

2019

# A Survey Study of Elementary Teachers' Perceptions of Student Classroom Behavior

Duane L. Davis  
*Walden University*

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# Walden University

College of Education

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Duane L. Davis

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Walden University  
2019

Abstract

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by

Duane L. Davis

MS, Walden University, 2010

BME, Heidelberg (College) University, 2003

Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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August, 2019

## Abstract

In a midwest, rural, and high-poverty elementary school, teachers expressed concerns about difficult student behaviors in their classrooms. It was important to address the problem because student misbehavior disrupts the learning of all students in the classroom. To provide information to the school that could inform possible interventions, a survey was conducted that measured the perceptions of 24 classroom teachers about concerning student behaviors, their methods of dealing with such behaviors, their needs for further support, and their confidence in dealing with difficult student behaviors. The conceptual frameworks that guided this study were the behaviorist theories of Watson and Skinner. The survey responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics. A Mann-Whitney *U* test was conducted for each of the survey questions to determine whether any statistically significant differences between the survey responses of independent variable groups of grade level (Kindergarten-3 and 4-6) and teacher experience (novice and veteran teachers). Findings showed only 1 statistically significant difference between the Grades K-3 and 4-6 teachers' use of books and published materials to deal with concerning student behavior. A professional development initiative was created that will use professional learning community groupings already present in the school for teachers to research and implement changes to their professional practices in dealing with concerning student behaviors. This study may lead to an improved learning environment for teachers and students, an enhanced school reputation, and further parental and community support.

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## Dedication

I give all honor and praise to God through Jesus Christ who showed me this path. I dedicate this work with all of my heart to my best friend, love of my life, and the example of who I want to be: My bride, Jacqueline M. Davis, my Jackie. Without her dedication, love, passion, sacrifice, and unending support, I would be nothing.

Further, I dedicate this lovingly to my daughters: Destiny, Torrance, and Sophia. It is my prayer and hope that my work shows them that you can do great things with hard work and passion.

This study is also dedicated in memory of our Grandparents Robert Adkins (January 26, 1943-February 27, 2019) and Wilma Adkins (August 1, 1944-November 29, 2018) as well as our niece, Mairi Davis (November 4, 2009-June 27, 2018). May this work help at least one school become further accepting and caring for all children, regardless of the obstacles both the school and the child face.

“If you care about what you do and work hard at it, there isn’t anything you can’t do if you want to.”

-Jim Henson

## Acknowledgments

This work has been the effort of a long, exciting, tough, and testing journey. I thank God through Jesus Christ that I have been able to do this work and for supporting my family and I through the process. I cannot express enough gratitude to my wife, Jackie Davis, and my daughters Destiny, Torrance, and Sophia. I am thankful for their cheering, their patience, and their love through this process.

I cannot express my gratitude to my professor, Dr. Salina Shrofel, for taking my study on and guiding me with humor, high expectations, high levels of learning, and complete and blunt honesty. This capstone study challenged me to my core and I would not have grown as a scholar and developed a further aspiration to teach teachers without her. I am humbled to have such a fantastic mentor and friend in this process. I would like to further express gratitude to Dr. Jennifer Seymour. She provided me with guidance and assistance as I transitioned from my first advisor and provided great insight as I developed this final document. Together, these two professors are an example of great leadership, collaboration, and dedication for their students.

Finally, I thank the leaders and teachers at the site where I completed this work. They were accepting, cooperative, and willing to do whatever was needed to make my work successful. The school is truly an example of what a quality school for children to learn in looks like today. I am thankful for their assistance in this process and hope that my study leads to further improvements to the small school.

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## Section 1: The Problem

### **The Definition of the Problem**

Increased levels of disruptive and inappropriate student behavior have the potential to interrupt student learning (Freiberg, Huzinec, & Templeton, 2009; Osher et al., 2010). When school faculty and administrators create safe and caring learning environments where students are able to prepare for the social aspects of adult life, students' levels of learning and overall well-being increase (Luiselli, Putnam, Handler, & Finberg, 2005; Miles & Stipek, 2006; Powers & Bierman, 2013; Sadler & Sugai, 2009). To create and/or improve upon a safe and positive school environment, teachers and administrators must have a detailed understanding of what discipline issues are occurring in the school and where and when they occur (Crone, Hawken, & Horner, 2010; Lane, Menzies, Ennis, & Bezdek, 2013; McIntosh, Ellwood, McCall, & Girvan, 2018; Pas, Bradshaw, Hershfeldt, & Leaf, 2010; Snyder, Vuchinich, Acock, Washburn, & Flay, 2014; Tillery, Varjas, Meyer, & Collins, 2010).

When school personnel have information regarding the frequencies and occurrences of specific student behaviors such as physical hitting or disruptive talking, corresponding teacher-initiated interventions, including rehearsal of rules or rewards to reinforce appropriate behaviors can be implemented to teach and improve student behavior (Pas et al., 2010; Pennefather & Smowlkowski, 2014; Skinner, 1969; Sugai & Horner, 2010). Such data may also help teachers improve their practice by providing further understanding to teachers, administrators, and outside sources about a school's specific student behaviors, how teachers deal with student behavioral issues, and what

teachers require from the school to deal with student behavioral issues. With this information, a school's faculty and staff may be able to create new or further develop methods to manage their classrooms in ways that prevent disruptions and improve student behavior (Lane et al., 2013; Martin, Linfoot, & Stephenson, 1999; Sugai & Simonsen, 2012).

Just as achievement data are often used to drive student learning (Dufour, Dufour, & Eaker, 2011; Hawley & Rolle, 2007; Marzano, 2003), data in relation to what specific student behaviors and the patterns of student behavior affecting a school can be used as a tool to improve a school's learning environment (Sugai & Horner, 2010; Pas et al., 2010). The collection of data regarding student behavior can help school personnel to understand disciplinary issues in their school and improve student behavior. Data about student behavioral issues that can be disaggregated to report the frequencies of student misbehavior with regards to specific grade levels and specific demographics of teachers can provide information that enhances school personnel understanding about the influence of student behavior and make adjustments to improve the learning environment for all students (Martin, Linfoot, & Stephenson, 1999).

With an increased understanding of student behavior, administrators and staff can make plans that improve the learning environment for all students. They can use these deeper understandings to provide relevant professional development and possibly implement improved disciplinary procedures and/or policies that can increase the overall sense of safety and security all students and teachers have in the learning environment



(Mayer & Furlong, 2010; Osher et al., 2010; Pas et al., 2010; Tidwell, Flannery, & Lewis-Palmer, 2003; Tillery et al., 2010).

### **The Local Problem**

In a high poverty, rural elementary school in the southern section of the midwest United States, some teachers and the administrators have expressed concerns that disruptive and violent student behaviors, as well as how teachers respond to these behaviors, are negatively affecting student learning. Some evidence, collected from a collected log of behaviors requiring interventions, demonstrated that the school was experiencing a slight increase in violent and disruptive student behaviors (REL Superintendent, personal communication, March 15, 2016). At the same time, school personnel had not systematically collected and analyzed data that would aid the faculty and administrators to understand what specific behaviors are most frequent and most concerning, how teachers deal with such behaviors in their classrooms, and what resources they require to more effectively deal with such behaviors.

The study school, labeled with the pseudonym rural elementary school (REL), had approximately 350 students enrolled and is the only elementary school and one of three schools in its district. Student mobility rates are high; REL's district had a mobility rate as high as 13% in the 2011-2012 school year, and the rate was as low as 6.9% in the 2015-2016 school year. In the previous four years, the district's average mobility rate was 9.6%, higher than the state average of 8.5 % (REL Superintendent, personal communication, March 8, 2016; XXX Department of Education, 2013). The school is currently a Title I school.

## **Rationale**

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

The literature shows that many external and internal factors present challenges to classroom teachers. Some of these factors include family poverty (Theriot & Duper, 2009; Vandell, Belsky, Burchinal, Vandergrift, & Steinberg, 2010), student mobility (Boon, 2011; Engec, 2006; Simpson & Fowler, 1994), and inconsistent classroom and school management of discipline (Cadima, Leal, & Burchinal, 2010; Yoshikawa, Aber, & Beardslee, 2012). REL has a growing poverty base, high student mobility, concerns regarding the consistency of classroom management, and documented and anecdotal information that points to disciplinary concerns that may be present at REL.

**Growing poverty base at REL.** Poverty is a serious issue in U.S. rural schools. Layton (2012) found urban and rural schools in western and southern states of the United States, where REL is located, often have increased numbers of students living in poverty compared with other areas in the nation. Health studies have linked poverty to higher stress levels among low-income children during early development, the use of more physical discipline in the home, less social interaction with peers and adults, and long-term issues with self-esteem, all of which contribute to disciplinary issues at school (Holtz, Fox, & Meurer, 2015; Jensen, 2009; Martinez, McMahon, & Treger, 2016; Payne, 2008; Theriot & Dupper, 2009).

Bodovski and Yoon (2010) found that low socioeconomic status affects how discipline and behavior are monitored in the home. Bodovski and Yoon's (2010)

longitudinal study of students from Kindergarten through fifth Grade found that levels of parental warmth, discipline techniques, and emotional climate in students' homes are related to socioeconomic status. The researchers found that parents from high-poverty homes, regardless of race or marital status, used physical discipline more frequently, interacted with their children less often, and expressed higher levels parental depression and disengagement. Without positive parental engagement, a child's ability to regulate his/her actions is often decreased, increasing the likelihood that children will present disciplinary issues at school (Bodovski & Yoon, 2010; Hart, Hodgkinson, Belcher, Hyman, & Cooley-Strickland, 2013; Theriot & Dupper, 2009; Vandell et al., 2010). Staff at REL reported that 59.8% of its students receive school lunch at free or reduced prices, a number that has increased each school year for the last four school years (XXX Department of Education, 2016). Although this percentage is not direct evidence of a disciplinary issue, it provides indirect evidence that moderate to high poverty rates may be contributing to disciplinary issues at REL.

**High student mobility at REL.** Students who change schools often have been found to display increased levels of disruptive, disrespectful, and violent behaviors at their receiving schools (Boon, 2011; Engec, 2006; Simpson & Fowler, 1994). In a study of both achievement scores and suspension records of K-12 students in one state, Engec (2006) found that 10.04% of the students moved at least three times in one school year and 34.75% of these students received an in-school or out-of-school suspension. For students who were enrolled in two or fewer schools, only 16% were given in-school or

out-of-school suspensions (Engec, 2006). When students change schools often, they are more likely to display behaviors that lead to discipline issues at the school.

Simpson and Fowler (1994) found that students who moved at least twice during their childhood (ages 6-17 years) were 2.3 times more likely to present behavioral issues at school and 1.9 times more likely to be suspended or expelled from school. REL had a mobility rate that has been as high as 13.9% in the 2011-2012 school year and as low as 6.9% in the 2015-2016 school year (REL District Data, 2016). With the exception of the school year during which I conducted this study, mobility percentages at REL had been higher than REL's state average of 8.5% (XXX Department of Education, 2016).

Researchers have concluded that student mobility affects student behavior and increases the likelihood of student office referrals or suspensions.

With new students entering the school, information from other schools that may inform a school's faculty about the academic and behavioral concerns regarding new students may be inconclusive or incomplete, due to the lack of time students spend in each school (Boon, 2011; Engec, 2006; Simpson & Fowler, 1994). A guidance counselor who has had experience at REL and other county schools expressed a need for information regarding incoming students' behavior at their previous schools. Files of students transferring to REL often include behavioral improvement plans (BIPs). Unfortunately, these plans provided little data regarding the details about the new students' behaviors and are often incomplete (REL Counselor, personal communication, 2013). Although REL cannot control how other schools collect or present behavioral data, more detailed plans would give REL information to prepare for any behavioral

issues a student may have displayed at their previous school and help the student improve his/her behavior. Not every student who switches schools will present disciplinary concerns. However, the high rate of student mobility at REL and the concerns of faculty members regarding mobile students provide indirect evidence of student behavior concerns at REL.

**Alignment of student behavioral expectations at REL.** Schools with successful disciplinary initiatives often emphasize consistent discipline, with alignment of rules and procedures within grade levels and/or schools, and communication of concerns between teachers as children progress from one grade to the next (Marzano, Marzano, & Pickering, 2003; Sugai, & Simonsen, 2012; Sugai, O’Keeffe, Horner, & Lewis, 2013). Some teachers at REL have expressed concerns about student behaviors and how they are affecting their learning environments. Although these teachers have discussed the possibility of exploring methods of improving their approach to dealing with these behaviors, professional development plans have not been made to deal with student behavior and plans to adapt behavioral expectations at the grade level or school level have not been discussed or made (REL administration, personal communication, March 22, 2016).

Poverty and student mobility both have been found to be contributing factors affecting the increased levels of student misbehavior in U.S. schools (Bodovski & Yoon, 2010; Boon, 2011; Engec, 2006). Increasing poverty and mobility rates at REL and the expressed concerns about difficult student behavior by the teachers are indirect evidence that student behavior may be a concern at REL.

## **Documentary Evidence at the Local Level**

**Building level student information system software.** To collect data about student behavior, REL uses a unified student information software program. This software program has a function that allows teachers to log specific disciplinary episodes in a narrative format. Administrators encourage the faculty to use the program to report student discipline issues. However, because use of this software is not compulsory and the time that is required to create the reports, some teachers do not use the program.

The narrative format of disciplinary episodes and the consistency of the information system's use by teachers is a concern for those making decisions when dealing with specific student behaviors. The teachers and administrators have reported to the special education cooperative that teacher narratives often did not follow a consistent format and because the teachers were not required to report each episode of student misbehavior, the reports were not useful as data to study student misbehavior in the classroom.

**District level policy manual.** REL's district policy manual provides a brief disciplinary policy. This policy gives teachers the authority to act within their classroom to create an environment of learning. Teachers are given the authority to apply discipline to deal with student misbehavior. The policy manual also presents a detailed plan guiding the implementation of corporal punishment, student suspensions, and expulsions. Teachers are also given the ability to remove students from the classroom with the approval of the principal and suggest corporal punishment (spanking), or suspensions to the building administrators.

REL provides a detailed policy for corporal punishment. Corporal punishment is carried out only after parents have provided their consent. That consent is provided at the beginning of each school year when parents complete a form providing their consent. This form informs the parents that corporal punishment may be administered to students. When a teacher suggests the use of corporal punishment, a principal or assistant principal must provide the punishment with a teacher acting as a witness. The administrator carries out this punishment by paddling the student's buttocks with a wooden paddle. After the spanking is applied, the school communicates with the parents by sending a written form home. Corporal punishment is used only in situations where other punishments, such as the removal of privileges or classroom discipline has not been effective (REL superintendent, personal communication, March 22, 2016).

In terms of suspensions and expulsions, the policy manual stipulates that suspensions can be used only after parental conferences are held and only as a last resort in reaction to extreme violent and dangerous student behaviors, such as possession of weapons, fighting, and/or possession/use of drugs. A plan to deal with disruptive classroom behaviors and minor infractions is not included in the policy manual. The policy manual makes it clear that principals are responsible for creating a handbook for students and a second handbook for teachers with specific protocols regarding how teachers should respond to student misbehavior.

A handbook specific to REL is presented to each student and their parents yearly. Specific details concerning the rules, consequences, or any methods that individual teachers may use to discipline students in their classroom are not explained to students in

this handbook. The student handbook suggests that teachers have the right to remove misbehaving students from the classroom for up to 1 day with the principal's approval. The handbook explains that the decisions about how teachers are to respond to specific behaviors are made by the classroom teachers. A unified policy regarding how teachers should respond to specific behaviors has not been presented to teachers and/or administrators in the school. Teachers have the opportunity and responsibility to design their classroom management plans and responses to student misbehavior within the context of their own strengths and preferences.

As a result of the district and school-level policies, the decisions that REL's teachers use to respond to student misbehavior are selected by the teachers at the classroom level. When the punishments and interventions implemented by the teachers are not successful, the administrators intercede with further discipline including revoking student privileges, removing students from the classroom conferencing with parents, and suspending and/or giving corporal punishment to students if necessary.

**Crisis interventions.** To provide immediate intervention to remove students in extreme violent or disruptive episodes, REL's administrators use the Crisis Prevention Institute's (CPI) nonviolent crisis intervention frameworks to avoid and/or deal with violent incidents and collect behavioral data (CPI, 2014). Through this process, trained administrators and special education teachers at REL have logged increases in disruptive and physical behavioral incidents. Incidents where crisis intervention has been implemented have increased from 4 in 2013 to 10 in 2015 (REL Administrator, personal communication, 2016). Although students who are removed from the classroom are given



the opportunity to calm down and discipline or counseling/intervention may follow these episodes, these incidents continue to occur.

REL is a high-poverty school with a high mobility rate, where external factors and increasing rates of violent and disruptive episodes demonstrate a possible disciplinary issue. Documents regarding the scope, affects, and specific details regarding student misbehavior and classroom discipline at REL is scant. The data that have been collected show an increase in violent and disruptive student behavior. Although district policy allows for school-level control of how teachers and administrators manage student behavior and the school handbook describes appropriate steps for violent and extreme behaviors, a school-level or classroom-level plan for how the individual teachers will deal with inappropriate behavior is not clearly defined.

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

Understanding student behavior, how teachers respond and deal with it, and its effects on student learning are concerns that are present in many U.S. schools. In data synthesized by Morgan and Sideridis (2013), U.S. teachers reported that least 10% and as many as 30% of their students acted inappropriately on a consistent basis. Many surveys of American teachers have found that inappropriate student behavior has increased over the course of most current teachers' careers (Losen & Martinez, 2013; Shah, 2013; Watkins, Mauthner, Hewitt, Epstein, & Leonard, 2007). Increased student misbehavior leading to office referrals has been reported in both elementary and secondary schools, leading to lost instructional time, increased teacher/student stress, and increased suspensions (Bauer, 2010; Caldarella et al., 2011; Collie, Shapka, & Lewis, 2012; Collie,

Shapka, Perry, & Lewis, 1999; Gray & Young, 2011; Losen & Martinez, 2013; Lupien, McEwen, Gunner, & Heim, 2009; Morgan & Sideridis, 2013; Rizzolo, 2004; Tidwell et al., 2003). Schools where teachers are using traditional classroom management methods as well as schools using school-wide disciplinary frameworks have reported increased office referrals (Caldarella et al., 2011; Powers & Bierman, 2013; Spaulding & Frank, 2009).

With increasing student misbehavior, punishments in response to these behaviors increase in frequency, leading to negative effects (Caldarella et al., 2011; Rizzolo, 2004). A survey of 725 middle and high school teachers and 600 parents found many teachers felt threatened by parental feedback when they applied student discipline (49%) and that schools often stepped back from intervening on smaller offenses, out of concern of community backlash and/or litigation from parents (Rizzolo, 2004). However, 63% of parents in the survey found that discipline for smaller offenses was essential in curbing student misbehavior (Rizzolo, 2004).

Literature has shown that difficult student behaviors are a concern throughout the United States. Understanding and implementing methods to reduce student misbehavior are areas where schools are working to improve their learning environments (Cregor, 2008; Osher, Bear, Sprague, & Doyle, 2010). Although schools and parents are concerned about student behavior, researchers agree that the teacher in the classroom and their methods and abilities to manage their classrooms and students are essential to reducing student misbehavior at the school level (Cooper, Hirn, & Scott, 2015; Osher et al., 2010; Rizzolo, 2004). By understanding the scope of student misbehavior in the

school, school faculty and administrators may be able to make decisions about their approaches to student discipline to reduce disruptions in learning, reduce suspensions, and improve the learning environment for all parties.

### **Definition of Terms**

*Administrator:* An administrator is an individual responsible for some aspect of administration of a school. Often, an *administrator* is defined as a principal, counselor, dean of students, or assistant/vice principal (Ramalingam & Parthasarathy, 2013; Schlechty, 2002).

*Classroom management:* *Classroom management* is a term to describe the methods, actions, rules, routines, and atmosphere teachers create to control student behavior and create a safe and caring classroom environment for optimal student learning (Koh & Shin, 2014; Marzano et al., 2003).

*Corporal punishment:* *Corporal punishment* is discipline provided to students that involves physical pain for the students who receive the punishment. Some historical documents have described this discipline as denying food, placing students in stocks and in cells, and whipping students with blunt objects and rods. Today, this punishment usually involves paddling a student with a wooden object on the buttocks (Mann, 1868; Moyo, Khewu, & Bayaga, 2014; Taylor, 1923).

*Discipline:* This term refers to the methods that one uses to instruct a person about appropriate behavior in a social situation. Often, the term refers to punishments for inappropriate behavior or rewards as incentives for appropriate behaviors in the classroom (Charles & Senter, 2004; Marzano, et al., 2003).

*Office referral:* An *office referral* is a disciplinary method where teachers send disruptive or violent students to a school administrator for discipline (Miramontes, Marchant, Heath, & Fischer, 2011; Sugai & Simonsen, 2012).

*Prosocial behavior:* *Prosocial behavior* is behavior where individuals act in ways that aid others, show care, and contribute in a positive manner toward a situation or society (Knafo, Israel, & Ebstein, 2011; Malti, & Gummerum, 2007; Punyanunt-Carter & Carter, 2009).

*Student suspension:* A *student suspension* is a punishment technique where a student is removed from school and barred from school activities for a time of at least one school day. This punishment, often reserved for students as a last resort, is being used at increasing rates as a punishment for violent and dangerous school offenses and minor infractions alike (Brownstein, 2009; Losen & Martinez, 2013).

