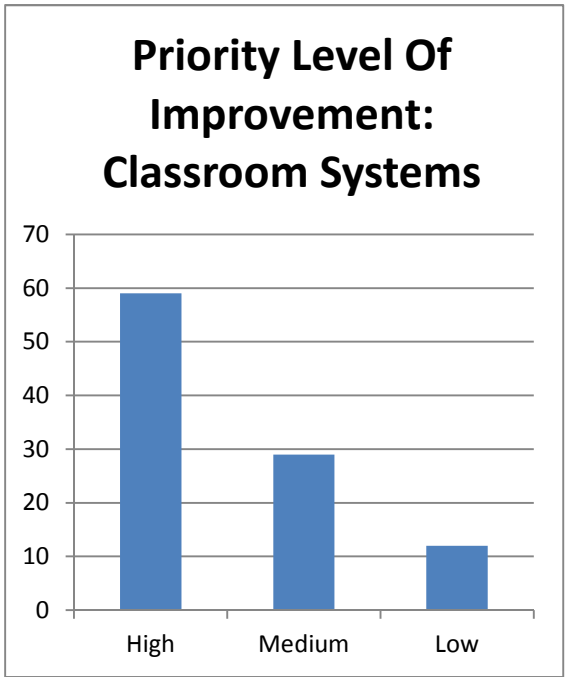
Middle School A



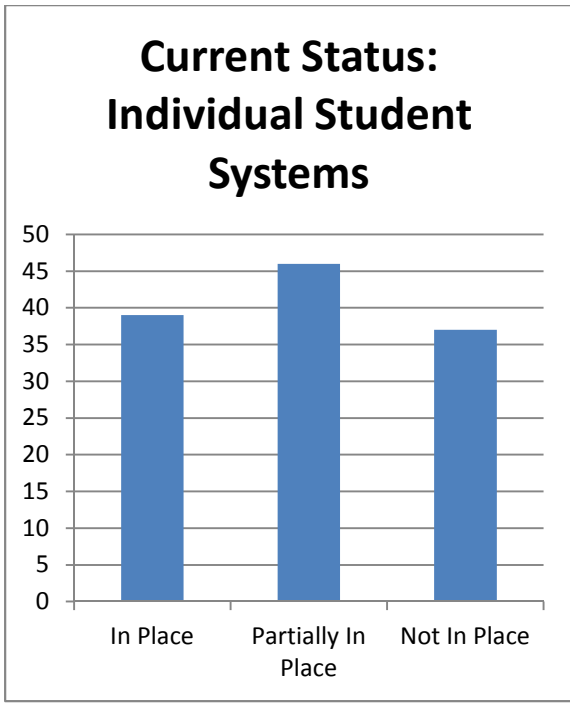


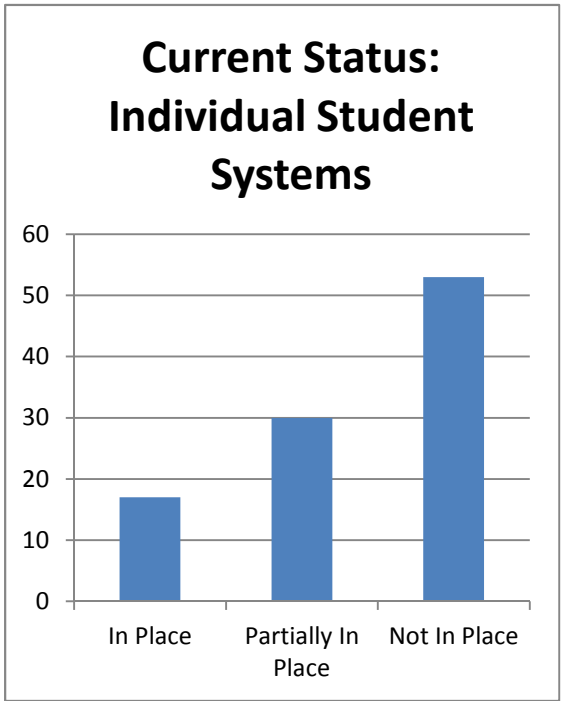
Middle School



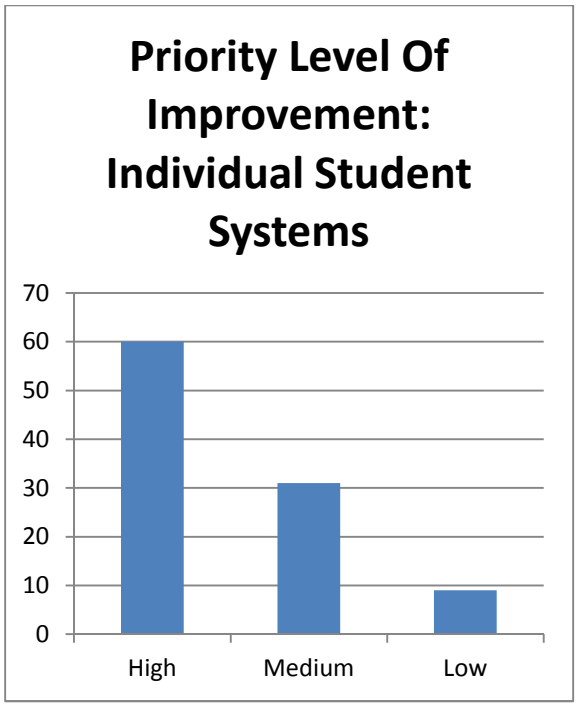


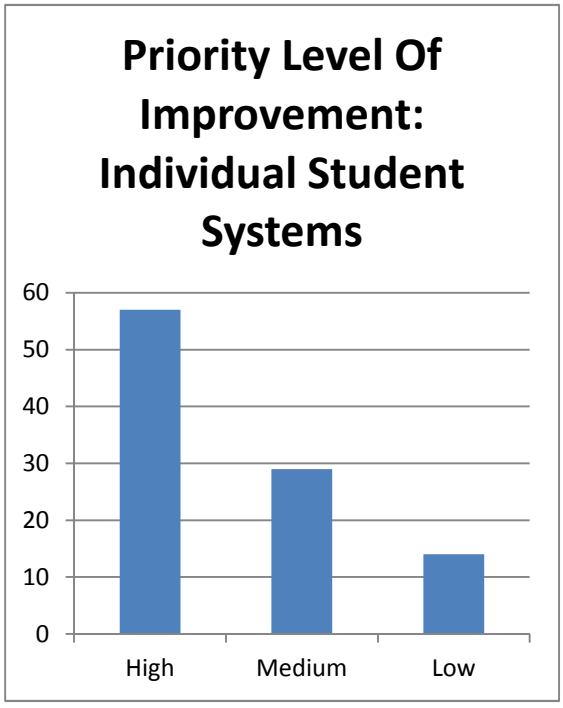
Middle School A





Middle School B





Appendix E: Policy Recommendation Evaluation and Feedback

Please check your selection for the following statements and return this form to Gequana Thomas. Thank you in advance.

	Agree	**Disagree**	**Unsure**
The information provided in the policy recommendation was easy to understand.			
The topic discussed in the policy recommendation is relevant to my school.			
The topic discussed in the policy recommendation is relevant to my role in the school.			
I will be able to apply what I learned from the policy recommendation in my school.			
Applying the concepts in the policy recommendations would benefit my school.			

Please provide feedback and comments regarding your thoughts on the policy recommendation.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____