### **Significance of the Study**

The information and conclusions that I collected and compiled in this study lead to increased understandings about school discipline. These understandings provide opportunities for the teachers and administrators to improve the learning environment at the study school. Such improvements could positively affect the teachers' ability to educate, the students' ability to learn, improve the perception that outside stakeholders possess about REL, and increase the sense of security that everyone in the local building has during their experience at REL.

In this study, I have provided information for local-based decision making. When schools collect and analyze data regarding specific inappropriate student behaviors, how

teachers respond to these behaviors, and where the teaching faculty see a need for assistance, the administrators and faculty have a clear understanding of the effect of student behavior in their school. This understanding will guide the school's teachers and administrators to make timely decisions about how and where changes or improvements can be made to teachers' practices and the school's policies (Martin et al., 1999; Marzano et al., 2003; Osher et al., 2010; Shellady & Sealander, 2003; Sugai & Horner, 2010; Tidwell et al., 2003).

This study may also benefit other schools. Teachers and administrators at schools that have similar issues with difficult student behavior may be able to use this study to understand student behavior at their schools and may provide them with information to guide decisions that improve their school communities.

The findings from this study and the project that is developed from its results can provide local-based change at REL. In this study, I provided information that can improve behavior and the quality of the learning experience for elementary school students. By improving student behavior at a young age, students may have the opportunity to develop life-long social skills, improve their ability to get along with their peers, and increase their ability to learn through providing a less-distracting setting. The students may also develop a deeper sense of security while in school. All of these may lead to further mastery of the subject matter and their ability to learn and function in society as responsible adults (Barnett, 2011; Merritt, Wanless, Rimm-Kaufman, Cameron, & Peugh, 2012; Sugai & Simonsen, 2012).

Finally, this study may contribute to social change within REL's community. REL faculty and administration is currently implementing a campaign to highlight positive aspects of the school to attract more students, promote new businesses, and attract citizens. A safer school where students are less distracted by student misbehavior will lead to increased confidence in REL and its school district by members of the community and those considering relocation to the community where the school is located (Cohen, McCabe, Michelli, & Pickeral, 2009). This may lead to increased job opportunities for the citizens, the recruitment of strong teachers, increased student enrollment, and improved quality of life in REL's surrounding community. Parents and community members who learn about the positive changes happening at the school the community may develop a higher opinion and further appreciation of how the school is working to mold children for society. These positive opinions often lead to further parental and community involvement and support (Grady, Bielick, & Aud, 2010; Griffith, 1998; Schueler, Capotosto, Bahena, McIntire, & Gehlbach, 2014). REL teachers and administrators will use the information that I collected to guide decisions that can possibly show REL as an example of improvement for others and provide an even stronger school that can be a positive asset for the local community.

### **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

Anecdotal evidence, indirect evidence, local evidence, and evidence from professional literature points to the need for more information regarding student misbehavior at REL, and the teachers' concerns about student behavior. To address the problem, I asked the following research questions and posed the following hypotheses:

RQ1. What are REL teachers' levels of concern about types of student behaviors in their classrooms as measured by survey questions 2A to 2N?

RQ1.1: What is difference between experienced (6+ years of experience) and novice teachers (1-5 years of experience) regarding their levels of concern about types of student behaviors in their classrooms?

*H<sub>o</sub>1.1*: There is no statistically significant difference between experienced (6+ years of experience) and novice teachers (1-5 years of experience) regarding their levels of concern about types of student behaviors in their classrooms.

*H<sub>a</sub> 1.1*: There is a statistically significant difference between experienced (6+ years of experience) and novice teachers (1-5 years of experience) regarding their levels of concern about types of student behaviors in their classrooms.

RQ1.2: Is there a statistically significant difference between Grades K-3 classroom teachers and Grades 4-6 classroom teachers regarding their levels of concern about student types of behaviors in their classrooms?

*H<sub>o</sub>1.2*: There is no statistically significant difference between Grades K-3 classroom teachers and Grades 4-6 classroom teachers regarding their levels of concern about student types of behaviors in their classrooms.

*H<sub>a</sub> 1.2*: There is a statistically significant difference between Grades K-3 classroom teachers and Grades 4-6 classroom teachers regarding their levels of concern about student types of behaviors in their classrooms.

RQ2: What do teachers identify as the level of support they need in order to address their concerns about types of student behaviors in their classrooms as measured by survey questions 2AB to 2NB?

RQ2.1: Is there a statistically significant difference between experienced (6+ years of experience) and novice teachers (1-5 years of experience) regarding the level of support they need in order to address their concerns about types of student behaviors in the classrooms?

*H<sub>0</sub>2.1*: There is no statistically significant difference between experienced (6+ years of experience) and novice teachers (1-5 years of experience) regarding the level of support they need in order to address their concerns about types of student behaviors in the classrooms.

*H<sub>a</sub>2.1*: There is a statistically significant difference between experienced (6+ years of experience) and novice teachers (1-5 years of experience) regarding the level of support they need in order to address their concerns about types of student behaviors in the classrooms.

RQ2.2: Is there a statistically significant difference between Grades K-3 classroom teachers and Grades 4-6 classroom teachers regarding the level of support they need in order to address their concerns about types of student behaviors in the classrooms?

*H<sub>0</sub>2.2*: There is no statistically significant difference between Grades K-3 classroom teachers and Grades 4-6 classroom teachers regarding the level of support they need in order to address their concerns about types of student behaviors in the classrooms.



*H<sub>a</sub> 2.2:* There is a statistically significant difference between Grades K-3 classroom teachers and Grades 4-6 classroom teachers regarding the level of support they need in order to address their concerns about types of student behaviors in the classrooms.

RQ3: What supports have REL teachers used in the past to help them deal with difficult student behaviors in their classrooms as measured by survey questions 3A-3K?

RQ3.1: Is there a statistically significant difference in the supports experienced teachers (6+ years of experience) and novice teachers' (1-5 years of experience) have used in the past to help them deal with difficult student behaviors in their classrooms?

*H<sub>o</sub> 3.1:* There is no statistically significant difference in the supports experienced teachers (6+ years of experience) and novice teachers' (1-5 years of experience) have used in the past to help them deal with difficult student behaviors in their classrooms.

*H<sub>a</sub>3.1:* There is a statistically significant difference in the supports experienced teachers (6+ years of experience) and novice teachers' (1-5 years of experience) have used in the past to help them deal with difficult student behaviors in their classrooms.

RQ3.2: Is there a statistically significant difference in the supports K-3 classroom teachers and 4-6 classroom teachers have used to deal with difficult student behaviors in their classrooms?

*H<sub>0</sub>3.2*: There is no statistically significant difference in the supports Grades K-3 classroom teachers and Grades 4-6 classroom teachers have used to deal with difficult student behaviors in their classrooms.

*H<sub>a</sub>3.2*: There is a statistically significant difference in the supports Grades K-3 classroom teachers and Grades 4-6 classroom teachers have used to deal with difficult student behaviors in their classrooms.

RQ4: What methods have REL teachers used to deal with difficult student behaviors in their classrooms as measured by survey questions 4A-4T?

RQ4.1: Is there a statistically significant difference in the methods experienced teachers (6+ years of experience) and novice teachers (1-5 years of experience) have used to help them deal with difficult student behaviors in their classrooms?

*H<sub>0</sub>4.1*: There is no statistically significant difference in the methods experienced teachers (6+ years of experience) and novice teachers (1-5 years of experience) have used to help them deal with difficult student behaviors in their classrooms.

*H<sub>a</sub>4.1*: There is a statistically significant t difference in the methods experienced teachers (6+ years of experience) and novice teachers (1-5 years of experience) have used to help them deal with difficult student behaviors in their classrooms.

RQ.4:2 Is there a statistically significant statistically significant difference in the methods Grade K-3 classroom teachers and Grades 4-6 classroom teachers have used to help them deal with difficult student behaviors in their classrooms?

*H<sub>0</sub>4.2:* There is no statistically significant difference in the methods K-3 classroom teachers and 4-6 classroom teachers have used to help them deal with difficult student behaviors in their classrooms.

*H<sub>a</sub>4.2:* There is a statistically significant difference in the methods K-3 classroom teachers and 4-6 classroom teachers have used to help them deal with difficult student behaviors in their classrooms.

RQ5: How confident are REL teachers in the way they manage student/classroom behaviors and difficulties that arise in their classrooms as measured by survey question 5?

RQ5.1: Is there a statistically significant difference in the level of confidence experienced teachers (6+ years of experience) and novice teachers (1-5 years of experience) have with regard to the way they manage student/classroom behaviors and difficulties that arise in their classrooms?

*H<sub>0</sub>5.1:* There is no statistically significant difference in the level of confidence experienced teachers (6+ years of experience) and novice teachers (1-5 years of experience) have in regards to the way they manage student/classroom behaviors and difficulties that arise in their classrooms.

*H<sub>a</sub>5.1:* There is a statistically significant difference in the level of confidence experienced teachers (6+ years of experience) and novice teachers (1-5 years of experience) have in regards to the way they manage student/classroom behaviors and difficulties that arise in their classrooms.

RQ5.2: Is there a statistically significant difference in the level of confidence Grades K-3 classroom teachers and Grades 4-6 classroom teachers have with regard to the way they manage student/classroom behaviors and difficulties that arise in their classrooms?

*H<sub>o</sub> 5.2:* There is no statistically significant difference in the level of confidence Grades K-3 classroom teachers and Grades 4-6 classroom teachers have in regards to the way they manage student/classroom behaviors and difficulties that arise in their classrooms.

*H<sub>a</sub> 5.2:* There is a statistically significant difference in the level of confidence Grades K-3 classroom teachers and Grades 4-6 classroom teachers have in regards to the way they manage student/classroom behaviors and difficulties that arise in their classrooms.

### **Review of the Literature**

As schools often use the training of behaviors and rewards and reinforcement to develop appropriate behavior in the classroom, this study will use a behaviorist lens to understand how teachers control student behavior and manage their classrooms (Canter & Canter, 1976; Charles & Senter, 2004; Marzano, Gaddy, & Fossid, 2005; Simonsen, Sugai, & Negron, 2008 Sugai & Horner, 2010). Behaviorism is a theory that premises that appropriate animal and human behavior can be trained (Skinner, 1955; Watson, 1924). In the practice of a classroom, a teacher can teach and develop appropriate student behaviors through rewards and redirect inappropriate behaviors by denying rewards or through punishments (Skinner, 1969).

To ensure that appropriate behaviors are successfully developed into their students' long-term memory, teachers consistently reward, over a long term, the desired behaviors and use negative reinforcements (the denial of a reward) or punishments for inappropriate behaviors (Baum, 2010; Skinner, 1955). To achieve appropriate behaviors, teachers must create an environment that removes negative stimuli, which could be disruptive for students or distracting in the classroom (Charles & Senter, 2004; Skinner, 1955; Taylor, 1923; Watson, 1924). Teachers in many U.S. schools develop consistent rules and classroom procedures that are rehearsed and developed from the first day of school, and often include rewards systems and rehearsal of routines, such as walking in the hallway rather than running (Sugai & Horner, 2002).

Aspects of the behaviorist theory have appeared in many approaches in classroom management and student discipline throughout the history of U.S. schooling (Balli, 2011). During the colonization period of the United States, rewarding students who performed desired student behaviors included reducing student seat work and giving students who acted appropriately leadership over their peers (Taylor, 1923). Early American school teachers often used physical punishments to teach students to avoid inappropriate behaviors (Taylor, 1923). As behaviorist theories developed, physical punishments were viewed as inappropriate methods. They represented negative reinforcement that would reduce the value of the rewards for appropriate behavior (Skinner, 1969).

Behaviorist theories underlie many of the methods modern U.S. schools use today. Teachers who use methods of classroom management that are reactionary in

nature set specific behavioral expectations for students and include immediate discipline for students acting inappropriately and reward systems for students who act appropriately (Canter & Canter, 1976). Using unified rewards and shared rules, teachers and administrators using the Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) framework use a reward schedule to teach appropriate student behavior and reduce the frequency of inappropriate behaviors (Sugai & Horner, 2002; Sugai & Simonsen, 2012). Teachers and administrators using conflict resolution or restorative justice use discussions and counseling formats to improve student behavior and also implement with a simple list of school rules and use reward and punishment systems for students (Liebman, 2007; Westervelt, 2014). As students spend a large portion of each day of their formative years in the classroom (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2001), teaching students in group settings appropriate social behaviors is critical for long-term student success in both academic learning and the social implications of adult life.

### **Literature Search Strategy**

Student behavior and how it is managed by teachers and school administration has been studied from many perspectives. In this literature review, I discuss the literature that explored the effect of student behavior on academic achievement, student welfare, and school environment. I also discuss how teacher-related factors affect their perceptions and management of student behavior. Finally, I discuss the historical background of school discipline and the psychological studies that provide frameworks for current approaches to classroom management and student discipline. I will conclude the literature

review with a discussion of the research related to current school discipline and classroom management approaches.

To develop this review of literature, I read numerous peer-reviewed and scholarly journal articles and books on topics related to student behavior and classroom management. To reach saturation of the literature, I searched several internet databases to find scholarly literature using Walden University's Thoreau, ProQuest Central, ProQuest Dissertations, EBSCOHost Academic Complete, EBSCO Education Research Complete, EBSCO PsycARTICLES, EBSCO PsycBOOKS, ScienceDirect, Sage, Google Scholar, and SocINDEX. I also consulted research monographs and their bibliographies for leads to research articles and other relevant publications.

I used the following terms to search for online resources: *history of classroom management, disruptive behavior and achievement, violence and elementary school, classroom management, student discipline, student discipline and student discipline impacts on students (and teachers), PBIS, behavior modification, B.F. Skinner, (Alfred) Bandura, history of discipline, classroom management and music education, classroom management and special education, classroom management and elementary classrooms, and teacher stress*. I used bibliographies and the internet to find more key terms, including *modern approaches to classroom discipline, restorative justice, behavior modification, behavior and student learning, teacher perceptions of student behavior, grade level and student behavior, grade level student behavior, and elementary school, and student discipline and school improvement*. I have confided with the recommended best practices for searching the literature.

## **The Relationship Between Student Behavior and School Level Issues**

### **The relationship between student behavior and academic achievement.**

Students with disciplinary issues often face punishments that eventually lead to suspensions and expulsions (Ford, 2013). Students who are suspended and/or expelled will often exhibit low academic achievement rates in core school subjects (Bear, Yang, Pell, & Gaskins, 2014; Blank & Shavit, 2016; Ford, 2013; Holbein & Ladd, 2015; Kellam, Mayer, Rebok, & Hawkins, 1998; Miles & Stipek, 2006; Sadler & Sugai, 2009). Studying school-wide suspension records in all Wisconsin public elementary and secondary schools from 2010-2011, Ford (2013) compared suspension rates with pass and fail rates on state reading assessments.

Ford (2013) argued that since students who were suspended were absent from school, they would be exposed to less of the academic content provided to their peers, supporting the claims of numerous other studies (Brownstein, 2009; Caldarella et al., 2011; Losen & Martinez, 2013; Powers & Bierman, 2013; Watkins et al., 2007). Ford found that students in grades 3-8 who attended schools with high student suspension rates achieved lower academic scores, especially in reading. Ford also found that schools with fewer suspensions had higher student achievement rates. The suspended students in higher-achieving schools with lower suspension rates were less likely to fail their reading achievement tests, when compared with students attending the schools where suspension rates were higher.

Ford (2013) also calculated that if the 100 school districts with the most suspensions could reduce the number of days students were suspended each school year



by an average of 195 days per school, passing percentages in reading could increase by as much as a 3.5% average per school. When faculty and administrators at schools reduce the number of suspensions, students will spend more time in the classroom learning. With more time in the classroom, student success rates on achievement assessments may increase.

Similar findings were made earlier by Luiselli, et al. (2005), who compared norm-referenced standardized test scores of a group of students over a period of three school years ( $N = 590$  in year one and  $N = 550$  in years two and three) as school-wide changes to improve student behavior occurred. Each year, discipline issues and suspensions were reduced in the school, from an average of 1.3/100 students requiring an office referral per month and .3/100 requiring suspensions to .5 /100 students requiring office referrals and .2/100 students receiving suspensions as a result of their behavior on average each month.

As the rate of suspensions was reduced each year, an increase in Metropolitan Achievement Test (MAT) scores was noted, with overall reading achievement scores increasing by 27 percentile ranks and math scores increasing by at least 29 percentile ranks. Luiselli et al. (2005) concluded that an increase in positive student behavior led to improved academic achievement in the classroom.

Students demonstrating negative behaviors may lack essential learning opportunities. McIntosh, Sadler, and Brown (2012) used scores from the dynamic indicators of basic early literacy skills (DIBELS) reading assessments in reading fluency and word fluency to show that students with more office referrals for discipline issues had lower DIBELS assessment initial sound fluency ratings scores. McIntosh et al.

(2012) deduced from their findings that students who receive frequent office referrals and or removals from class for disciplinary issues have less time in the classroom to develop skills and learn the content being taught. McIntosh et al. concluded that low achievement scores often reflect a lack of time for students to learn, practice, and develop essential skills.

Other studies explored the development of prosocial behavior and its relationship to improved student engagement, learning, and achievement (Luiselli et al., 2005; Miles & Stipek, 2006; Muratori, Bertacchi, Giuli, et al., 2015; Sadler & Sugai, 2009; Sugai & Horner, 2010). Miles and Stipek (2006) explained prosocial behavior as student actions that aid in the facilitation of learning between students, are positive towards others in manner, and lead to strong social skills and cooperation skills with teachers and peers alike. Miles and Stipek (2006) argued that prosocial skills were performed by students without the demand for reward and developed through practice.

Research has shown that disruptive student behavior is related to reduced motivation and transfer of knowledge to long-term memory for all students (Berger, Yule, & Rutter, 1975; Caprara, Barbaranelli, Pastorelli, Bandura, & Zimbardo, 2000; Dishion, 1990; Kazdin, 1987; McGee, Williams, Share, Anderson, & Silva, 1986; Miles & Stipek, 2006; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development [NICHD], 2004; Normandeau & Guay, 1998; Wentzel, 1993; Wentzel & Asher, 1995; Wentzel & Caldwell, 1997). As a result of these previous findings, Miles and Stipek (2006) hypothesized that prosocial behavior would be positively correlated to student success. Administering the Woodcock-Johnson reading assessment to students who teachers

identified as prosocial, Miles and Stipek compared student assessment scores to the scores of students reported by teachers as having issues with student behavior.

Miles and Stipek (2006) found that of the 400 students included in the study, those students identified as displaying stronger prosocial skills were likely to receive increased amounts of positive interactions and instructive attention from teachers and develop stronger abilities to cooperate with others and process knowledge. To further discover the effect of prosocial behavior on achievement, Miles and Stipek (2006) compared reading assessment scores of two groups of students when they were in kindergarten and again when they were in third grade. The two groups were comprised of students identified by their kindergarten teachers as displaying elevated rates of disruptive and/or violent behaviors in the first group and a second group of students identified by their kindergarten teachers as exhibiting prosocial behavior.

Miles and Stipek found a strong negative correlation between the group presenting inappropriate and/or aggressive behaviors and reading achievement in the kindergarten and third grades. These negative correlations remained consistent each year from first to third grade. Students who acted in positive and prosocial manners showed higher reading levels. The authors concluded that students who exhibited strong prosocial behaviors achieved stronger reading scores than those presenting disruptive and/or violent behavior. A similar comparison was also made with a cohort of first graders whose scores were compared with themselves when they entered fifth grade with similar results. The authors argued that providing an environment where social skills are taught provides students more opportunities for learning (Miles & Stipek, 2006).

Overall learning achievement cannot be improved by simply reducing office referrals. Spivak and Farran (2012) studied 124 elementary classrooms. They found that when teachers teach appropriate behavior, use positive language and verbal requests, and conduct discussions with students about proper behavior, increased positive and appropriate student behavior resulted. As well, teachers observed that these methods appeared to increase learning and achievement (Spivak & Farran, 2012). From interviews with teachers and classroom observations, Spivak and Farran concluded that direct instruction to students about appropriate behavior increased prosocial behaviors and created a positive environment where increased learning occurred.

The findings by Denham, et al. (2012) and Spivak and Farran (2012) emphasized the importance of teachers developing their understanding of both the causes of and the solutions to student behavior. Spivak and Farran (2012) concluded that when teachers have collegial dialogue about student behavior, they were able to develop further understandings and develop interventions that are specific to individual students' behaviors. Spivak and Farran argued that through teacher to teacher dialogue, teachers are able to implement methods that reduce the frequency and possibly avoid specific disciplinary issues among some students (Denham et al., 2012; Spivak & Farran, 2012). By understanding student discipline and working together to prevent negative behaviors, teachers have an opportunity to create an environment where students develop social skills while increasing the opportunities for their students to achieve their learning goals.

In summary, researchers have concluded that negative behavior has a negative effect on students' abilities to succeed academically (Ford, 2013; Luiselli et al., 2005;

McIntosh et al., 2012; Miles & Stipek, 2006). Two groups of students are affected by student misbehavior. Students who are suspended from school due to behavior lose valuable learning time in the classroom. At the same time, students whose learning is interrupted by other students' misbehavior also miss valuable time learning the content (Ford, 2013; Luselli et al., 2005; McIntosh et al., 2012). The deliberate teaching of appropriate behavior, professional development relating to student behavior, and the use of methods that reduce student suspensions have all been related to increased student learning time and achievement scores (Bear et al., 2014; Ford, 2013; Miles & Stipek, 2006; Sadler & Sugai, 2009; Spivek & Farran, 2012; Sugai & Simonsen, 2012). Student achievement can be affected by both inappropriate student behavior and the reduction of these behaviors through teaching and enforcing positive social behavior in the classroom.

**The relationship between student behavior and student welfare.** Safety and security are essential characteristics of schools where students feel comfortable to learn. In the hierarchy of needs, Maslow (1943) argued that the availability of food and shelter is the primary need for everyone and the second most important need is safety and security. Maslow theorized that humans need positive relationships with others in their lives to develop confidence and self-esteem. In his discussion on human motivation, Maslow (1943) stated the following:

From these and similar observations, we may generalize and say that the average child in our society generally prefers a safe, orderly, predictable, organized world, which he can count, on, and in which unexpected, unmanageable or other dangerous things do not happen. (Paragraph 23)

Maslow (1943) stated that when students who are exposed to behavior that is not predictable or orderly, they will not feel safe enough to learn. If a child is in a school where he/she does not feel safe, learning may be affected. Although many factors may contribute to a child feeling safe, exposure to violent or disruptive behaviors may reduce this feeling of safety (Maslow, 1943).

Individuals who are exposed to disruptive and violent behaviors will attempt to justify the others' inappropriate behaviors, distance themselves from those who cause these issues, or retaliate with equal or worse behaviors towards those acting in inappropriate ways (Bandura, 1977; Bandura, 1986; Pozzoli, Gini, & Vieno, 2012). Students who are exposed to a disruptive or violent classroom would be more likely to follow the behaviors of other students, increasing the chances that students will behave inappropriately (Powers & Bierman, 2013; Pozzoli et al., 2012; Sutherland & Oswald, 2005). The exposure to inappropriate and violent behavior may reduce a student's mental well-being (Powers & Bierman, 2013; Sutherland & Oswald, 2005).

When students are exposed to disruptive behavior, their sense of personal security may be reduced (Cole & Dodge, 1988; Maslow, 1943). When a child is insecure in their surroundings, they are forced to cope in ways which may lead to further disruptions in their learning (Cole & Dodge, 1988; Maslow, 1943). Cole and Dodge (1988) found that students who see individuals acting in inappropriate or violent manners often reject the student causing the behaviors. This "singling-out" often hampers the misbehaving child's opportunities to develop appropriate social skills in the early grades (Cole & Dodge, 1988).

Developing adequate social skills in the early school grades has been found to be a critical factor in student learning (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2001; Cole & Dodge, 1988; Denham et al., 2012; Powers & Bierman, 2013). When students exhibit inappropriate behavior that is not corrected, long-term behavioral issues often develop (Denham et al., 2012). Administering an elementary school readiness checklist for Minnesota preschool and head start programs to over 350 students, Denham et al. (2012) found that students displaying inappropriate or negative behaviors in the three-year-old preschool classes often had the lowest readiness scores for social skills. This same relationship followed students after they left the four-year-old class and moved into kindergarten. Students who displayed inappropriate behavior each year were less likely to test as ready for each grade.

Denham et al. (2012) concluded that the relationship between misbehavior and grade level readiness may be a precursor to more aggressive and/or disruptive behavior as students move into middle and high school. As student behavior can affect student success in primary school grades, it is essential for schools provide a safe environment where students are exposed to appropriate behaviors and where teachers encourage students to develop appropriate school behaviors at the youngest of ages (Cole & Dodge, 1988; Denham et al., 2012; Snyder et al., 2008).

When students continue to behave inappropriately over time, they often struggle to develop appropriate social relationships with their classmates (Denham et al., 2012; Powers & Bierman, 2013). Powers and Bierman (2013) surveyed the teachers of 4000 students and found strong relationships between student behavior and the friendships that

the students develop. Students who behaved in an inappropriate way were often less accepted by their classmates.

From the survey results, Powers and Bierman (2013) found that students who exhibited disruptive and negative behavior in first grade were more likely to be disliked by their peers when they advanced to the second grade. The surveyed teachers also reported that a majority of students with violent and disruptive behaviors would likely seek friendships with other students who were displaying negative behaviors in school. The likeliness of this trend increased each school year as the students advanced from kindergarten to first, second, and then third grade. Without the ability to build friendships, students may develop maladaptive socialization skills and disengagement from school (Cole & Dodge, 1988; Denham et al., 2012; Powers & Bierman, 2013).

When students are exposed to misbehavior of other students in the classroom, they develop a sense of instability. When students feel this sense of instability, they will often lead students to developing methods to cope with the disruptions and possible frustration or fear from others acting in disruptive or violent manners. Often, these students develop coping skills that include negative and inappropriate behaviors (Cole & Dodge, 1988; Powers & Bierman, 2013). As a result, the students who are acting inappropriately in the classroom are often not able to develop lasting, positive friendships and appropriate social skills for classroom behavior. Meanwhile, students who act appropriately in the classroom will begin to misbehave or socially disengage themselves from their classmates (Denham et al., 2012; Powers & Bierman, 2013). Schools must ensure all children's well-being while they are at school. To develop students' learning



and prepare students for society, teachers must create a classroom environment is stable and provides an opportunity for students to develop relationship and social skills.

### **The relationship between student behavior and the school environment.**

When schools experienced high levels of disruptive and/or violent student behavior, the negative behaviors and the ways other students react to them led to adverse consequences for the entire school (Cole & Dodge, 1988; Powers & Bierman, 2013; Skiba & Rausch, 2006; Thapa, Cohen, Guffey, & Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2013; Thomas, Bierman, & Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group, 2006; Thomas, Bierman, Thompson, & Powers, 2008). Student comfort, teacher satisfaction, and student achievement suffered, which can also have an effect on the perceptions that parents and other stakeholders have regarding the school (Skiba & Rausch, 2006; Thapa et al., 2013). The United States Federal Bureau of Investigations' survey of youth risk in schools showed yearly increases between 1993-2007 of average incidents where parents kept children home out of concerns over school safety due to violence and disciplinary issues (Mayer & Furlong, 2010). As a result of other students acting inappropriately, students who adhere to student conduct expectations are losing instructional opportunities out of parental concerns for their safety.

### **Research About Teacher-Related Factors that Affect Student Behavior**

The classroom teacher is the central, immediate person who is responsible for responding to and intervening in disruptive and violent student behavior in the classroom (Canter & Canter, 1976). Researchers have concluded that the grade level a teacher teaches and the years of teaching experience teachers have affects how student behavior

is perceived and managed (Brownstein, 2009; Calderella et al., 2011; Losen & Martinez, 2013; Watkins et al., 2007).

**Grade level taught by the teacher.** Children grow and develop into adults as a result of their experiences and the people who teach them and support them (Alter, Walker, & Landers, 2013; Bandura, 1977; Cooper et al., 2015; Watkins et al., 2007). The teacher's reaction to student misbehavior in a classroom often comes from the teacher's understanding and perception of individual students developed through consultation with the child's previous teachers, as the child progresses from kindergarten to the later grades (Kokkinos, Panayiotou, & Davazoglou, 2004; Martin et al., 1999; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007).

What behaviors are seen as troublesome in the classroom can be determined by what grade level a teacher teaches (Alter et al., 2013; Jacobi, 2012; Jacobsen, 2013; May, 2011). In a survey study by Alter et al. (2013), the grade level a teacher teaches influences what behaviors are seen as disruptive. Alter et al. surveyed 800 teachers of three groups (elementary, middle school, and high school). The authors found that teachers teaching elementary school expressed that off-task behaviors ( $M = 3.05$ ), students leaving seats ( $M = 2.33$ ), disruptive talking ( $M = 2.92$ ), and verbal aggression ( $M = 2.54$ ) were the most concerning behaviors. As students progressed to middle and high school, each of these concerns were seen by their teachers as less problematic.

In a detailed, qualitative interview study by Jacobsen (2013), seven teachers expressed that teacher perceptions of student behavior are different in different elementary school grade levels. Three of the teachers that the author interviewed taught

different grade levels at different points in their career. Jacobsen concluded that the teachers found behaviors that were attention seeking were most common in older elementary grades, while off-task behaviors were more common in the primary grade levels. The teachers also expressed that misbehaving younger children were more likely to be acting in ways to gain the attention of their teachers and that misbehaving older students were more often influenced by their social circles, or groups of students they associate with (Jacobsen, 2013). Jacobsen (2013) also found that the teachers used different disciplinary methods that were appropriate for their students based on grade level. Primary school teachers used behavioral redirection as an essential tool for improving behavior while teachers of older students found rewards systems were more effective for improving behavior.

When teachers in the primary grades (Kindergarten through second and/or third grade) teach appropriate classroom behaviors in their classrooms, teachers in the elementary grades develop higher behavioral standards in their students (Alter et al., 2013; Jacobsen, 2013). Jacobsen (2013) found that teachers who had experience teaching both Primary (K-2) and Elementary (3-5/6) Grades reported that their peers teaching older students developed higher expectations for their students through communication with and observations of primary teachers and their students. Further, the teachers with older students discussed their desire to teach appropriate social skills over simple classroom behaviors and redirection when students are disruptive (Jacobsen, 2013). As teachers collaborate with teachers between grade levels to improve academic learning, teachers benefit from discussing behavioral expectations with their colleagues. The result

is that the teachers create clear and obtainable expectations and goals for student conduct (Alter et al., 2013; Jacobsen, 2013).

In summation, teachers' perceptions and definitions of what is appropriate student behavior can be affected by the grade and age level of children that teachers are working with (Alter et al., 2013; Jacobsen, 2013; Kokkinos et al., 2004). Teachers working with kindergarten students must help their students develop basic skills for navigating the school environment, while third and fifth grade teachers are often working to help students understand how to work with their peers respectfully in a social environment (Alter et al., 2013; Jacobsen, 2013). To improve upon effective classroom discipline, there must be clear communications between teachers about behavioral expectations. Also, positive redirections and early interventions in the primary grades are essential steps for teachers to take to improve student behaviors as students' progress through school (Jacobsen, 2013; Kokkinos et al., 2004).

**Teacher experience.** Teaching experience may have an influence on how teachers perceive and manage student behavior (Alter et al., 2013; Heikonen, Pietarinen, Phyalto, Toom, & Soini, 2017; Klassen & Chiu, 2010; Tschanen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). In his work on self-efficacy, Bandura (1977) argued that as teachers developed both confidence and skill as they worked in the classroom over several years. Through both trials and successes, teachers would develop skills to cope with change, overcome issues and disruptions in the classroom, and learn new skills watching and working with other colleagues. When teachers serve a long period of time, they develop through their experiences, skills in all aspects of teaching.

Using a previously-piloted teacher efficacy survey, Tschannen-Moran & Hoy (2015) collected opinions from elementary school teachers ( $N = 247$ ) to determine how experience in the classroom contributed to several areas of a teacher's skill set, including classroom management. Tschannen-Moran & Hoy found that teachers with less than three years teaching experience reported not only a lower sense of ability to do their work overall, but also a lower sense of their ability to manage a classroom (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). This is supported by similar findings by Alter et al. (2013) and Kokkinos et al. (2004), whose studies found strong correlations between teacher experience and the ability to control student misbehavior. A survey study by Berger, Giradet, Vaudroz, & Crahay (2018) concluded that teachers who are more experienced have a higher sense of self-efficacy in all aspects of teaching, including the management of student behavior. Teachers who are more experienced have had the time and opportunities to practice their craft and develop skill over time, all of which can be beneficial to both teachers and novice teachers alike (Alter et al., 2013, Berger, Giradet, Vaudroz, & Crahay, 2018). These skills are developed in all areas, including responding to disruptive student behavior and improving the social skills of students (Kokkinos, Panayiotou, & Davazoglou, 2004).

### **Summation**

All students require a learning environment conducive to learning that provides protection from adverse consequences and a safe environment (Jensen, 2009; Maslow, 1943; Schlechty, 2002; Theriot & Duper, 2009; Yoshikawa et al., 2012). Although teachers' and administrators' perceptions can be affected by external factors, they can

provide information to teachers and administrators to help them develop new methods that develop appropriate student behavior (Alter et al., 2013; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2015). When teachers and administrators assure that their schools are safe and appropriate places for learning, students develop appropriate social skills, students feel safe to come to school, and students learn and develop positive and lasting peer relationships (Cole & Dodge, 1998; Denham et al., 2012; Mayer & Furlong, 2008; Powers & Bierman, 2013).

### **Historical Implications of Student Discipline and Classroom Management**

Developing a classroom that is a safe and secure place for student learning has been an issue throughout the history of U.S. education. The methods that schools and teachers used to manage classrooms and discipline over time provided a foundation for the disciplinary methods used in today's classrooms. Previous classroom management and discipline practices, as well as the development of the modern school and classical psychological research into human behavior have all influenced the disciplinary methods teachers use today.

**Colonization to the 20th century.** U.S. schools from colonization to the 1800's demanded strictly-controlled and respectful classrooms similar to those in various nations from where settlers originated. Throughout the 1820s and 1830s, schools often used discipline that was reactionary in nature and often included corporal punishments, such as spanking or hitting (Butchart & McEwan, 1998; Taylor, 1923). The settlers thought that ideal classrooms emphasized order and the development of thought. These Early United States schools created a precision-based classroom environment, where students worked

alone and approached the teacher to discuss learning, recite a lesson, or answer questions prompted by the teacher. A majority of these schools were comprised of one or several classrooms composed of several different age groups, providing additional challenges for teachers (Butchart & McEwan, 1998; Taylor, 1923).

Student fear of the teacher and punishment were seen as necessities for teachers to maintain control (Butchart & McEwan, 1998; Taylor, 1923). Punishments included whipping students with switches that inflicted pain. Students were also placed in front of the classroom and publicly humiliated by the teacher. Both of these methods would create public embarrassment for the student being punished (Butchart & McEwan, 1998; Taylor, 1923). In many cases, these punishments included the removal of disruptive students from instruction (Taylor, 1923).

As schools moved into the middle to late 19<sup>th</sup> century, an emphasis on systemic leadership and external stimulus became a norm. In Philadelphia, Lancaster developed an approach, which resembled modern peer tutoring. Students who excelled in academics were given opportunities to lead others in their learning (Taylor, 1923). Teachers who used school management systems like the Lancaster school created a system where students were given responsibilities and privileges based on their achievements in the classroom (Talbot, 1975; Taylor, 1923). Teachers were led by principals, students were led by teachers in small classrooms, and students who were less successful were led by more successful students (Taylor, 1923).

Teachers and faculty at schools following this model began implementing rewards, such as merit points for success and positive behavior and demerit points for

negative behaviors. Students with more merits would be given benefits: being required to do fewer of the required chores such as cleaning the classroom, fewer school work requirements, and being provided the opportunity to lead students who had acquired fewer merit points (Taylor, 1923). However, punishments for students who did not follow classroom behavior expectations included placing students in cages or stocks in the classroom (Talbot, 1975; Taylor, 1923).

Although many teachers studied and implemented the Lancaster system, many criticized the approach for giving more affluent students increased opportunities for success. As these students received more social learning experiences and learning at home, they were more likely to be given more opportunities to lead their less-affluent peers (Talbot, 1975; Taylor, 1923). Teachers who taught in and followed the methods used in the Lancaster school designed the structure of discipline in their school to reflect the social class systems in their society (Taylor, 1923). They perceived that those who were willing to work would be rewarded with responsibilities and leadership, while those who struggled or were less willing to work would benefit from increased manual labor and being subordinate to their peers. Those who were punished for behavior by being placed in the stocks or cages would be exposed to the life of criminal punishment they would suffer if they continued their behavior (Butchart & McEwan, 1998; Taylor, 1923).

Many schools of this period emphasized whole class instruction with a teacher as the leader of all the students in the room (Taylor, 1923). Using scriptures from the Christian Bible on love and respect, teachers taught the students social skills emphasizing empathy and service to others (Taylor, 1923). As teachers emphasized social skills, many



of them developed engaging lessons that would spark interest and keep students involved in the lesson as teachers directed learning from their desks (Butchart & McEwan, 1998). Teaching engaging lessons and rewarding positive behaviors are present in such modern management approaches as positive behavior intervention supports (PBIS) (Sugai et al., 2012), which will be discussed in the modern approaches to student discipline section of this review.

During the U.S. Civil War, leaders and teachers at schools using the Lancaster and Bible-based approaches to student learning and school discipline began to develop systems where students who demonstrated appropriate behavior were given more learning opportunities than their classmates, including more attention in the classroom and being made into a role model by their teachers (Taylor, 1923). Meanwhile, the students who demonstrated less appropriate behaviors were more likely to fail in their studies (Taylor, 1923). College professors and scholars during this period conducted research and developed textbooks and course work on the topic of student discipline for pre-service teachers.

Detailed classroom management plans, studies, and college class work described by Taylor (1923) taught new teachers to emphasize a sense of humor, include fresh plants in their rooms, and ensure their classrooms were warm in the winter months. These disciplinary methods emphasized developing warm, inviting classrooms that gave a home-like atmosphere. However, the methods teachers used to manage their classrooms and to discipline was often carried out using methods that the students' previous teachers had used (Taylor, 1923). These preservice classes and textbooks did little to address any

possible physical, social, or emotional reasons behind disruptive student behavior (Taylor, 1923) Physical discipline, with restraint and a lack of teacher emotion, the use of rewards for appropriate behavior, and public embarrassment were still the norm for school punishments (Buchart & McEwan, 1998; Taylor, 1923).

As the 1800s progressed into the early 1900s, a movement away from corporal (physical) punishment developed. Articles and writings from press at the time reflected the fact that many parents and families believed that physical punishments were barbaric and made other students uncomfortable in the classroom (Mann, 1868; Taylor, 1923). The New York state schools produced a guide that attempted to reduce the use of physical punishments. In this guide, corporal punishment for inappropriate behavior was described as a last resort to be used when rewards and removal from instruction for a short time failed to develop compliance by the students. (Mann, 1868; Taylor, 1923). The guide set rules which required that the child being physically punished was to be removed from their classroom. After the students were removed, school leaders (school masters or principals) would provide corporal punishment to the student and discuss the punishment with the child's parents (Taylor, 1923). As a final resort, the New York guide suggested suspensions from school for several days as a substitute for physical discipline (Mann, 1868; Taylor, 1923).

The methods teachers used to manage their classrooms in the 1890s changed. The Spellbinders school format in New York state was an early style of student self-regulated and self-governed behavior management. Teachers developed democratic systems where students created rules, selected class leaders, and allowed students to guide the learning

and pace of the classroom (Talbot, 1975; Taylor, 1923). This approach began a period where student self-regulation and ownership of learning opened up doors to psychological research of school discipline that shapes the classroom management and disciplinary approaches of today (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012; Taylor, 1923; Watson, 1924).

**Watson, Skinner, and behaviorism.** In the early 1920s, Watson (1924) theorized that behaviors, positive or negative, are a learned trait. Watson concluded that, “If you decide that the human organism should behave in this way; you must arrange situations of such and such kinds” (Watson, 1924 p. 7). He concluded that desired behaviors were developed by reactions to stimuli that could be set by man or by the environment (Watson, 1924). Watson also suggested that schools avoid physical punishments at all costs, a suggestion that would be both supported and argued by others such as Skinner (1969) and Baum (2010). Watson theorized that people can develop appropriate behaviors into memory when they are rewarded for appropriate behaviors and denied rewards for inappropriate behaviors (Watson, 1924). Over a long period of time, consistent and scheduled rewards and positive words in reaction to desired behaviors would result in people developing the desired behaviors into long-term memory (Watson, 1924, 1969).

Studying Watson’s work on training behavior, B.F. Skinner concluded that behaviors could be trained through mental exercise and practice (Skinner, 1955, 1969). From the results of experiments, Skinner theorized that humans developed behavioral habits through rehearsals. By rehearsing appropriate behaviors and receiving positive rewards (reinforcement), people would develop the desired behaviors (Skinner, 1969).

When a person is rewarded for acting appropriately and not rewarded for inappropriate behaviors, he/she will develop a positive memory for the rewarded behavior, increasing the frequency the person will act appropriately (Skinner, 1969).

Removing stimuli that would lead to the undesired behaviors and denying rewards when these behaviors occur was termed negative reinforcement (Skinner, 1955, 1969). Skinner theorized that removing rewards for inappropriate behaviors and removing possible distractions aided in training for the correct behavior or action (Skinner, 1969). As the behavior is learned, the reward is slowly taken away over time. During this time, these behaviors would become learned and would be performed without the reinforcement (Skinner, 1969).

Supporting Watson (1924), Skinner warned about the use of physical punishments, as well as punishments in general. He concluded that positive reinforcement increased the frequency of appropriate behaviors and argued that negative reinforcement, through the lack of a reward, would aid in increasing the subject's desire to perform the appropriate behavior more than a punishment would (Skinner, 1969). Skinner (1969) found that punishments merely weakened the frequency of inappropriate behavior while not increasing the frequency of desired behaviors. Positive reinforcement would produce more long-term results than negative reinforcement or punishment (Skinner, 1955, 1969).

Skinner (1969) theorized that humans could voluntarily change their behaviors if they were taught and encouraged to do so (Charles & Senter, 2004; Skinner, 1969). After several rewards for new behaviors and the removal of reward for incorrect behaviors,

Skinner concluded that new habits could be mentally and physically learned (Charles & Senter, 2004; Skinner, 1969).

In his early work, Skinner did not address classroom discipline (Charles & Senter, 2004). However, in his later years, Skinner applied these ideas of behavioral modification to schools. He reflected that schools could avoid corporal punishment and train lasting and desired behaviors by using rewards (Charles & Senter, 2004). Through positive student and teacher relationships and rewards of value to the child, schools could change behavior by creating a schedule of rewards for desired behaviors. As students develop appropriate behaviors, the frequency a child is rewarded for the appropriate behavior is reduced gradually until the behaviors are part of a child's long-term memory (Charles & Senter, 2004; Skinner, 1959, 1969). With effective teacher disciplinary practices, student behavior may be trained through rehearsal and rewards, avoiding the physical punishments many desired to be removed from schools (Mann, 1868; Skinner, 1969; Taylor, 1923).

**Skinner's theory in practice.** Schools apply many aspects of Skinner's theories about behavior in their classrooms today. The use of token economies and verbal rewards to reinforce positive behaviors are common methods used to improve student behavior. Through token economies, schools allow their students to collect "money", tickets, or even progress points daily to gain class or individual rewards (Scott, Alter, & Hirn, 2011 Sugai & Simonsen 2012). This practice has been found to increase student confidence and aid in developing long-term social norms in schools (Sugai & Horner, 2010).

Studies of classrooms and teachers using these rewards have been well-documented in the literature. Carnett et al. (2014) demonstrated how tokens could benefit special learners. In a classroom with an autistic student struggling to behave, a token economy was developed. For the first study in the experiment, the autistic student used a chart to record each positive or appropriate behavior. Once a goal amount of marks was achieved, a reward was given by the teacher. After implementation of the reward system, the frequency of appropriate behaviors was observed and charted (Carnett et al., 2014).

Before the intervention study, Carnett et al. (2014) observed that the autistic student behaved appropriately only 13% of the time. After the reward system was implemented only for the autistic student, Carnett et al. found that the child behaved appropriately 59% of the time he was in a mainstream classroom with general curriculum students. After the plan was implemented with the child's entire class of mainstream students, the autistic student's rate of behaving appropriately increased again to 64% of the time he spent in the mainstream class (Carnett et al., 2014). The use of a reward system for appropriate behavior led to a large increase in the student's use of appropriate behaviors.

In an experiment rewarding the use of appropriate routines to solve math problems, five students with behavioral issues were given rewards for following steps to solve story problems. Using a reward chart, teachers gave each student reward points when they successfully performed an action in the solving of math problems and acting appropriately during math instruction. After an undisclosed time period, the students were trained to monitor and reward their own behavior (Scott et al., 2011). Through

charting the rate of disruptive behaviors, Scott et al. (2011) saw an increase in on task behaviors as a result of both staff-monitored and self-monitored tokens. The average rate of on-task behavior for each student increased at rates as high as 32%. Also, each child increased the number of correctly-solved math problems in a post-test in comparison to the pre-test (Scott et al., 2011).

Training behaviors through reinforcement and rewards has increased appropriate student behaviors (Carnett et al., 2014; Scott et al., 2011). Studies have found behaviorist methods have improved student behavior (Carnett et al., 2014; Scott et al., 2011; Horner & Sugai, 2015). Carnett et al. (2014) cautioned that the power of the reward can be interrupted when teachers are forced to give punishments or remove violent students. To receive optimal success through conditioning, behavior training must be supported with consistent demonstration and teaching of desired behaviors and the consistent use of the rewards (Skinner, 1969; Sugai & Simonsen, 2012).

**Criticisms of behaviorism.** Behaviorism's idea of rewards for behaviors and rehearsal of correct behaviors has become a norm in several modern educational frameworks and approaches (Canter & Canter, 1976; Sugai & Horner, 2002; Sugai & Simonsen, 2012). However, many arguments have been expressed regarding behaviorist-based methods being used to teach appropriate behavior (Chomsky, 1957; Kohn, 1993; MacCorquodale, 1970).

Chomsky (1957) used a linguistic approach to analyze the writings of Skinner. Chomsky raised concerns regarding the definition of stimulus. Skinner (1957) theorized that a human could be trained to act in a desired manner through a reward and the use of

a consistent reward phrase or tone of voice. Comparing Skinner's research to a piece of art, Chomsky argued that several different nuances in the atmosphere of everyday life could change the response (Chomsky, 1957; MacCorquodale, 1970). Further, Chomsky (1957) stated that one cannot teach or predict someone's behavior in every situation, as he/she may be distracted by outside stimuli. If a student is being trained and rewarded to not interrupt the teacher in a classroom, their need to use the restroom, others talking, or boredom with student work may distract them from acting appropriately (Chomsky, 1957; Schlechty, 2002).

Chomsky also argued that the verbal commands that a teacher or parent gives to a child can have an effect on how a child responds. Chomsky argued that the dialect, tone of voice, and the vocal pitch of each person working with a child can affect how a child processes behavior (Chomsky, 1957; MacCorquodale, 1970). If a parent and a teacher both desire a specific behavior while one uses a friendly tone and another yells, the response from the same child would be different, thus affecting the development of overall behavior (Chomsky, 1957). Chomsky (1957) concluded that the human brain processes memories through not only training, but by reaction to the environment where training is occurring. The brain memorizes behaviors not only by training, but also reaction to outside influences that occur during the training. Chomsky (1957) argued that behaviors are not developed by rewards alone, but that outside stimuli, the language used, and the voice of the person teaching the behavior leads to the construction of long-term behaviors and knowledge of social norms (Chomsky, 1957; MacCorquodale, 1970).



Kohn (1993) argued that rewards do not develop long term behavioral skills of students. Kohn (1993) argued that rewards may lead to appropriate behaviors but are an exercise in adults ensuring control. Kohn (1993) stated that this control denies a child the opportunity to develop self-control and intrinsic motivation, or the desire to perform tasks independently for themselves. Kohn also argued that while control is needed in areas where safety and health are in question, simply giving a reward for successfully solving a math problem takes away from a child's curiosity and motivation to develop knowledge on their own. Kohn (1993, 2013) discussed that behaviorist methods make classroom control easy for teachers but does not give children the opportunity to develop self-control, find rewards in the learning experience in the classroom, and develop the ability to control their own learning.

According to Kohn (1993), rewards act as punishment. As an example, he discussed that while a student who gets an "A" on their report card will feel encouraged, those who receive an "F" feel punished and even rejected. These rewards lead students to gain favor for a reward instead of developing a true relationship with a parent or teacher. Kohn also argued that the rewards given for student behavior neglect the true reasons for behavior and give the students little reason to take risks, make mistakes, and challenge themselves. Kohn (2013) presented a new idea for rewards in the classroom. Although rewards are a strong method for ensuring that basic behavior is achieved, Kohn (2013) argued that students should discuss with the teacher what behavior expectations should be, rewards should be reasonable and related to learning tasks, and that all students should be able to see the intrinsic reward that can come from the learning. Kohn's idea of

learning being a reward for students is further supported by Schlechty (2002), who discussed the importance of creating student work that encourages students to become engaged and motivated to spend their time learning instead of gaining rewards.

The use of rewards and training of appropriate behavior have been applied in several methods teachers have used to assure cooperative classrooms and safe learning environments (Canter & Canter, 1976; Carnett et al., 2014; Charles & Senter, 2004; Kohn, 1993; Skinner, 1969; Sugai & Simonsen, 2012). Reinforcing appropriate behaviors and using routines to teach and reward appropriate behaviors have been found to be motivational for students and effective for teachers (Charles & Senter, 2004; Moberly, Waddle, & Duff, 2005). However, opinions and studies of the use of behaviorist methods to control student behavior have presented an argument that external stimuli affect the ability for children to translate expectations and that rewards actually remove the intrinsic motivation for children to learn in school and cooperate in society (Chomsky, 1957; Kohn, 1993). Regardless, aspects of behaviorism have been the evident in many modern approaches to classroom management (Canter & Canter, 1976; Kohn, 1993; Moberly et al., 2005; Sugai & Horner, 2010) and a critical part of how schools react to inappropriate student behavior.

**Social learning theory and positive discipline: Alfred Bandura.** Although Skinner saw learning as a programmed, developed skill (Skinner, 1955; Skinner, 1969; Charles & Senter, 2004), Bandura (1977) theorized that adults and children alike make decisions by processing thoughts about behaviors and weighing options to measure what

is good or bad. Bandura found that people look to the behaviors of other individuals around them as role models or examples for their behavior.

Bandura (1977) created an experiment where a person, selected by the researchers as a role model, would act in both appropriate and inappropriate behaviors. When the role model acted appropriately, he/she was given a reward, such as praise, from the researcher. The researchers gave the role model punishments, such as a denied reward, when the role model acted inappropriately. As the role model performed tasks or acted in the ways Bandura and his researchers asked, other subjects would observe from an outside area. After this process, Bandura and his researchers observed the behaviors of those in the audience in similar situations. In observations, the audience members acted in the appropriate manner with increasing frequency in comparison with the role models (Bandura, 1977). Bandura theorized that that people who witnessed the behaviors of the role models and their resulting rewards would learn vicariously about what is appropriate behavior, increasing the likeliness of the audience members acting appropriately. It was further observed that when inappropriate behavior was rewarded, those observing the behaviors would act inappropriately (Bandura, 1977; Bandura, Ross, & Ross, 1961).

Bandura (1977) concluded that individuals' behaviors are developed by experiencing others' behaviors. Bandura added that the teacher of the desired behavior must act as a facilitator of behavior learning and deliberately select individuals who are role models for each group of people being taught (Gibbs & Powell, 2012). By modeling and rewarding correct behavior and selecting individuals as role models, peers can

develop appropriate behavior skills through observation (Bandura, et al., 1961; Bandura, 1977).

**Classroom implications of social learning.** Modeling and demonstrating behaviors for students is used in many modern discipline formats that emphasize social and emotional learning (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicky, Taylor, Weissburg, & Schellinger, 2011; Simonsen & Sugai, 2012). Wassdorp, Bradshaw, and Leaf (2012) studied the implementation of discipline plans with social learning aspects. Bradshaw et al. (2012) conducted a clinical effectiveness trial in 37 schools with varying student demographic backgrounds. Using a teacher-collected checklist that tracks office referrals and observations of student behaviors, Wassdorp et al. found that the emphasis on positive and appropriate behaviors and using students as peer examples led to improved emotional regulation in students, increased student concentration on class work, and reduced office referrals in the schools. Violent and aggressive behaviors were also reduced in the schools (Wassdorp et al., 2012).

To understand the advantages of implementing discipline emphasizing social and emotional learning, Durlak et al. (2011) performed a meta-analysis of 213 research articles and reports of the implementation of discipline programs which emphasized the teaching of social skills and positive behaviors. These 213 research articles included research on several topics, including the relationship between positive behavior and achievement, the development of social skills, and the effects of teachers working to improve student social skills. Over 270,000 children were involved in these studies.

Analyzing articles from 1970 to 2007, Durlak et al. (2011) found that the implementation of programs emphasizing the development of social skills and positive behavior increased student self-esteem, reduced student conduct issues and office interventions, and reduced emotional stress levels in the students and staff in the school. Although different approaches to teaching social and emotional skills were used in the studied schools, over 83% of the studies were implemented by classroom teachers who were directly teaching behaviors and emphasizing positive behaviors and interventions to assist students with behavioral problems (Durlak et al., 2011).

Several studies included in the meta-analysis involved the implementation of behavioral intervention programs and discipline approaches emphasizing prosocial behavior. These intervention programs and discipline programs took, on average, at least one to two years to fully implement. Programs which were successful had success rates that remained statistically significant for at least six months or longer. Durlak et al. (2011) found that successful programs were often implemented by staff members in the schools. By using inside sources, schools are spared the cost of outside organizations developing these programs while allowing staff to gain ownership of these changes and developing teacher leadership skills (Dufour, et al., 2011; Durlak et al., 2011).

Durlak et al. (2011) also found that schools that emphasized teaching positive behaviors saw modest increases in assessment scores, with an average increase of 11 percentile points. Although only a few of the analyzed studies discussed and related the school behavior to assessment scores and student learning, Durlak et al. (2011) reflected, “Educators who are pressured by the No Child Left Behind legislation to improve the

academic performance of their students might welcome programs that could boost achievement by 11 percentile points” (p. 412). With a confidence level of 95%, these studies provide evidence that emphasizing and teaching positive behaviors improves student well-being, student emotional health, and to an extent, academic performance (Durlak et al., 2011).

Student behavior has presented a challenge for schools throughout the history of American schools. Teachers, psychologists, and researchers have used several methods to understand student behavior and learn how to improve the learning environment for students. The psychological studies and historical background described in the literature has provided a background for the frameworks and methods schools use to manage classrooms and provide safe and appropriate places for students to grow and learn.

### **Modern Disciplinary Approaches and Frameworks**

Several different disciplinary approaches and frameworks are currently used by schools to develop appropriate student behavior, prevent disruptive behaviors, and/or discipline students (Kaikci, 2011). Although several names and frameworks exist for these ideas, the concepts of obedience, teacher reaction to disruptions, teacher preventative approaches, and conflict resolution appear often in the literature (Allen, 2010; Canter & Canter, 1976; Johnson, Johnson, Dudley, & Ackigoz, 1994; Kaikci, 2011; Kounin, 1970; Marzano, Marzano, & Pickering, 2003; Nicholls & Houghton, 1995). These frameworks and approaches shape the disciplinary training teachers have received in their pre-service education and the methods experienced teachers use to implement discipline in their classrooms today.

**Reactionary discipline: obedience and responsibility.** Many American and international teachers and schools provide student discipline using reactionary methods where teachers see inappropriate behaviors, react to them, and provide assistance and/or consequences after incidents have occurred (Kaikci, 2011; Kounin, 1970; Marzano et al., 2003; Taylor, 1923). Using this methodology, teachers set concrete rules, procedures, and punishments (Marzano, 2003). To assure an orderly environment, teachers guide learning while scanning the room to identify inappropriate student behavior (Kounin, 1970). In reaction, teachers may glance at students, create silence to emphasize the disciplinary issue, relocate students, or give a punishment (Kounin, 1970; Marzano et al., 2003). Kounin (1970) described this as group management or *withitness*. In group management, the teacher reacts to situations in the classroom in an effective manner and provides discipline, showing their authority to the class (Kounin, 1970). Other names for programs that use the idea of group management methods includes group dynamics, classroom management, and behavior intervention support team (BIST), obedience models, and/or responsibility models (Maag, 2012).

**Assertive discipline: a common reactionary approach.** The concept of *withitness* was further developed into a reactionary approach that demands an assertive teacher who creates an atmosphere that demands appropriate behavior and develops an organized classroom to ensure it (Canter & Canter, 1976). A popular form of classroom management that is practiced by many teachers is the Assertive Discipline approach, where teachers create rules that lead to reactions with rewards or punishments (Canter & Canter, 1976). The goal of these plans is for teachers to simply set rules and react in ways

that punish offenders and set-up demonstrations for others to see the consequences of inappropriate behavior. Rewards are often given through merit systems of individual student rewards for appropriate behavior (Canter & Canter, 1976).

Canter and Canter (1976) described student behavior as a primary responsibility of the teacher. The teacher had the responsibility to teach students about what is acceptable student behavior in the classroom. Talking with students on the very first day of school, teachers would create and teach concrete rules while outlining immediate rewards and consequences (Canter & Canter, 1976). Following the ideas of behaviorism, teachers and school administrators develop schedules of reinforcement to develop appropriate behavior (Canter & Canter, 1976; Skinner, 1969). On the first day, teachers implement reinforcement through rewards systems such as point charts along with verbal praise (Canter & Canter, 1976). At the same time, teachers reinforce classroom rules through verbal commands and repetition of class rules. Most of the reinforcement the teachers use come through words and actions which are assertive in nature, using a repetitive speech pattern of the same warning, without harmful words such as “shut up”, and effective and consistent delivery of a punishment to students, often a removal from class activity or denial of a class reward. These punishments, the denial of a reward, reflect the ideas proposed by Watson (1924) and Skinner (1969). Teachers continue a consistent schedule of rewards, reinforcing appropriate behavior (Canter & Canter, 1976; Nicholls & Houghton, 1995; Skinner, 1969).

**Assertive discipline and other reactionary discipline in practice.** The use of assertive, reactionary based disciplinary methods has shown to be effective for many



teachers. In an international study of 120 students in three consecutive school years, observations of student behavior and reaction to instruction from teachers trained in assertive discipline was recorded (Nicholls & Houghton, 1995). Over the time period of three years, disruptive student behaviors decreased, time on-task increased, and teacher support for reactionary disciplinary approaches increased (Nicholls & Houghton, 1995). Using concise rules and reacting to offenses effectively has been useful for many teachers.

Teachers practicing reactionary discipline may develop a stronger sense of professionalism. Kaicki (2011) found through interviews of teachers in primary schools that the educators felt a sense of freedom and professionalism when they used reactionary processes of discipline. In this study, teachers reported value in the use of their psychological training and discussed the importance of discussing the issues of individual students and practice disciplinary skills in teacher support groups. The increased effectiveness of non-verbal gestures and facial expressions to remind students of inappropriate behaviors that were developed through practicing reactionary discipline approaches was reported by the teachers as rewarding and empowering (Kaicki, 2011). Teachers surveyed were found to be more accepting of reactionary discipline when teachers clearly discussed rules with their students, reported possible discipline issues with students to their colleagues, and gave effective punishments to students in a fair and consistent manner. Kaicki (2011) and Marzano et al. (2005) found that creating assertive and/or reactionary disciplinary methods can further the ability for teachers to develop

positive relationships with their students, improving the learning environment for teachers and students alike.

**Concerns involving reactionary discipline.** The tradition of schools creating rules and reacting to infractions has been used with different variations over time (Canter & Canter, 1976; Marzano et al., 2005; Taylor, 1923). However, the use of punishments that react to behavior has been seen as a concern by many scholars, schools, and disciplinary experts (Allen, 2010; Kaicki, 2011; Lhamon & Samuels, 2014; McIntosh, Bennett, & Price, 2011). Due to the inexperience of younger teachers, lost learning time due to the teaching and reinforcement of class rules, and the concerns over legalities of discipline that reacts to behaviors has created some concerns about the effectiveness of reactionary discipline (Lhamon & Samuels, 2014; McIntosh et al., 2011; Sugai & Simonsen, 2012).

Using reactive disciplinary approaches requires teachers who are experienced in dealing with student behavior and the provision of time for the teacher to develop confidence in their skills (Allen, 2010; Canter & Canter, 1976; Marzano, Gaddy, & Fossid, 2005; Nicholls & Houghton, 1995; Pas et al., 2010). In many studies, researchers have discussed the importance of developing these discipline and classroom management skills through practice in the pre-service period of a teacher's career (Allen, 2010; Kaicki, 2011; Martin et al., 1999; Marzano et al., 2005) Even with this emphasis, novice teachers feel that too little time was spent in college developing classroom management skills and that they felt unprepared to effectively react to discipline issues in an effective manner (Allen, 2010; Merrett & Wheldall, 1993; Smart & Igo, 2010).

In a survey of first- and second-year teachers' perceptions of student behaviors, Martin et al. (1999) concluded that novice teachers were concerned about their abilities to manage a classroom. Martin et al. found that a majority of first- and second-year teachers perceived that their discipline issues were affected by their level of confidence in reacting to inappropriate behaviors effectively. Martin et al. found that the teachers desired specific professional development that would assist them in understanding how to control their classrooms. Martin et al. (1999) found that experienced teachers felt more comfortable reacting to and stopping inappropriate student behaviors. Meanwhile, less-experienced teachers, especially those just out of their pre-service training, expressed a lack of emphasis and time in their training devoted to learning and developing classroom management techniques and discipline skills needed to prevent disruptive behavior (Martin et al., 1999). This same concern was expressed in other studies (Allen, 2010; Magg, 2012; Merrett & Wheldall, 1993; Sugai & Simonsen, 2012).

Many of the methods involved in reactionary disciplinary techniques involve punishments that remove students from class environments, such as time outs, office referrals, and even suspensions for severe infractions (Magg, 2012; Simonsen & Sugai, 2012). Caldarella et al. (2011) concluded in their studies that classroom management that is reactionary in nature often leads to inability of students to independently control their own behavior and led to an increased chance a student would be suspended. Suspensions and removals from instruction have led to increased school drop-out rates, increased delinquency rates, and lower reading and mathematics achievement scores (Caldarella et

al., 2011; Fenning, Theodos, Benner, & Bohanon-Edmonson, 2004; Magg, 2012; Skiba & Rausch, 2006).

The practice of excluding students from activities or class instruction as a way to eliminate problem behaviors has often been a topic of debate. Magg (2012) reported that teachers in many studies observed students who would purposely misbehave to leave activities that were not of interest, or to receive attention not received in the home. Studies have also reported that students with disabilities and minority students are often targeted more than average students when disruptive behaviors occur (Fenning et al., 2004; Magg, 2012; McIntosh et al., 2011).

When students are disciplined in front of their class, the public embarrassment many children experience has also been seen as a catalyst for further disciplinary issues (Kayikcy, 2011; Morrissey, Bohanon, & Fenning, 2010). Morrissey et al. (2010) concluded that the overuse of punishment and reactionary methods towards students with aggressive behaviors may increase student anger and exacerbate violent behavior towards adults and peers.

Scholars have expressed concerns that reactionary disciplinary methods lead to teacher discrimination toward students with disabilities, towards student that come from different socioeconomic groups, and towards students from different racial groups (Sugai & Horner, 2010; Lhamon & Samuels, 2014; McIntosh et al., 2011; Sugai & Simonsen, 2012). A joint letter by the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Justice recommended that discipline approaches in schools be nondiscriminatory towards students in nature (Lhamon & Samuels, 2014). This letter also requested that schools

create discipline that reinforces appropriate student behaviors in a positive manner to avoid discipline that may be discriminatory towards some students.

Lhamon and Samuel's letter encouraged schools to create preventative disciplinary methods that avoid classroom management that is simply reacting to discipline, as this may lead to emotional-based punishments and possible mistreatment of minority groups or students with emotional issues. Instead, the letter encouraged schools to teach appropriate behaviors that emphasize preventing rather than reducing behavioral issues (Lhamon & Samuels, 2014). With this federal initiative and possible legislative changes regarding discipline, it is necessary for schools to consider disciplinary approaches that go beyond reacting to behaviors and giving punishments (Lhamon & Samuels, 2014; McIntosh et al., 2011; Morrissey et al., 2010; Simonsen & Sugai, 2012). Approaches that are preventative and emphasize the teaching and rehearsal of effective behavior are encouraged by several sources to improve student behavior (Carroll, Lawler, & Phee, 2013; Evans, Lester, & Anfara Jr., 2013; Lhamon & Samuels, 2014; Martin et al., 1999; Sugai & Simonsen, 2012). Behaviorist based, reactionary practices have provided methods for teachers to manage classrooms that have empowered teachers and stopped disruptive student behaviors (Canter & Canter, 1976; Kaicki 2011; Marzano et al., 2005; Skinner, 1969).

**Intervention-based disciplinary approaches: Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS/SWPBIS).** Due to the increasing emphasis on developing social skills and preventing negative behaviors, frameworks that emphasize rewarding positive behavior and assisting students who behave inappropriately are becoming more common

in the classroom (Ford, 2013; Lhamon & Samuels, 2014; Sugai & Horner, 2010; Sugai & Simonsen, 2015) Positive behavior intervention and supports (PBIS, or often labeled as School-Wide PBIS [SWPBIS]) is a framework that is used to emphasize positive behaviors, teach appropriate and life-long social skills, and prevent problematic behaviors from becoming long-term issues for students. The PBIS framework, developed in the 1980's, uses behavioral modification and conditioning developed by Skinner and Watson to emphasize prevention and intervention over student discipline and punishments (Sugai & Horner, 2015).

**How PBIS works.** PBIS is a decision-making framework for teachers and administrators that emphasizes preventative measures for curbing disruptive and violent behavior (Sugai & Horner, 2002; Sugai & Simonsen, 2012). School personnel use PBIS to make decisions about how to prevent disruptive behaviors and help students understand basic social skills necessary for schools (Sugai & Horner, 2010). In this framework, all students are categorized into one of three different levels of interventions, described as tiers, based on their behavior (Sugai & Horner, 2010). In the first level, or first tier, all students experience school-wide behavior expectations and rules that are shared by all students and teachers, instead of individual classroom rules. The shared rules and expectations, developed by teachers and administrators include clear demonstrations and discussions about how to act in the school environment. Also, a system to reward positive behaviors, often a token economy, is introduced (Sugai & Horner, 2010). Daily practice of rules occurs and teachers actively acknowledge students

who make appropriate social decisions. As a result, students are exposed to social norms in a positive manner (Bauer, 2010; Sugai & Horner, 2010; Simonsen et al., 2008).

While all students receive first tier (or primary) discipline, students who demonstrate behavioral issues may receive second tier (preventions) that may include group counseling and behavioral instruction by selected staff members. If these interventions fail to improve student behavior, these students will then receive third tier (intervention) supports from staff, including possible behavioral intervention plans (BIPs) and intense social and psychological counseling. All events, from rules violations to counseling, are recorded into a database or list that can be used to implement interventions for students in need (Sugai & Horner, 2009, 2010).

In the PBIS framework, students who present disciplinary issues receive further training from school counselors and staff about appropriate behavior. Individual conferences, small-group re-teaching of expectations, and consultation with family members are often included in the third tier (Bradshaw & Pas, 2011; Sugai & Horner, 2010). More-frequent classroom emphasis on positive behaviors and immediate response to infractions are necessary for the students who have not improved their behavior in the first and the second tier (Simonsen et al., 2008).

**How PBIS affects schools: students.** Literature shows the strengths of SWPBIS and how it can positively affect a school. The importance of tier-1 interventions, shared common social expectations, interventions for students exhibiting concerning student behavior, and rewards have been beneficial for many learning situations (Atkins, Hoagwood, Kutash, & Seidman, 2010; Barrett & Scott, 2006; Cuccaro & Geitner, 2007;

Miramontes, Marchant, Heath, & Fischer, 2011; Reddy, Newman, De Thomas, & Chun, 2009; Sugai & Simonsen, 2012). Studies of Florida schools implementing SWPBIS between 2004 and 2007 found strong decreases in student office referrals during the implementation of primary interventions. These elementary schools experienced a 33% average decrease of office referrals, a 24% average decrease in school suspensions, and a decrease in average out of school suspension dates by five days per 100 days during the first school year (Childs, Kincaid, & George, 2010).

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When students exhibit behavioral issues, the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Justice suggests that interventions to prevent behaviors and provide students with tools to improve their behavior are a necessity (Lhamon &



Samuels, 2014). PBIS has provided schools with a system to assist students with emotional issues through the response to intervention (Rti) process. Schools use Rti to collect data about students who are struggling in their academic coursework (Carroll, et al., 2013). When students exhibit a misunderstanding or non-compliance with behavioral expectations, teachers and support staff provide interventions and extra assistance, and progress is tracked to make decisions that will prevent further issues with developing appropriate behavior and social skills (Carroll et al., 2013). Schools implementing PBIS follow this same process to help students who are struggling to use acceptable behavior (Carroll et al., 2013; Utley & Obiakor, 2012).

To improve student learning, schools create and implement interventions to attempt improvement for students before tutoring or special education programs are implemented. Schools using PBIS or intervention-based disciplinary methods use a similar process to intervene with students and improve student behavior (Carroll Lawlor, & Phee, 2013; Haraway, 2012; Sugai & Simonsen, 2012). Interventions, collecting data, and adjusting individual student interventions based on the collected data are all performed to assure that schools are able to reach students in need while complying with federal and local educational laws and policies (Carroll et al., 2013). It is cautioned that PBIS should not be separated from Rti, but instead, “(the) PBIS framework is the application of Rti principles and should be applied to the improvement side of all students” (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012, p. 4).

**How PBIS affects schools: teachers and leadership.** PBIS has been found to save time for teachers to perform the duties of teaching (Bradshaw, Reinke, Brown, &

Beavins, 2008; Feuerborn & Chinn, 2012; Pas et al., 2010; Sugai, O’Keeffe, Horner, & Lewis, 2013). In studies performed by Sugai et al. (2013), principals stated that schools implementing PBIS gained an average 15 extra days of school hours for instruction, as less time was spent dealing with discipline and behavior. It was also found in these schools that the students could gain up to 79 days of school hours back each year as a result of effective teacher rewards and interventions (Sugai et al., 2013). The increased instructional time often results in increased achievement scores in reading and language arts, as well as in an observed improvement in student study skills (Nelson, Lynass, Tsai, Richman, & Cheney, 2012; Reinke, Herman, & Stormont, 2013; Yeung, Mooney, Barker, & Dobia, 2009).

Administrative leadership and teacher involvement have been suggested as methods to improve teacher and support staff support of PBIS (Coffey & Horner, 2012; Pas et al., 2010; Sugai et al., 2013; Sugai & Simonsen, 2012). In a survey of teachers working in a cross section of three large schools using the PBIS framework, 76% of the teachers perceived that strong administration support and knowledge of the framework was a necessity for successful use of PBIS (Andreou, 2012). Administrators must be able to effectively show the link between individual classroom management and strong interventions (Carter & Van Norman, 2010; Sugai & Simonsen, 2012). With strong leadership and effective training, PBIS is a tool that schools can use to improve classroom environments and student behavior.

**Critiques of PBIS.** Several critiques of PBIS have been presented in the press and in research. Because the process of PBIS is based on the principles of Behaviorism

(Skinner, 1969; Sugai & Horner, 2010; Watson, 1924), some media, educators, and parents have compared the reinforcement of positive behaviors to giving treats to animal (Andreou, 2012; Leibig, 2011). PBIS has been thought of as a special education program, an individual intervention, or a system to remove motivation for intrinsic success (Andreou, 2012; Kohn, 1993; Sugai & Simonsen, 2012). Often, teachers are concerned about time lost to data collection and that the framework removes the independent classroom personalities that teachers work entire careers to create (Andreou, 2012; Sugai & Simonsen, 2012).

Simplifying rules and procedures for students has been seen as a method for improving student behavior (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012). Through PBIS/SWPBIS, schools create shared rules, collect data, and teach students about appropriate behavior while identifying students with behavioral issues and helping them to understand what is accepted in school (Pas et al., 2010; Sadler & Sugai 2009; Sugai & Simonsen, 2012). While some critics have questioned the use of this disciplinary framework due to the removal of teacher freedom and the overuse of rewards (Andreou, 2012; Kohn, 1993; Leibig, 2011; Sugai & Simonsen, 2012), PBIS has been seen to improve conflicts between students, reduce suspensions, and increase student achievement (Cregor, 2008; Reinke et al., 2013; Yeung, Money, Barker, & Dobia, 2009).

**Intervention-based disciplinary approaches: conflict resolution and restorative justice.** Recently, some K-12 schools in metropolitan areas have begun to use conflict resolution through the approach of restorative justice to manage student behavior (Evans, Lester, & Anafara JR, 2013; Gregory, Clawson, Davis, & Gerewitz, 2016; Konz

& McKay, 2014; Schlechter, 2014; Westervelt, 2014). With the goal of empowering students to solve their own issues with their peers, school faculties implementing restorative justice create interventions with both parties in a conflict through counseling and mediation with adults to discuss positive solutions. Schools using restorative justice aim to avoid suspending or removing students from classrooms through these mediations (Konz & Mckay, 2014; Schlechter, 2014). Although assisting students with violent or disruptive conflict with their peers or teachers, school staff members spend time teaching their entire student body about conflict resolution and discussing how other classmates solved their own conflicts. (Konz & Mckay, 2014; Schlechter, 2014).

**The development of restorative justice for schools: how it is implemented.**

Developed in prison systems by British and Quaker missionaries in England and Canada in the 1980s, restorative justice follows the practices of conflict resolution, where teachers step back from punishment and use mediation to solve student issues (Johnson, Johnson et al., 1994). Teachers use traditional classroom rules to provide accountability for those who are disruptive or violent while creating an appropriate and safe classroom for all students. Along with traditional discipline, counseling, group discussions, and staff-developed classes are used to assist students in rehearsing appropriate social skills, apologizing for behaviors, and finding ways to make retribution to those who have been affected. Finally, students who exhibit high levels of disrespectful or violent behavior are given opportunities to build relationships through mentoring programs with peers and adults (Ashley & Burke, 2009; Liebman, 2007; Westervelt, 2014). Teachers are assertive and have clear demands for behavior while providing students the opportunity to solve

conflicts in a peaceful manner with an emphasis on creating positive relationships rather than punishing behavior (Canter & Canter, 1976; Johnson et al., 1994; Konz & McKay, 2014)

When students present disruptive behaviors, discipline, demerits such as time-outs, are administered by the teacher. When teachers administer punishments, they also spend time with the student to discuss their behavior and ways to avoid further disruptions (Evans et al., 2013; Liebman, 2007; Payne & Welch, 2017). Students who cause harm to classmates, such as fighting, bullying, and harmful words, are sent to mediation outside the classroom, to work together in conferences with teachers and those who were offended (Liebman, 2007; Westervelt, 2014).

In conferences with the students, staff members discuss conflict and provide opportunities for apologies, opportunities to make good on behaviors, and long-term follow up appointments to discuss and teach how behaviors harmed other students (Liebman, 2007). These methods are carried out through peer to peer counseling, individual counseling, and support groups for students with similar disciplinary issues (Liebman, 2007; Westervelt, 2014). When students are violent or disrespectful towards teachers, they will be placed into a mediation session with the teacher, often mediated by other staff members (Evans et al., 2013; Liebman, 2007).

To further teach and ensure the development of prosocial skills, entire classrooms will have sessions where prosocial skills are taught and reviewed (Liebman, 2007). Students are given opportunities to rehearse and discuss behavior in class-wide circle discussions, student-adult mentoring, and role-play activities on a weekly or bi-weekly

basis (Evans et al., 2013). The majority of lessons and discussions include rehearsing and discussing personal responsibility for behaviors, discussion skills, modeling of appropriate behavior, and problem solving between peers (Armstrong, 2012; Liebman, 2007).

When students are involved in conflicts with their peers, such as fights or bullying, teachers use traditional disciplinary methods such as verbal warnings, office referrals, and detentions. However, these same students, along with those with more frequent issues with their classmates, will attend mediation sessions (Liebman, 2007). In these sessions, teachers create opportunities for both the victim and the offender to discuss the issues. Often, bystanders who were eyewitnesses to fights or negative student behaviors are invited to attend the sessions, to express their viewpoints and possibly discuss their feelings and reactions (Liebman, 2007). The mediation sessions aim to bring forgiveness, improved communication of needs and issues, and creations of methods to improve relationships (Liebman, 2007). Through the use of mediation sessions and discussion groups, offenders are offered ways to deal with their behavior using conflict resolution (Liebman, 2007; Schlechter, 2014).

Schools implementing restorative justice practices aim to teach pro-social skills and conflict resolution to students, avoiding suspensions and removal from the classroom at all costs (Evans et al., 2013; Liebman, 2007). To achieve success, schools must train their staff in peer mediation and conflict resolution (Armstrong, 2012). Often, school psychologists and social workers assist the principals in arranging professional

development, mediation meetings, and lessons for individual classroom teachers (Armstrong, 2012; Ashley & Burke, 2009).

### **The effectiveness of restorative justice and conflict resolution in schools.**

Although conflict resolution has been reported to reduce bullying, violence, and disruptive incidents in schools (Durlak et al., 2011; Farrington & Ttofi, 2010; Payne & Welch, 2017), researchers have not conducted substantive research about the success of restorative justice at the elementary school level (Evans et al., 2013; Gregory et al., 2016). In a Canadian survey of 650 students and secondary school staff, Varnham (2005) found that staff members thought that the use of restorative justice made them feel safer, and they reported that at least 95% of peer conflicts were resolved without further violent or hurtful episodes (Varnham, 2005). In a qualitative observation of a high school using restorative justice, staff members reported improved attendance at school. They also reported improved collegial relationships between staff members and increased trust in discussing and dealing with individual student issues (Schiff, 2013).

Schiff (2013) and Varnham (2005) reported resistance and confusion from staff members using restorative justice. Teachers expressed misunderstandings concerning the practices of restorative justice. In several cases, teachers perceived that traditional discipline, such as warnings and classroom punishments, were not to be carried out (Varnham, 2005). The teachers also expressed concerns that the lack of suspensions and removal of violent students would hamper student learning (Varnham, 2005). Several suggestions to improve the use of restorative justice include implementing plans with all involved faculty and staff, implementing procedures based on existing school rules and

procedures, and implementing long-term plans that phase out traditional punishments that remove students from school (Armstrong, 2012; Liebman, 2007). Using inclusive and sequential implementation processes, schools and classrooms adopting restorative justice practices have opportunities to develop prosocial skills and peer problem solving to reduce disruptive and/or violent behaviors.

### **Summation of Literature Review**

Literature related to student discipline shows that high levels of disruptive, violent, and/or challenging student behavior have a negative effect on student learning, student well-being, and teacher performance and satisfaction. Current disciplinary practices are influenced by early U.S. models from Europe and the studies from behavioral psychologists and their findings (Moberly et al., 2005; Skinner, 1969; Sugai & Simonsen, 2012; Taylor, 1923). Today, teachers use many of the same techniques and ideas schools used in the past to respond to and deal with student misbehavior. To this day, developing and administering student discipline and managing classrooms provide challenges to American schools and staff members.

By assuring a safe environment where students feel secure, students are more likely to develop knowledge and skills (Maslow, 1943). Concerns have been raised about the disciplinary methods schools are using today. Some media and scholars are concerned that rewarding appropriate behavior robs students the opportunity to develop self-discipline and a desire for lifelong learning (Kohn, 1993; Leibig, 2011). Others are concerned that the use of suspensions and expulsions lead to an increased likelihood of students going to jails or prison as adults (Eilas, 2013; Fowler & Vitris, 2012). Many



modern approaches to student discipline have had successes. However, many have been criticized for their use of rewards, lack of detailed research, and the loss of classroom control by adults (Andreou, 2012; Evans et al., 2013; Kohn, 1993; Sugai & Simonsen, 2012).

### **Implications**

Voiced concerns from the teachers and scant written or numerical data regarding the effect of student misbehavior at REL presented me an opportunity to foster further understanding the school's scope of student misbehavior. By collecting teachers' perceptions of student discipline in their classrooms, significant information regarding the effect of student misbehavior will give teachers and school leaders further understanding and an opportunity to improve their learning environment.

The results of this study indicated that REL could benefit from professional development that provides opportunities for faculty and administrators to discuss student behavior at the school, learn about new techniques and suggestions from staff on how to respond to student behavior, and begin to develop plans that can improve student behavior at the classroom level. I developed a professional development program for REL that I will present in Section 3.

### **Summary**

Student behavior and how teachers respond to both appropriate and inappropriate behaviors affect how teachers teach and how students learn (Crone et al., 2010; Osher et al., 2010; Powers & Bierman, 2013; Sadler & Sugai, 2009). When teachers and administrators understand student behavior issues, they can create interventions and

adjustments to how they respond to student misbehavior, developing a safer environment for all students (Bear et al., 2014; Snyder et al., 2014; Tillery et al., 2010). In a rural midwestern elementary school (REL), data reflecting student discipline was scant. However, increased violent student behaviors, increased levels of student mobility and increased student poverty at REL showed a need for further data that would provide a clearer understanding regarding the effect of student discipline in the school.

Teachers in today's schools use a variety of disciplinary methods that come from the practices of schools in the past. These procedures are often based on early psychological research and developed through training students' behavior with rewards and punishments (Bandura, Ross, & Ross, 1961; Canter & Canter, 1976; Skinner, 1969). The majority of these procedures provide discipline and rewards in reaction to behavior (Canter & Canter, 1976). Although many new approaches are being used to respond to student misbehavior, there are criticisms about all of these methods and there is not a method that is the best solution for each school (Bear et al., 2014; Kohn, 1993; Miles & Stipek, 2006; Spivak & Farran, 2012).

The next section this study describes the quantitative survey research methodology that was employed to answer the research questions. I present a discussion and justification of the research method that will be used. I describe the setting and sampling methods that were used to collect data. I explain the process for the implementation of the tool for data collection and the process for drawing conclusions from the data. At the conclusion, I explain the strengths and weaknesses of the study and

the steps taken to ensure that the study was ethical and that participants' rights were protected

## Section 2: The Methodology

### **Research Design and Approach**

#### **Introduction**

At REL, teachers expressed concerns that increasing disruptive and violent student behaviors, as well as how teachers respond to these behaviors, were negatively affecting student learning (REL Administrators, personal communication, 2016). The school's teachers and/or administrators had not systematically collected and analyzed data that would aid the teaching faculty and administrators to understand what specific behaviors that are most frequent and most concerning, how teachers deal with such behaviors in their classroom, and what resources they require to more effectively deal with such behaviors. To increase the administrators and teachers' understanding of how difficult student behaviors are affecting the school and in what areas teachers need extra support, I conducted a quantitative survey study in which I collected and analyzed the teachers' perceptions of their concerns about difficult student behaviors, how the teachers deal with student behaviors, how confident teachers perceive they are about dealing with difficult student behaviors, and what resources teachers perceive that they need to better deal with difficult student behaviors with increased confidence.

#### **Research Approach**

The study was designed as a quantitative survey study using a Likert-type survey research instrument. My purpose in this study was to gain an in-depth understanding about the perceptions of the teaching population at REL about multiple dimensions of student classroom behavior and how these perceptions were distributed on two teacher-

related variables (grade level taught and years of teaching experience). Surveys, such as a Likert-type survey, are often used by researchers to collect information about perceptions that can come from a large sample of people from a specific group (Brown, 2011; Creswell, 2009; Likert, 1932, Martin et al., 1999). I determined that a quantitative survey design was the most appropriate design because I wanted to achieve an understanding of the teachers' concerns about student behaviors and provide more information to the school about these concerns. The research questions and hypotheses were:

RQ1. What are REL teachers' levels of concern about types of student behaviors in their classrooms as measured by survey questions 2A to 2N?

RQ1.1: What is the difference between experienced (6+ years of experience) and novice teachers (1-5 years of experience) regarding their levels of concern about types of student behaviors in their classrooms?

*H<sub>o</sub>1.1:* There is no statistically significant difference between experienced (6+ years of experience) and novice teachers (1-5 years of experience) regarding their levels of concern about types of student behaviors in their classrooms.

*H<sub>a</sub> 1.1:* There is a statistically significant difference between experienced (6+ years of experience) and novice teachers (1-5 years of experience) regarding their levels of concern about types of student behaviors in their classrooms.

RQ1.2: Is there a statistically significant difference between Grades K-3 classroom teachers and Grades 4-6 classroom teachers regarding their levels of concern about student types of behaviors in their classrooms?

*H<sub>o</sub>1.2*: There is no statistically significant difference between Grades K-3 classroom teachers and Grades 4-6 classroom teachers regarding their levels of concern about student types of behaviors in their classrooms.

*H<sub>a</sub> 1.2*: There is a statistically significant difference between Grades K-3 classroom teachers and Grades 4-6 classroom teachers regarding their levels of concern about student types of behaviors in their classrooms.

RQ2: What do teachers identify as the level of support they need in order to address their concerns about types of student behaviors in their classrooms as measured by survey questions 2AB to 2NB?

RQ2.1: Is there a statistically significant difference between experienced (6+ years of experience) and novice teachers (1-5 years of experience) regarding the level of support they need in order to address their concerns about types of student behaviors in the classrooms?

*H<sub>o</sub>2.1*: There is no statistically significant difference between experienced (6+ years of experience) and novice teachers (1-5 years of experience) regarding the level of support they need in order to address their concerns about types of student behaviors in the classrooms.

*H<sub>a</sub>2.1*: There is a statistically significant difference between experienced (6+ years of experience) and novice teachers (1-5 years of experience) regarding the level of support they need in order to address their concerns about types of student behaviors in the classrooms.

RQ2.2: Is there a statistically significant difference between Grades K-3 classroom teachers and Grades 4-6 classroom teachers regarding the level of support they need in order to address their concerns about types of student behaviors in the classrooms?

*H<sub>0</sub>2.2:* There is no statistically significant difference between Grades K-3 classroom teachers and Grades 4-6 classroom teachers regarding the level of support they need in order to address their concerns about types of student behaviors in the classrooms.

*H<sub>a</sub> 2.2:* There is a statistically significant difference between Grades K-3 classroom teachers and Grades 4-6 classroom teachers regarding the level of support they need in order to address their concerns about types of student behaviors in the classrooms.

RQ3: What supports have REL teachers used in the past to help them deal with difficult student behaviors in their classrooms as measured by survey questions 3A-3K?

RQ3.1: Is there a statistically significant difference in the supports experienced teachers (6+ years of experience) and novice teachers (1-5 years of experience) have used in the past to help them deal with difficult student behaviors in their classrooms?

*H<sub>0</sub> 3.1:* There is no statistically significant difference in the supports experienced teachers (6+ years of experience) and novice teachers (1-5 years of experience) have used in the past to help them deal with difficult student behaviors in their classrooms.

*H<sub>a</sub>3.1:* There is a statistically significant difference in the supports experienced teachers (6+ years of experience) and novice teachers (1-5 years of experience)

have used in the past to help them deal with difficult student behaviors in their classrooms.

RQ3.2: Is there a statistically significant difference in the supports K-3 classroom teachers and 4-6 classroom teachers have used to deal with difficult student behaviors in their classrooms?

*H<sub>0</sub>3.2:* There is no statistically significant difference in the supports Grades K-3 classroom teachers and Grades 4-6 classroom teachers have used to deal with difficult student behaviors in their classrooms.

*H<sub>a</sub>3.2:* There is a statistically significant difference in the supports Grades K-3 classroom teachers and Grades 4-6 classroom teachers have used to deal with difficult student behaviors in their classrooms.

RQ4: What methods have REL teachers used to deal with difficult student behaviors in their classrooms as measured by survey questions 4A-4T?

RQ4.1: Is there a statistically significant difference in the methods experienced teachers (6+ years of experience) and novice teachers (1-5 years of experience) have used to help them deal with difficult student behaviors in their classrooms?

*H<sub>0</sub>4.1:* There is no statistically significant difference in the methods experienced teachers (6+ years of experience) and novice teachers (1-5 years of experience) have used to help them deal with difficult student behaviors in their classrooms.

*H<sub>a</sub>4.1:* There is a statistically significant t difference in the methods experienced teachers (6+ years of experience) and novice teachers (1-5 years of experience) have used to help them deal with difficult student behaviors in their classrooms.



RQ.4.2 Is there a statistically significant statistically significant difference in the methods Grade K-3 classroom teachers and Grades 4-6 classroom teachers have used to help them deal with difficult student behaviors in their classrooms?

*H<sub>0</sub>4.2:* There is no statistically significant difference in the methods K-3 classroom teachers and 4-6 classroom teachers have used to help them deal with difficult student behaviors in their classrooms.

*H<sub>a</sub>4.2:* There is a statistically significant difference in the methods K-3 classroom teachers and 4-6 classroom teachers have used to help them deal with difficult student behaviors in their classrooms.

RQ5: How confident are REL teachers in the way they manage student/classroom behaviors and difficulties that arise in their classrooms as measured by survey question 5?

RQ5.1: Is there a statistically significant difference in the level of confidence experienced teachers (6+ years of experience) and novice teachers (1-5 years of experience) have with regard to the way they manage student/classroom behaviors and difficulties that arise in their classrooms?

*H<sub>0</sub>5.1:* There is no statistically significant difference in the level of confidence experienced teachers (6+ years of experience) and novice teachers (1-5 years of experience) have in regards to the way they manage student/classroom behaviors and difficulties that arise in their classrooms.

*H<sub>a</sub>5.1:* There is a statistically significant difference in the level of confidence experienced teachers (6+ years of experience) and novice teachers (1-5 years of

experience) have in regards to the way they manage student/classroom behaviors and difficulties that arise in their classrooms.

RQ5.2: Is there a statistically significant difference in the level of confidence Grades K-3 classroom teachers and Grades 4-6 classroom teachers have with regard to the way they manage student/classroom behaviors and difficulties that arise in their classrooms?

*H<sub>0</sub> 5.2:* There is no statistically significant difference in the level of confidence Grades K-3 classroom teachers and Grades 4-6 classroom teachers have in regards to the way they manage student/classroom behaviors and difficulties that arise in their classrooms.

*H<sub>a</sub> 5.2:* There is a statistically significant difference in the level of confidence Grades K-3 classroom teachers and Grades 4-6 classroom teachers have in regards to the way they manage student/classroom behaviors and difficulties that arise in their classrooms.

### **Selection of a Quantitative Survey Design**

I selected a quantitative survey because it is the most appropriate method to collect data about multiple perceptions of a specific population (Bernard, 2013; Fink, 2009; Lodico, Spaulding, Vogetle, &, 2010). Using a survey, I was able to explore and describe the characteristics of a population, in this case REL's teachers' perceptions about difficult student behaviors in their classrooms, how they deal with such behaviors, the resources they need to better deal with difficult student behaviors, and how confident

they feel about handling difficult student behaviors in their classrooms (Creswell, 2014; Fink, 2009; Lodico et al., 2010).

### **Survey Research Design**

Surveys are a quantitative approach involving the collection of data to explain a phenomenon that occurs within a specific group of people (Creswell, 2009, 2014; Fink, 2009; Hoy, 2010; Lodico et al., 2010). Using surveys, researchers can collect numerical data in an unbiased way that provides perspectives of groups of people, answers research questions, and provides data that explore specific feelings or issues (Bernard, 2013; Creswell, 2009; Fink, 2009). In this study, I explored the perceptions of the teachers at REL about multiple dimensions of student classroom behavior and how these perceptions are distributed on two teacher-related variables (grade level taught and years of teaching experience).

### **Alternative Approaches**

I considered and rejected other qualitative and quantitative approaches for this study. I considered using qualitative case study, phenomenological and grounded theory approaches, and experimental and quasi-comparative approaches but rejected them. For my study to have been useful to the entire school I needed information to determine how the members of the population (teachers at the study school) distribute themselves on two variables (teaching experience and teacher grade level). Only a quantitative survey study would provide the detailed data and analysis that would be useful to teachers and administrators as they begin to systematically address student behavior issues (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2009; Lodico et al., 2010; Merriam, 2009; Trochim & Donnelly, 2008).

## Setting and Sample

### Local Context of the Study

I conducted the research in this study with a sample collected from one local elementary school, REL. This K-6, high-poverty, public elementary school is the only elementary school in its school district. The school district also has a unified middle school and high school that are located on the same campus as the elementary school.

At the time of the study, REL had approximately 350 students. Approximately 97% of the student population was White/Caucasian. Many parents worked in factories, were local farmers, or worked in local businesses. However, many of the students' parents would travel more than 30 miles each way to work in a nearby metropolitan area. Parent volunteerism during the school day and PTO meeting attendance was moderate in terms of attendance (REL teacher, personal communication, 2016). However, parental support of school activities and afterschool programs was high. More than 59% of the students received free or reduced student lunch (XXX Department of Education, 2016).

When I conducted this survey, REL had 31 teaching faculty members, the majority of whom had more than 20 years of teaching experience. Only five of the teaching staff had been hired during the last five years. The population of teaching faculty at REL at the time of the survey was implemented was 100% Caucasian and both of the school's administrators were Caucasian males (XXX Department of Education, 2015). The school had seven teachers who taught exploratory and special education classes, and 24 teachers who taught in the Grades K-6 classrooms.

### **Population/Sample**

I used the convenience sample method to select participants. A convenience sample involves participants who are willing and available to participate in a study (Creswell, 2009). I used convenience sampling to invite all teaching faculty members with classroom assignments to participate ( $N = 24$ ) (Creswell, 2009; Fink, 2009; Lodico et al., 2010).

I invited the entire classroom teaching faculty at REL to participate in the survey. I used only those teachers that were assigned to grade level, classroom teaching, as the research goals and survey that I used in this study were designed to explore the perceptions of the teachers' classroom environments (Martin et al., 1999). The teaching faculty who was invited to participate in this study included Grades K-6 classroom teachers. Permission to collect survey data was granted by REL district administration.

To obtain strong data that reflected the perceptions of the teaching population at REL and determine how the perceptions were distributed on the two variables (the teachers' years of teaching experience and the teachers' grade level assignment), I concluded that I would need to survey as many classroom teachers as possible (Barnett, 2011; Coe, 2002; Creswell, 2012; Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2009; Fink, 2009; Sullivan & Feinn, 2012). At the time of this study, the classroom teaching population at REL numbered 24 with 15 teaching in Grades K-3 and nine in Grades 4-6. A total of five had less than 5 years of teaching experience and 19 had more than 6 years of classroom teaching experience.

To invite the population to participate in the study, I followed a five-step process for inviting participants:

**Step 1.** I began the process by sending a letter describing the study and its goals to the potential participants. I sent a letter via email and provided a hard copy of the invitation in the teachers' school mail mailboxes. I described how the study would provide information that could guide decision making and possible professional development, how the survey would protect the faculty members' identities, and how the survey would be distributed.

**Step 2.** I sent an email invitation letter that provided the same information that was in the first letter. This letter informed the participants that their participation in the survey gave me consent to use their anonymous information in the study (Bernard, 2013; Creswell, 2014; Patton, 2011; Richter, Kunter, Klusman, Ludtke, & Baumert, 2011). At the end of the letter, I provided a link to the survey and a reminder of a 10-day time period to complete the survey.

**Step 3.** After 5 days, I sent a reminder to the potential participants, asking them to complete the survey if they had not done so.

**Step 4.** Steps 1, 2, and 3 resulted in a sample that was not representative. After obtaining permission from REL and the Walden University IRB, I presented two more survey collection periods, one with a 10 day and a second with a 7-day collection period, using the same collection materials sent previously.

**Step 5.** I sent a thank-you letter to all invited faculty members, regardless of their participation as suggested by Bernard (2013), Creswell (2014), and Patton (2011).

**Final survey demographics.** By the completion of the data collection process, I had received a total of 24 surveys. Of these 24 surveys, 22 participants had completed the demographic questions and Question 2 and 21 participants had completed the entire survey.

Table 1

<i>Demographics of Participants (N = 21)</i>			
Grades K-3 teachers	Grades 4-6 teachers	Novice teachers (0-5 years)	Veteran teachers (6+ Years)
14	7	3	18

As presented in Table 1, three of the 22 participants had less than 5 years of experience teaching in the classroom and 19 had more than 6 years of experience. In terms of grade level assignment, 14 of the participants taught in kindergarten through third grade and eight participants taught fourth through sixth grade students. I selected these variable groupings as studies have shown that teachers' ability to deal with difficult student behavior are affected by the teachers' experience (Alter et al., 2013; Kokkinos et al., 2004; Tschanen-Moran & Hoy, 2007) and the age and/or grade level of students that the teachers work with (Alter et al. 2013; Jacobsen, 2013; May, 2011).

### **Instrumentation and Materials**

#### **Survey Instrument**

For this study, I used a Likert scale survey developed by Martin et al. (1999), entitled *Staff Perceptions of Student Behavior Survey* (see Appendix B). This survey was created and implemented by Martin et al. (1999) as part of a study of teacher confidence in responding to disruptive behaviors. Stephenson, the third author and current

responsible party for the research, gave me permission to use the survey and to make minor adaptations. The survey, that required 20-30 minutes to complete, had 48 questions in total. This survey was approved as a research tool by the Walden University IRB with the approval number 06-07-16-0132997. Participants rated their levels of concern and the levels of support they perceived they needed to deal with difficult student behaviors within their classrooms. The survey was divided into four sections.

**Section 1.** In the first section of the survey, participants answered two demographic questions that provided the information about the variables used for the analysis (grade level taught and years of experience).

**Section 2.** In the next of the survey, participants rated their concerns about 14 specific difficult student behaviors, such as disruptive talking and student inability to work independently. The teachers rated their level of concern on a scale of 1 *not at all*, 2 *somewhat*, 3 *quite*, or 4 *extreme* (concern). Then, the teachers rated the level of support they need to improve their ability to deal with these behaviors. Items were ranked on a scale of 1 *not at all*, 2 *a little*, 3 *some*, and 4 *a lot* (Martin et al., 1999).

**Section 3.** In the third section of the survey, the teachers rated how often they used 11 supports to deal with difficult student behaviors, such as consultation with co-workers or professional books and materials. They ranked the supports on a scale of 0 *never used*, 1 *occasionally used*, or 2 *frequently used*.

**Section 4.** In the fourth section, the teachers rated their frequency of use of 20 specific disciplinary techniques such as office referrals and parental contacts on a scale of 0 *never used*, 1 *sometimes used* and 2 *frequently used*. At the end of Section 4, the



teachers rated their perception of their confidence in managing student behavior in their classroom on a scale from 1 to 5. The teachers ranked their agreement with a statement that they were confident dealing with difficult behaviors as they arise with a score of 1 *strongly disagree*, 2 *disagree*, 3 *neither disagree or agree*, 4 *agree*, or 5 *strongly agree* (Martin et al. 1999).

### **Validity and Reliability of the Survey Instrument**

The survey instrument I used for this study was piloted and verified by the authors using structural equation modeling that determined appropriate fit by comparing a hypothesized matrix of scores within the survey's variables and the final matrix of scores. Using the Tucker Lewis Index, a fit score of .90 indicated that the study was reliable and consistent (Martin et al., 1999). The survey's consistency was assured through the use of the Cronbach's Alpha, with subscale scores computed using the mean of the set of the target items with a value of  $p < .05$  or  $p < .01$  as necessary (Martin et al., 1999). This survey has been successfully implemented and/or cited in several other published articles, including studies about student behavior by Beaudoin, Mihic, and Loncaric (2014), Gibbs and Miller (2014), and Shohani, Azizifar, Gowhary, and Jamalinesari (2015).

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

#### **Data Collection**

I assembled and sent the survey to the teachers using Survey Monkey. By using an online service, I was able to collect data in a secure form that allowed teachers to answer the questions without pressure of time or being in a specific location (Bernard, 2013; Creswell, 2014). I included instructions and procedures about accessing the survey

and participation in the invitation letter and the survey reminder letter. I avoided any other kind of communication with REL teachers and administrators regarding the survey to avoid any appearance of coercion as recommended by Fowler (2009).

Following my proposed 11-day timeline, I sent all correspondence and updates to the teaching faculty at REL using my Walden University email, as required by the Walden IRB. I kept all raw data that I downloaded from Survey Monkey secure on a password-protected, personal computer and on a back-up memory disk stored in a locked safe at my home. This data will be available upon request for five years after the final approval of this study.

### **Analysis**

Once the participants had completed the survey, Survey Monkey sent the raw data in Excel and .pdf formats to my private account on their website. I downloaded the raw data from Survey Monkey into SPSS version 24 where I analyzed the data using descriptive statistics (frequencies, mean scores, medians, and standard deviations). I calculated the descriptive statistics to provide a broad overview of concerns and perceptions of the entire sample of participants on two teacher-related variables (grade level taught and years of teaching experience).

To determine whether to accept or reject the null hypotheses, I conducted two Mann-Whitney  $U$  tests. The descriptive and nonparametric analyses provided answers to the research questions and detailed information that the faculty and the administration at REL could use to guide decision making and to guide a professional development project to aid teachers in their handling of difficult student behavior.

## **Assumptions, Limitations, Delimitations and Scope**

### **Assumptions**

To successfully present data that reflect the perceptions of REL's teaching faculty, I assumed that the participants of this study would be able to complete the electronic survey without difficulty. I also assumed that the participants would be honest in answering the survey questions.

### **Limitations**

The local nature of this study presented a limitation. As surveys often call for large numbers of participants, the smaller sample size that is provided by one faculty of one school limits the ability to generalize the results of this study beyond the local situation (Fink, 2009; Lodico et al., 2010).

### **Delimitations**

Each individual school has a teaching faculty with a different demographical composition. Only members of teaching faculty in confined grade level classes were selected as participants for this study. This study did not include perceptions from administrators, exploratory class teachers (e.g., art, music, physical education), special education classroom teachers, support staff (e.g., cafeteria workers, secretaries, and/or custodians), or paraprofessional teacher assistants.

### **Scope of the Research**

I studied teachers' perceptions of student behavior at only one school, REL. I surveyed only those teachers at REL who work with students in a classroom environment, Grades K-6 general education classroom teachers.

### **Ethical Issues**

To ensure that the study met ethical standards and protected the participants from harm, I followed both the National Institute of Health (NIH) and Walden University Institutional Research Board's (IRB) guidelines. Walden University approved my study's survey, assigning the IRB approval number 06-07-16-0132997. In the invitation letters, I provided a consent statement that included a full disclosure of the study, its purpose, how the survey would be used to collect information about student behavior and guide decision making, a description of who would be selected as participants, and a plan to ensure the participants were: (a) protected from any physical, mental, social, or professional harm; (b) provided confidentiality and anonymity; (c) assured that the data collected did not reflect individual practice in the classroom or be used for school-level evaluations; (d) assured that participation in the study is optional; (e) gave the opportunity to opt out of the survey at any time. I also noted in the letter that participants would not be compensated and that the results would benefit the school. I informed the participants that by answering the first question of the survey and completing/submitting the survey, the participant provided consent for the use of their data for the purposes of this study.

### **Protection of Participants**

I protected the anonymity of the participants. I collected data using an electronic survey, delivered by Survey Monkey. I stored the data in a file on my password-protected personal computer stored at my home. I created backup copies of the data on a flash drive that I will store in a locked safe in my home for five years. After this time period has

passed, I will permanently delete the data from my computer and then destroy the flash drive.

### **Role of the Researcher**

As the researcher in this study, I had my own biases. I am a teacher in a school in the same county as REL. I believe that there are growing concerns about mobility and increasing poverty in the county that REL serves that may contribute to disciplinary issues at all of the county's schools. I believe that the school faculty and staff should be collaborative in creating a plan to improve school climate and deal with difficult student behavior. I have collegial relationships with three of the teachers at REL and their district. To assure my biases were controlled, I did not communicate details about this study to these teachers beyond the information that was provided to all potential participants.

To manage my biases about difficult student behavior during the analysis and presentation of the data, I presented raw data, the statistical analyses, and my initial findings to my committee for review. By having a committee discuss and view my data with me, I was able to assure that my bias did not affect the findings and provided the school with rich and unbiased data (Bernard, 2013; Lodico et al., 2010; Merriam, 2009) Although I have a professional relationship with REL and its district, I performed this research to provide deeper insight about the school's disciplinary concerns that may not match my opinions or viewpoints.

## **Data Analysis Results**

### **Introduction**

At the time I conducted this study, REL had not systematically collected and analyzed data that would aid the teaching faculty and administrators to understand what specific behaviors that are most frequent and most concerning: (a) how teachers deal with such behaviors in their classroom and (b) what resources they require to more effectively deal with such behaviors. To increase administrators' and teachers' understanding of how difficult student behaviors are affecting the school and in what areas teachers need extra support, I conducted a quantitative survey study. I collected and analyzed (a) the teachers' perceptions of their concerns about difficult student behaviors, (b) how the teachers deal with student behaviors, (c) how confident teachers perceive they are about dealing with difficult student behaviors, and (d) what resources teachers perceive that they need to better deal with difficult student behaviors with increased confidence.

To answer the research questions, I analyzed the data using descriptive statistics (mean, median, and standard deviation), providing an overall description of the participants' perceptions concerning student behaviors, needs for support in dealing with student behavior, and the methods and supports they use to deal with student behavior. To develop a nuanced understanding of the teachers' concerns regarding student behavior, I disaggregated the analysis by two independent variables: teachers' years of experience in the classroom (0-5 years of experience and 6 or more years of experience) and the teachers' grade level assignments (Grades K-3 or Grades 4-6).

## **Organization of the Data**

After the completion of data collection, I used the tools supplied by survey monkey to download the collected raw data to a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. I organized each response by survey item into categories of survey item and participant. Each participant's answers were assigned a generic participant identification number by Survey Monkey. Each column of the Excel sheet listed each participant's responses to the survey questions and their demographic information. I then uploaded the spread sheet into IBM SPSS software version 24.

## **Results**

The results of this study are described in two parts. In the first part, I describe the descriptive statistics for each of the research questions posed in the study. These statistics provide a general description of what the survey participants report as the most concerning behaviors, where they need assistance in dealing with them, what methods they use most to deal with student behaviors as they occur, and what teaching faculty, support staff, and/or administration at REL the participants prefer to work with in dealing with these behaviors. The first part concludes with a description what level of confidence the teachers perceive they have in dealing with difficult student behaviors. Using SPSS, I calculated the mean, median and standard deviation for each survey question. Mean scores describe what the overall perception the entire participant population reported for each survey question. Median is by described by Triola (2012) as "...the measure of center that is the middle value when the original data values are arranged in order of increasing magnitude (p. 86)." Standard Deviation scores provide a description of the

agreement the teachers had about each question on the survey (Creswell, 2014; Lodico et al., 2010; Triola, 2012).

In the second part of the results, I analyzed the data using two Mann-Whitney  $U$  tests in SPSS. I conducted a Mann-Whitney  $U$  test for each survey question disaggregated by teachers' years of experience (0-5 years of experience and 6+ years of experience) and teacher grade level (Grades K-3 and Grades 4-6). From the results of the analysis, I accepted or rejected the null hypotheses for each research question.

### **Descriptive Analysis**

**RQ1:** What are REL teachers' levels of concern about types of student behaviors in their classrooms as measured by survey questions 2A to 2N?

Table 2

*Faculty Levels of Concern About Specific Student Behaviors*

Behavior	<i>N</i>	Mean	Median	<i>SD</i>
2A: Demands must be met immediately/cannot wait for attention	21	2.29	2.00	0.78
2B: Disrupts the activities of others	21	2.43	2.00	0.98
2C: Doesn't remain on task for an acceptable period of time	21	2.38	2.00	0.97

Continued



Table 2 (Continued)

Behavior	<i>N</i>	Mean	Median	<i>SD</i>
2D: Excessive demands for teacher's attention/doesn't work independently	21	2.50	2.00	0.87
2E: Distractibility or attention span a problem/does not listen	21	2.71	2.00	0.90
2F: Argues when reprimanded or corrected	21	2.42	2.50	1.33
2G: Leaves seat without permission	21	1.95	2.00	0.92
2H: Ignores the feelings of others	21	2.33	2.00	0.91
2I: Does not get along well with other children	21	2.53	2.00	0.93
2J: Does not follow established class rules	21	2.67	2.00	0.84
2K: Expresses anger inappropriately	21	2.92	3.00	0.87
2L: Is physically aggressive with others/bullies	21	3.83	3.00	1.17
2M: Damages others' property	21	2.71	3.00	1.15
2N: Uses obscene gestures or language	21	2.53	3.00	1.21

Answering Research Question 1 required the use of descriptive statistics to determine the respondents' overall concerns about the types of student behaviors that occur or may occur in their classrooms. In Table 2, I provide the number of participants and the mean, median, and SD for each survey item for Question 2, part A (2A-2N).

In this section of the survey, the teachers rated their concerns about several specific student behaviors. They ranked each behavior on a scale of 1 *not a concern*, 2 *somewhat a concern*, 3 *quite a concern*, or 4 *extreme concern*. A mean score of 1 to 2 indicated a low concern, 2-3 indicated a moderate concern, and any item receiving a mean score greater than three indicated a high level of concern for the teachers.

The mean scores in Table 2 present the levels of concerns that teachers at REL had about specific student behaviors. The means show that the teachers expressed high levels of concern about students being physically aggressive or bullying their peers (2L,  $M = 3.83$ ) and students expressing their anger in the classroom (2K,  $M = 2.92$ ) and. The

teachers were moderately concerned about students demanding attention (2A,  $M = 2.29$ ), disrupting activities (2B,  $M = 2.43$ ), remaining off task (2C,  $M = 2.38$ ), having excessive demands for the teachers' attention (2D,  $M = 2.50$ ), and being easily distracted (2E,  $M = 2.71$ ), ignoring the feelings of others (2H,  $M = 2.33$ ), not getting along with their peers (2I,  $M = 2.53$ ), not following class rules (2J,  $M = 2.57$ ), damaging property (2M,  $M = 2.71$ ), and using obscene language (2N,  $M = 2.53$ ). The teachers reported that students leaving their seats without permission was a low level of concern (2G,  $M = 1.95$ ).

The low standard deviation ( $SD$ ) for every item in Question 2, part A shows that most of the teachers' individual numerical responses are clustered close to the mean score. The mean scores and standard deviation scores for this question show that the teachers surveyed have a general agreement of what behaviors are of high, moderate, and low levels of concern. The teachers' concerns at REL are similar to concerns addressed in national studies that show teachers and administrators are concerned about violent student behaviors towards their peers and teachers, students having difficulty controlling anger, and bullying (Fite et al., 2013; & Gray, Lewis, & Ralph, 2015).

**RQ2:** What do teachers identify as the level of support they need in order to address their concerns about types of student behaviors in their classrooms as measured by survey questions 2AB to 2NB?

Answering Research Question 2 required descriptive statistics to determine the respondents' need for support to address concerns about the types of student behaviors that occur or may occur in their classrooms. In Table 3, I provide the number of participants and the mean, median, and  $SD$  for each survey item for Question 2, part B.

Table 3

*Faculty Expressed Need for Support to Deal With Specific Student Behaviors*

Behavior	<i>N</i>	Mean	Median	<i>SD</i>
<i>2AB</i> : Demands must be met immediately/cannot wait for attention	21	1.57	1.00	0.81
<i>2BB</i> : Disrupts the activities of others	21	1.90	2.00	1.00
<i>2CB</i> : Doesn't remain on task for an acceptable period of time	21	1.90	2.00	0.88
<i>2DB</i> : Excessive demands for teacher's attention/doesn't work independently	21	1.71	1.00	0.85
<i>2EB</i> : Distractibility or attention span a problem/does not listen	21	2.14	2.00	1.02
<i>2FB</i> : Argues when reprimanded or corrected	21	2.24	2.00	1.00
<i>2GB</i> : Leaves seat without permission	21	1.52	1.00	0.75
<i>2HB</i> : Ignores the feelings of others	21	1.86	2.00	0.91
<i>2IB</i> : Does not get along well with other children	21	2.00	2.00	0.89
<i>2JB</i> : Does not follow established class rules	21	1.95	2.00	0.90
<i>2KB</i> : Expresses anger inappropriately	21	2.05	2.01	0.92
<i>2LB</i> : Is physically aggressive with others/bullies	21	2.57	3.00	1.12
<i>2MB</i> : Damages others' property	21	2.62	3.00	1.12
<i>2NB</i> : Uses obscene gestures or language	21	2.29	2.00	1.23

Table 3 details the participants' responses to the survey items in Question 2, part B of the survey. The teachers ranked each behavior on a scale of 1 to 4 to indicate the amount of support they needed to deal with the specified behavior listed in each item. The respondents answered on a scale of 1 *no support at all*, 2 *a little support*, 3 *some support*, or 4 *a lot of support*. Items receiving a mean score of 1 to 2 indicated a low need

for support, 2-3 indicated a moderate need for support, and any item receiving a mean score greater than three indicated high levels of need for support.

The participants reported that there were no areas where a high level of support was needed. Behaviors where a low level of support was needed were: student inability to wait for the teacher's attention (2AB,  $M = 1.55$ ); students disrupting classroom activity (2BB,  $M = 1.90$ ); students not remaining on task (2CB,  $M = 1.90$ ); excessive demands for the teachers' attention (2DB,  $M = 1.71$ ); leaving assigned seats (2GB,  $M = 1.52$ ); ignoring the feelings of others (2HB,  $M = 1.86$ ); and not following class rules (2JB,  $M = 1.95$ ).

The teachers reported needing a moderate level of support for situations where students were acting physically aggressive and bullying (2LB,  $M = 2.57$ ) and where students were damaging property (2MB,  $M = 2.62$ ). These mean scores were similar to the mean scores of the participants' responses to the first question (Table 2), where teachers indicated high levels of concern about behaviors that involved dealing with anger and bullying. The SDs cluster close to the mean, reflecting that participants agreed about their need for support to improve their dealings with the specific student behaviors. The information in Tables 2 and 3 provide the school with the information that not only do the teachers have a common concern about student behavior, but also a high level of agreement about what behaviors they perceive as high, moderate, and low levels of concern. Teachers also have a general agreement about what areas of behavior present a moderate and low level of need for further support that the teachers need to further improve their ability to deal with the concerning behaviors. When administrators have

information about the areas where teachers need assistance, they have the resources to begin discussions and work to encourage teachers to research methods to improve their professional craft (Dufour et al., 2011; Esplelage et al., 2013). With a high level of agreement about the level of support that the teachers need to deal with specific behaviors and the knowledge of areas where teachers need more support, REL's teachers and administrators have information that they that they can use to make plans to respond to teacher needs and make changes that may improve the school environment.

**RQ3:** What supports have teachers used in the past to help them deal with difficult student behaviors in their classrooms as measured by survey questions 3A-3K?

Answering Research Question 3 required the use of descriptive statistics to provide information about what supports the respondents used in the past to deal with student behavior in their classrooms. In Table 4, I provide the number of participants and the mean, median, and SD for each survey item for Question 3 (3A-3K).

Table 4

*Supports Used by Faculty to Deal With Their Response to Difficult Student Behaviors*

Question (Support)	<i>N</i>	Mean	Median	<i>SD</i>
3A: Other class teachers	21	1.62	2.00	0.50
3B: Principal or other executive	21	1.14	1.00	0.36
3C School Counselor	21	1.43	1.00	0.50
3D: In-Service/Professional Development	21	0.95	1.00	0.50
3E: Books/videos, other published material	21	1.00	1.00	0.55
3F: Friend/Family Member	21	0.84	1.00	0.75
3G: University courses/staff	21	0.21	1.00	0.43
3H: Parents	21	1.33	0.00	0.66

Continued

Table 4 (Continued)

Question (Support)	<i>N</i>	Mean	Median	<i>SD</i>
3I: Internet resources such as websites, social networking, newsgroups, and/or email	21	1.14	1.00	0.66
3J: School Staff Meeting	21	0.90	1.00	0.55
3K: Use of CPI Crisis Team Member or group	21	0.67	1.00	0.58

For this survey question, teachers ranked their use of specific supports to deal with difficult student behavior. The teachers' responses were recorded on a scale of 0 *never used*, 1 *sometimes used*, or 2 *frequently used*. Three of the 24 participants did not complete this section. Mean scores for each item for the survey question below .99 indicated a method to deal with difficult student behaviors that was of low use by the teachers, 1.00 indicated a method to deal with difficult student behaviors that was of moderate use by the teachers, and a mean above 1.00 indicated a method to deal with difficult student behaviors that was of high use by the teachers. The majority of the teachers surveyed reported that consultation with faculty within the school was the most often used support.

The participants reported that consulting with their colleagues (3A,  $M = 1.62$ ) and the school counselor (3C,  $M = 1.43$ ) were highly-used methods of support to deal with difficult student behaviors. The teachers also reported that working with the students' parents to deal with difficult student behavior was a highly used support (3H,  $M = 1.33$ ). The participants reported the use of the internet (3I,  $M = 1.14$ ) and occasional support from the principal/executives at the school (3B,  $M = 1.00$ ) as occasional support

when dealing with difficult student behavior. The teachers reported a moderate use of professional books and the internet (3I,  $M=1.00$ ) as a support to deal with difficult student behaviors. The teachers reported the use of teacher in-services (3D  $M=.95$ ), family members and friends (3FM  $M=.84$ ), university courses/staff (3G,  $M=.21$ ), school staff meetings (3J,  $M=.90$ ), and the CPI crisis team (3K,  $M=.67$ ) as needing a low level of support. The standard deviation ranged between  $SD = .359$  and  $SD =.750$ , showing high levels of agreement among the teachers about their uses of each of the supports to further deal with difficult student behaviors that occur in their classrooms.

Because REL operates as a professional learning community (PLC), collaboration between colleagues is a common activity and it is not surprising that the teachers would indicate that collaboration with colleagues is the support that is most frequently used and/or preferred to deal with difficult student behaviors (Dufour et al., 2011). Schools developing professional learning communities (PLCs) use faculty and/or faculty and support staff collaboration to develop solutions to issues that are discovered within the teaching faculty of a school's practices or environment. These collaborations often lead to an increased sense of collegiality within the school (Dufour et al., 2011; Gebbie, Ceglowski, Taylor, & Miels, 2012; Gray & Summers, 2015).

**RQ4:** What methods have teachers used to deal with difficult student behaviors in their classrooms as measured by survey questions 4A-4T?

Answering Research Question 4 required the use of descriptive statistics to provide information about what methods the teachers have used to deal with difficult student behaviors in their classrooms. In Table 5, I provide the number of participants

and the mean, median, and SD for each survey item for Question 4 (4A-4T), regarding the teachers' use of specific methods to deal with difficult student behaviors in their classrooms.

Table 5

*Specific Methods Teachers Use to Deal With Difficult Student Behaviors*

Question	<i>N</i>	Mean	Median	<i>SD</i>
4A: Talked it over with the child	21	2.00	2.00	0.00
4B: Ignored the bad behavior	21	1.19	1.00	0.60
4C: Verbally reprimanded the child	21	1.24	1.00	0.44
4D: Tried to teach better behavior	21	1.57	2.00	0.51
4E: Used praise to encourage better behavior	21	1.67	2.00	0.48
4F: Sent the child to the corner/back of the room etc.	21	0.71	1.00	0.46
4G: Sent the child out of class (time out)	21	0.57	1.00	0.50
4H: Removed privileges (e.g., Loss of recess or field trip)	21	1.14	1.00	0.57
4I: Detained the child	21	0.33	0.00	0.48
4J: Contacted child's parents	21	1.57	2.00	0.51
4K: Sent the child to the Principal/executive	21	1.00	1.00	0.45
4L: Consulted with school/district social worker	21	1.29	1.00	0.56
4M: Used seating arrangement	21	1.62	2.00	0.59
4N: Adapted curriculum to suit student needs	21	1.52	2.00	0.51
4O: Used token economies	21	1.05	1.00	0.59
4P: Used conflict resolution methods	21	0.95	1.00	0.67
4Q: Called class meeting or discussion	21	0.81	1.00	0.60
4R: Implemented peer support program	21	0.67	1.00	0.58
4S: Used behavior modification	21	1.24	1.00	0.54
4T: Referred students for or given corporal punishment(spanking)	21	0.29	0.00	0.46



Survey Question 4 asked about the specific actions that the participants use to deal with student behaviors. Twenty-one of 24 participants responded to the survey items for this question. Teachers responded by stating how often they used specific actions to deal with student behavior. They ranked the actions on a scale of 0 *never used*, 1 *sometimes used*, or 2 *frequently used*. Mean scores of  $M = 0-.99$  for each action indicated a low use, a mean score of 1.00 for each action indicated a moderate use, and a mean score above 1.01-2.00 indicate a high use. Teachers who completed this section of the survey reported discussing behavior with students (4A,  $M = 2.00$ ) as the most frequently used method that they use to deal with difficult student behaviors. Other methods that the teachers reported as a high use included assigning classroom seats (4M,  $M = 1.62$ ), creating curriculum to fit the students' needs (4N,  $M = 1.54$ ), and giving verbal reprimands (4C,  $M = 1.24$ ). Ignoring student behaviors (4B,  $M = 1.00$ ) was reported by the teachers as a moderately used method to deal with difficult student behavior. Some of the methods that were reported as actions of low use by the teachers included referrals for corporal punishment 4T, ( $M = 0.29$ ), the use of detentions (4I,  $M = 0.33$ ), and the implementation of peer support programs (4R,  $M = 0.67$ ). The SDs cluster close to the mean, reflecting that the participants' agreed about their level of use of each of the items.

Question 4A, talking behaviors over with students, was reported as being used frequently ( $M = 2.00$ ). The SD for this survey item was  $SD = .000$ , showing that the teachers not only use this method to deal with student behaviors frequently, but that there was complete agreement among the participants about its use. The use of corporal punishment (4T) was used the least frequently with a mean of  $M = .29$  and a high level of

agreement with an  $SD = .463$ . Research shows that the use of spanking is on the decline in today's schools and the use of consultation with students and teaching desired behaviors is becoming a more common practice in current schools (Fagan & Catalano, 2012; Gray et al., 2015). The responses by the teachers in Section 4 of the survey provide information to the school and the teachers that can be used to promote discussions about how they deal with student behaviors.

**RQ5:** How confident are teachers in the way they manage student/classroom behaviors and difficulties that arise in their classrooms as measured by survey question 5?

Answering Research Question 5 required the use of descriptive statistics to describe the level of confidence the participants have in managing student behavioral challenges when they occur in the classroom. In Table 6, I provide the number of participants and the mean, median, and SD for Survey Question 5.

Table 6

*Faculty's Level of Confidence in Managing Student Behavioral Problems That Occur in the Classroom*

<i>N</i>	Mean	Median	<i>SD</i>
21	4.29	4.00	0.56

The final question of the survey asks the teachers to rank their level of agreement on the statement, "In summary, I am confident with the way I manage classroom behavior and difficulties as they arise." The participants ranked their confidence in dealing with difficult student behaviors that arise in their classrooms. It is essential that teachers have confidence in their ability to manage their classrooms and create an

appropriate environment for students to feel safe and able to concentrate on learning (Powers & Bierman, 2013; Snyder et al., 2014). The teachers who participated in the survey ranked their confidence within a scale of 1 *strongly disagree*, 2 *disagree*, 3 *neither disagree or agree*, 4 *agree*, or 5 *strongly agree*. As described in Table 7, the mean score of the participants' responses was  $M = 4.29$ , showing that the participants agree with the statement. The analysis of the responses produced a  $SD = .56$ , demonstrating a high level of agreement that the teachers who responded to this survey are confident in managing their classrooms when challenging behaviors arise.

### Summary of the Descriptive Analysis

Table 7

*Overview of Behaviors That are of High, Moderate, and Low Level of Concern of Survey Participants*

High Level of Concern $M = 3.01-4.00$	Moderate Level of Concern $M = 2.01-3.00$	Low Level of Concern $M = 1.00-2.00$
2K: Expresses anger inappropriately	2A: Demands must be met immediately/cannot wait for attention	2G: Leaves seat without permission
2L: Peer Aggression/bullying	2B: Disrupts the activities of others 2C: Doesn't remain on task for an acceptable period of time 2D: Excessive demands for teacher's attention/doesn't work independently 2E: Distractibility or attention span a problem/does not listen 2F: Argues when reprimanded or corrected 2H: Ignores the feelings of others	

Continued

Table 7 (Continued)

High Level of Concern <i>M</i> = 3.01-4.00	Moderate Level of Concern <i>M</i> = 2.01-3.00	Low Level of Concern <i>M</i> = 1.00-2.00
	<i>2I</i> : Does not get along well with other children <i>2J</i> : Does not follow established class rules <i>2M</i> : Damages others' property <i>2N</i> : Uses obscene gestures/ language	

As detailed in Table 7, the descriptive analysis of the data shows that participants have low, moderate, and high concerns about specific behaviors that occur in their classrooms. Most notably, participants reported that bullying and violent behaviors in the classroom are highly concerning. Most behaviors were of moderate concern. However, the participants were highly concerned with expressions of anger (*2K*, *M* = 3.68) and the students acting physically aggressive or bullying their peers (*2L*, *M* = 3.83). The statistics also provide information about what supports the teachers use to deal with difficult student behavior, with talking to students (*4A*, *M* = 2.00) using assigned seating (*4M*, *M* = 1.62), and parental contacts (*4J*, *M* = 1.57). Although there are many other methods teachers use to deal with difficult student behavior, many may not have been included as choices in this survey. The participants also reported that they use their colleagues, including other teachers (*3A*, *M* = 1.62), counsellors (*3C*, *M* = 1.43), and, to a lesser extent, principals/administrators (*3B*, *M* = 1.14) to address their response to difficult student behaviors. Finally, as discussed in Table 6, the descriptive statistics provides the

school with the knowledge that the teachers are confident when dealing with difficult student behaviors.

For all of the questions in the survey, the SD is low (below  $SD = 1.00$  in most cases). This shows high levels of agreement among the participants about what student behaviors are of low, moderate, and/or high concern and the level of supports that are needed. The analysis also provides information that peer collaboration among the teachers is highly used and that teachers are confident in their dealings with behavioral issues as they arise in the classroom. The descriptive statistics provide information that can be used to understand student behavior at the building level and can be used to begin discussions about areas where the entire teaching faculty need assistance. The descriptive statistics provide information about what methods of support and collaboration are used at low, moderate, and high levels by the teachers. Finally, the results show that the teachers are, in general, confident in handling disruptive behaviors as they arise in the classroom.

### **Nonparametric Test**

To provide more detailed and nuanced information to REL about student behavior and the teachers' concerns, needs for and preferences of support to deal with difficult student behavior, and the teachers' confidence in dealing with difficult behaviors, I disaggregated the data using two independent variables: Teacher years of experience and grade level taught. For each survey item in sections two to five, I analyzed teacher responses by grade level (Grades K-3 and Grades 4-6) and teacher experience (0-5 years of experience and 6 or more years of experience). I selected each of the variables in this

study based on research that showed that teachers' perception of student conduct can vary by their years of experience and by their grade level assignment at the elementary school level (Alter et al., 2013; Bandura, 1977; Cooper et al., 2015; Tschanen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). To analyze the data, I conducted Mann-Whitney *U* tests to determine whether the items in each question, when analyzed by the independent variables of experience (0-5 years of experience and 6+ years of experience) and grade level (Grades K-3 and Grades 4-6) differ significantly.

### **Consideration of Assumptions**

To verify the use of the Mann-Whitney *U* test for this study, I explored my data to determine whether the four assumptions of the non-parametric test were met (Laerd Statistics, 2015)

**Assumption 1.** Assumption 1 requires that the dependent variable be continuous. In my study, the dependent variables for each research question were the medians of the responses to each of the Likert-scale survey items. The ordinal variables provided by the Likert scales for each survey question allow for the use of the Mann-Whitney *U* test (Agresti, 2013).

**Assumption 2.** Assumption 2 requires that there is one independent variable that includes two categorical groups. In my study, the independent variables (teacher experience and grade level assignment) were categorical and there were two groups for the independent variable in each hypothesis statement

**Assumption 3.** Assumption 3 requires that there is independence of observations, which means that there is no relationship between the observations in each group of the

independent variable. In my study, there is no relationship between the participants in any of the groups for any of the research questions.

**Assumption 4.** Assumption 4 requires the researcher to determine whether the distribution scores for both groups of the independent variables (Grade levels K-3 and Grade levels 4-6 and the years of experience groups) are. Following the advice of Agresti (2013) and Hart (2001), I inspected graphics in the SPSS reports for each Mann-Whitney  $U$  test for similar shapes. For results where the distribution of scores of the independent variables were not similar, I compared the mean rank score to determine significance (Hart, 2001). In the report of each Mann-Whitney  $U$  test, I described which survey items' results provided similar and not similar distribution of scores. These descriptions are in the bottom of each table.

### **Results of the Nonparametric Test**

**RQ1.1:** What is the difference between experienced (6+ years of experience) and novice teachers (1-5 years of experience) regarding their levels of concern about types of student behaviors in their classrooms?

$H_0$ 1.1: There is no statistically significant difference between experienced (6+ years of experience) and novice teachers (1-5 years of experience) regarding their levels of concern about types of student behaviors in their classrooms.

$H_a$  1.1: There is a statistically significant difference between experienced (6+ years of experience) and novice teachers (1-5 years of experience) regarding their levels of concern about types of student behaviors in their classrooms.

Table 8

*Faculty Levels of Concern About Specific Student Behaviors by Teacher Experience (0-5 Years of Experience and 6 or More Years of Experience)*

Question (Behavior)	Median 0-5	Median 6+	Mean Rank Value 0-5	Mean Rank Value 6+	<i>U</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>p</i>
*2A: Demands must be met immediately/cannot	2.00	2.00	06.5	11.8	40.5	1.560	0.185
2B: Disrupts the activities of others	2.00	2.00	10.8	11.0	27.5	0.054	1.000
2C: Doesn't remain on task for an acceptable period of time	2.00	2.00	10.8	11.0	27.5	0.053	1.000
2D: Excessive demands for attention/doesn't work independently	2.99	2.00	12.0	10.8	24.0	-0.329	0.814
*2E: Distractibility or attention span a problem/does not listen	2.00	2.00	10.5	11.0	28.5	0.170	0.887
2F: Argues when reprimanded or corrected	2.50	1.00	9.00	11.3	33.0	0.634	0.600
2G: Argues when reprimanded or corrected	2.00	2.00	14.5	10.4	16.5	-1.140	0.307
2H: Ignores the feelings of others	2.00	2.00	11.0	11.0	27.0	0.000	1.000
2I: Does not get along well with other children	2.00	2.00	10.0	11.2	30.0	0.323	0.814
2J: Does not follow established class rules	3.00	2.00	10.5	11.0	28.5	0.161	0.877
2K: Expresses anger inappropriately	3.00	2.00	7.67	11.6	37.0	1.040	0.356
2L: Is physically aggressive with others/bullies	3.00	2.00	9.00	11.3	33.0	0.629	0.600
2M: Damages others' property	2.00	2.00	9.17	11.3	32.5	0.537	0.600
2N: Uses obscene gestures or language	2.00	2.00	0.17	11.1	29.5	0.260	0.814

\*=The data collected in the survey item did not meet assumption 4. Distributions of the scores for the variables were not similar, as assessed by visual inspection.



The hypothesis statements for Research Question 1.1, as well as the number of survey participants, required the use of a Mann-Whitney  $U$  test to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the two groups' (0-5 Years of experience and 6 or years of experience) responses to the items in Survey Question 2, part A. In Table 8, I provide the mean scores for each of the independent variables and the results of the Mann-Whitney  $U$  test for the items in Survey Question 2, part A.

Table 8 shows the Mann-Whitney  $U$  test results for the items in Survey Question 2, part A. For Research Question 1.1, I performed Mann-Whitney  $U$  test to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in the teachers' responses to the items in Question 2, part A and the teachers' level of experience (0-5 or 6+ years of experience).

The analysis revealed that there were no statistically significant differences between the medians for any of the items in survey Question 2, part A. Distributions of the scores for the teachers with 0-5 years of experience and six or more years of experience were similar, as assessed by visual inspection. I accepted the null hypothesis for each item in Survey Question 2, part A (items 2A to 2N). I concluded that there were no statistically significant differences between the medians of the participants' responses to the items in Survey Question 2, part A and their years of experience in the classroom.

**RQ1.2:** Is there a statistically significant difference between Grades K-3 classroom teachers and Grades 4-6 classroom teachers regarding their levels of concern about student types of behaviors in their classrooms?

$H_0$ 1.2: There is no statistically significant difference between Grades K-3 classroom teachers and Grades 4-6 classroom teachers regarding their levels of concern about student types of behaviors in their classrooms.

$H_a$  1.2: There is a statistically significant difference between Grades K-3 classroom teachers and Grades 4-6 classroom teachers regarding their levels of concern about student types of behaviors in their classrooms.

The hypothesis statements for Research Question 1.2, as well as the number of survey participants, required the use of a Mann-Whitney  $U$  test to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the two groups' (Grades K-3 teachers and Grades 4-6 teachers) responses to the items in Survey Question 2, part A. In Table 9, I provide the median scores for each of the independent variables and the results of the Mann-Whitney  $U$  test for the items in Survey Question 2, part A.

Table 9

*Faculty Levels of Concern About Specific Student Behaviors by Teacher Grade Level (K-3 and 4-6)*

Question (Behavior)	Median K-3	Median 4-6	Mean Rank Value K-3	Mean Rank Value 4-6	$U$	$z$	$p$
2A: Demands must be met immediately/cannot	2.00	2.00	11.9	9.14	36.0	-1.120	0.360
2B: Disrupts the activities of others	2.00	2.00	12.2	8.60	32.5	-1.310	0.224
2C: Doesn't remain on task for an acceptable period of time	2.00	2.00	10.9	11.3	51.0	0.156	0.913

Continued

Table 9 (Continued)

Question (Behavior)	Median K-3	Median 4-6	Mean Rank Value K-3	Mean Rank Value 4-6	<i>U</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>p</i>
2D: Excessive demands for teacher's attention/doesn't work independently	2.00	2.99	12.0	9.00	35.0	-1.140	0.322
2E: Distractibility or attention span a problem/does not listen	2.00	2.00	10.7	11.7	53.5	0.378	0.743
2F: Argues when reprimanded or corrected	1.00	2.50	10.4	12.3	58.0	0.706	0.535
*2G: Argues when reprimanded or corrected	2.00	2.00	11.2	10.6	46.0	-0.242	0.856
2H: Ignores the feelings of others	2.00	2.00	11.5	10.0	42.0	-0.550	0.636
2I: Does not get along well with other children	2.00	2.00	10.5	12.0	56.0	0.559	0.636
2J: Does not follow established class rules	2.00	3.00	11.0	11.0	49.0	0.000	1.000
2K: Expresses anger inappropriately	2.00	3.00	11.1	10.8	47.5	-0.116	0.913
2L: Is physically aggressive with others/bullies	2.00	3.00	10.4	12.1	57.0	0.534	0.585
*2M: Damages others' property	2.00	3.00	10.6	11.8	54.5	0.435	0.689
*2N: Uses obscene gestures or language	2.00	3.00	10.5	11.9	55.5	0.501	0.360

\*=The data collected in the survey item did not meet assumption 4. Distributions of the scores for the variables were not similar, as assessed by visual inspection.

Table 9 shows the Mann-Whitney *U* test results for the items in Survey Question 2 part A. For Research Question 1.2, I performed Mann-Whitney *U* test to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in the teachers' responses to the

items in Question 2, part A and the teachers' grade level assignments (Grades K-3 or Grades 4-6).

The analysis revealed that there were no statistically significant differences between the medians for any of the items in Survey Question 2, part A. Distributions of the scores for the K-3 teachers and the 4-6 teachers in survey items 2A, 2B, 2C, 2D, 2E, 2F, 2H, 2I, 2K, 2L, and 2N were similar, as assessed by visual inspection. Distributions of the scores for the Grades K-3 teachers and Grades 4-6 teachers were not similar in survey items 2G, 2M, and 2N were not similar, as assessed by visual inspection. I accepted the null hypothesis for each item in Survey Question 2, part A (items 2A to 2N). I concluded that there were no statistically significant differences between the medians of the participants' responses to the items in Survey Question 2, part A and the teachers grade level assignment.

**RQ2.1:** Is there a statistically significant difference between experienced (6+ years of experience) and novice teachers (1-5 years of experience) regarding the level of support they need in order to address their concerns about types of student behaviors in the classrooms?

*H<sub>0</sub>2.1:* There is no statistically significant difference between experienced (6+ years of experience) and novice teachers (1-5 years of experience) regarding the level of support they need in order to address their concerns about types of student behaviors in the classrooms.

*H<sub>a</sub>2.1:* There is a statistically significant difference between experienced (6+ years of experience) and novice teachers (1-5 years of experience) regarding the level of

support they need in order to address their concerns about types of student behaviors in the classrooms.

The hypothesis statements for Research Question 2.1, as well as the number of survey participants, required the use of a Mann-Whitney  $U$  test to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the two groups' (0-5 years of experience and 6 or years of experience) responses to the items in Survey Question 2, part B. In Table 10, I provide the median scores for each of the independent variables and the results of the Mann-Whitney  $U$  test for the items in Survey Question 2, part B.

Table 10

*Faculty Expressed Need for Support to Deal With Specific Student Behaviors by Teacher Experience (0-5 years of experience and 6+ years of experience)*

Question (Behavior)	Median 0-5	Median 6+	Mean Rank Value 0-5	Mean Rank Value 6+	$U$	$z$	$p$
2AB: Demands must be met immediately	1.00	1.00	9.80	11.2	30.5	0.406	0.740
2BB: Disrupts the activities of others	2.00	1.00	9.50	11.3	31.5	0.487	0.669
*2CB: Doesn't remain on task for acceptable period of time	2.00	2.00	9.80	11.2	30.5	0.374	0.740
2DB: Excessive demands for teacher's attention/doesn't work independently	1.00	2.00	13.0	10.7	21.0	-0.661	0.600
2EB: Distractibility or attention span a problem/does not listen	2.00	1.00	8.20	11.5	35.5	0.892	0.412
2FB: Argues when reprimanded or corrected	2.00	2.00	9.70	11.2	31.0	0.420	0.740

Continued

Table 10 (Continued)

Question (Behavior)	Median 0-5	Median 6+	Mean Rank Value 0-5	Mean Rank Value 6+	<i>U</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>p</i>
2GB: Argues when reprimanded or corrected	1.00	1.00	10.0	11.2	30.0	0.349	0.814
2HB: Ignores the feelings of others	1.00	1.00	7.40	11.5	36.5	1.040	0.356
2IB: Does not get along well with other children	2.00	2.00	7.80	11.0	26.5	0.053	0.962
2JB: Does not follow established class rules	2.00	2.00	11.2	10.9	25.5	-0.159	0.887
*2KB: Expresses anger inappropriately	2.00	1.00	6.30	11.8	41.0	1.480	0.185
2LB: Is physically aggressive with others/bullies	3.00	2.00	9.80	11.2	30.5	0.365	0.740
*2MB: Damages others' property	3.00	2.00	9.80	11.3	31.5	0.468	0.669
2NB: Uses obscene gestures or language	2.00	2.00	11.3	10.9	26.0	-0.105	0.962

\*The data collected in the survey item did not meet assumption 4. of the scores for the variables were not similar, as assessed by visual inspection.

Table 10 shows the Mann-Whitney *U* test results for the items in Survey Question 2 part B. For Research Question 2.1, I performed Mann-Whitney *U* test to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in the teachers' responses to the items in Question 2, part B and the teachers' level of experience (0-5 and 6+ years of experience).

The analysis revealed that there were no statistically significant differences between the medians for any of the items in Survey Question 2, part B. Distributions of the scores for the teachers with 0-5 years of experience and 6 or more years of experience

in survey items 2AB, 2BB, 2DB, 2EB, 2FB, 2GB, 2HB, 2IB, 2JB, 2LB, and 2NB were similar, as assessed by visual inspection. Distributions of the scores for the teachers with 0-5 years of experience and 6 or more years of experience were not similar in survey items 2CB, 2KB, and 2NB were not similar, as assessed by visual inspection. I accepted the null hypothesis for each item in Survey Question 2, part B (items 2AB to 2NB). I concluded that there were no statistically significant differences between the medians of the participants' responses to the items in Survey Question 2, part B and the teachers' teaching experience.

**RQ2.2:** RQ2.2: Is there a statistically significant difference between Grades K-3 classroom teachers and Grades 4-6 classroom teachers regarding the level of support they need in order to address their concerns about types of student behaviors in the classrooms?

*H<sub>o</sub>2.2:* There is no statistically significant difference between Grades K-3 classroom teachers and Grades 4-6 classroom teachers regarding the level of support they need in order to address their concerns about types of student behaviors in the classrooms.

*H<sub>a</sub> 2.2:* There is a statistically significant difference between Grades K-3 classroom teachers and Grades 4-6 classroom teachers regarding the level of support they need in order to address their concerns about types of student behaviors in the classrooms.

The hypothesis statements for Research Question 2.2, as well as the number of survey participants, required the use of a Mann-Whitney *U* test to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the two groups' (Grades K-3

teachers and Grades 4-6 teachers) responses to the items in Survey Question 2 part B. In Table 11, I provide the median scores for each of the independent variables and the results of the Mann-Whitney  $U$  test for the items in Survey Question 2, part B.

Table 11

*Faculty Expressed Need for Support to Deal With Specific Student Behaviors by Teacher Grade Level (K-3 and 4-6).*

Question (Behavior)	Median K-3	Median 4-6	Mean Rank Value K-3	Mean Rank Value 4-6	$U$	$z$	$p$
2A: Demands must be met immediately/cannot	1.00	1.00	11.8	09.4	38.0	-0.947	0.443
2B: Disrupts the activities of others	2.00	1.00	11.9	09.2	36.5	-1.000	0.360
2C: Doesn't remain on task for an acceptable period of time	2.00	2.00	11.4	10.2	30.5	-0.436	0.663
2D: Excessive demands for attention/doesn't work independently	1.50	1.00	11.9	10.9	48.0	-0.082	0.585
2E: Distractibility or attention span a problem/does not listen	2.00	2.00	10.4	12.1	57.0	0.623	0.412
2F: Argues when reprimanded corrected	2.00	2.00	10.8	11.4	52.0	0.234	0.656
*2G: Argues when reprimanded or corrected	1.00	1.00	10.8	11.4	52.0	0.259	0.856
2H: Ignores the feelings of others	1.00	2.00	10.9	11.3	51.0	0.162	0.913
2I: Does not get along well with other children	2.00	2.00	10.9	11.2	50.5	0.118	0.913
2J: Does not follow established class rules	2.00	2.00	11.3	10.5	45.5	-0.276	0.799

Continued



Table 11 (continued)

Question (Behavior)	Median K-3	Median 4-6	Mean Rank Value K-3	Mean Rank Value 4-6	<i>U</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>p</i>
2K: Expresses anger inappropriately	2.00	2.00	11.1	10.9	48.0	-0.078	0.971
2L: Is physically aggressive with others/bullies	2.50	3.00	10.3	12.5	59.5	0.812	0.443
*2M: Damages others' property	2.00	3.00	09.2	14.6	70.0	1.930	0.067
*2N: Uses obscene gestures or language	1.50	2.00	10.2	12.6	60.5	0.895	0.400

\*=The data collected in the survey item did not meet assumption 4. Distributions of the scores for the variables were not similar, as assessed by visual inspection.

Table 11 shows the Mann-Whitney *U* test results for the items in Survey Question 2 part B. For research question 2.1, I performed Mann-Whitney *U* test to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in the teachers' responses to the items in question 2-part B and the teachers' grade level assignment (Grades K-3 or Grades 4-6).

The analysis revealed that there were no statistically significant differences between the medians for any of the items in Survey Question 2, part B. Distributions of the of the Grades K-3 and Grades 4-6 teacher groups in survey items 2AB, 2EB, 2GB, 2IB, 2JB, and 2LB were similar, as assessed by visual inspection. Distributions of the scores for the K-3 and 4-6 teacher groups were not similar for survey items 2BB, 2CB, 2DB, 2FB, 2HB, 2KB, 2MB, and 2NB were not similar, as assessed by visual inspection. I accepted the null hypothesis for each item in Survey Question 2, part B (items 2AB to 2NB). I concluded that there were no statistically significant differences between the

medians of the participants' responses to the items in Survey Question 2, part B and the teachers' grade level assignment.

**RQ3.1:** Is there a statistically significant difference in the supports experienced teachers (6+ years of experience) and novice teachers (1-5 years of experience) have used in the past to help them deal with difficult student behaviors in their classrooms?

$H_0$  3.1: There is no statistically significant difference in the supports experienced teachers (6+ years of experience) and novice teachers (1-5 years of experience) have used in the past to help them deal with difficult student behaviors in their classrooms.

$H_a$ 3.1: There is a statistically significant difference in the supports experienced teachers (6+ years of experience) and novice teachers (1-5 years of experience) have used in the past to help them deal with difficult student behaviors in their classrooms.

Table 12

*Supports Used by Faculty to Improve Their Response to Difficult Student Behaviors by Teacher Experience (0-5 Years of Experience and 6+ Years of Experience).*

Question (Supports)	Median 0-5	Median 6+	Mean Rank Value 0-5	Mean Rank Value 6+	$U$	$z$	$p$
*3A: Other class teachers	1.00	2.00	07.8	11.5	36.0	1.200	0.412
3B: Principal or other executive	1.00	1.00	13.0	10.7	21.0	-0.994	0.600
3C School Counselor	1.00	1.00	06.5	11.8	40.5	-1.580	0.185
3D: In-Service/Professional Development	1.00	1.00	14.5	10.4	16.5	-1.450	0.308

Continued

Table 12 (Continued)

Question (Supports)	Median 0-5	Median 6+	Mean Rank Value 0-5	Mean Rank Value 6+	<i>U</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>p</i>
3E: Books/videos, other published material	1.00	1.00	11.0	11.0	27.0	0.000	1.000
3F: Friend/Family Member	1.00	1.00	12.3	10.8	23.0	-0.433	0.740
3G: University courses/staff	0.00	0.00	08.5	11.4	34.6	1.020	0.471
3H: Parents	1.00	1.39	08.7	11.4	34.0	0.780	0.534
3I: Internet resources such as websites, social networking, newsgroups, and/or email	1.00	1.00	12.5	16.8	22.5	-0.509	0.669
3J: School Staff Meeting	1.00	1.00	08.8	11.4	33.5	0.824	0.534
*3K: Use of CPI Crisis Team Member or group	0.00	1.00	07.8	11.5	36.5	1.100	0.356

\*=The data collected in the survey item did not meet assumption 4. Distributions of the scores for the variables were not similar, as assessed by visual inspection.

The hypothesis statements for Research Question 3.1, as well as the number of survey participants, required the use of a Mann-Whitney *U* test to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the two groups' (0-5 Years of experience and 6 or years of experience) responses to the items in Survey Question 3. In Table 12, I provide the median scores for each of the independent variables and the results of the Mann-Whitney *U* test for the items in Survey Question 3.

Table 12 shows the Mann-Whitney *U* test results for the items in Survey Question 3. For Research Question 3.1, I performed Mann-Whitney *U* test to determine whether

there was a statistically significant difference in the teachers' responses to the items in question 3 and the teachers' level of experience (0-5 and 6+ years of experience).

My analysis revealed that there were no statistically significant differences between the medians for any of the items in Survey Question 3. Distributions of the scores for the teachers with 0-5 years of experience and six or more years of experience in survey items 3B, 3C, 3D, 3E, 3F, 3G, 3H, 3I, and 3J were similar, as assessed by visual inspection. Distributions of the scores for the teachers with 0-5 years of experience and 6 or more years of experience in survey items 3A and 3K were not similar, as assessed by visual inspection. I accepted the null hypothesis for each item in Survey Question 3 (items 3A to 3K). I concluded that there were no statistically significant differences between the medians of the participants' responses to the items in Survey Question 3 and the teachers' teaching experience.

**RQ3.2:** Is there a statistically significant difference in the supports K-3 classroom teachers and 4-6 classroom teachers have used to deal with difficult student behaviors in their classrooms?

*H<sub>0</sub>3.2:* There is no statistically significant difference in the supports Grades K-3 classroom teachers and Grades 4-6 classroom teachers have used to deal with difficult student behaviors in their classrooms.

*H<sub>a</sub>3.2:* There is a statistically significant difference in the supports Grades K-3 classroom teachers and Grades 4-6 classroom teachers have used to deal with difficult student behaviors in their classrooms.

Table 13

*Supports Used by Faculty to Improve Their Response to Difficult Student Behaviors by Teacher Grade Level (Grades K-3 and Grades 4-6).*

Question (Supports)	Median K-3	Median 4-6	Mean Rank Value K-3	Mean Rank Value 4-6	<i>U</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>p</i>
*3A: Other class teachers	2.00	2.00	10.5	12.0	56.0	0.620	0.636
3B: Principal or other executive	1.00	1.00	11.0	11.0	49.0	0.000	1.000
3C School Counselor	1.00	1.00	11.0	11.0	49.0	0.000	1.000
3D: In-Service/Professional Development	1.00	1.00	11.5	10.1	42.5	-0.651	0.636
3E: Books/videos, other published material	1.00	1.00	12.9	11.5	22.0	0.620	0.046
*3F: Friend/Family Member	0.50	1.00	09.7	13.6	76.5	1.490	0.172
3G: University courses/staff	0.00	0.00	11.5	10.0	42.0	-0.707	0.636
3H: Parents	1.00	1.00	10.7	11.6	53.0	0.331	0.799
3I: Internet resources such as websites, social networking, newsgroups, and/or email	1.00	1.00	12.8	07.4	23.5	2.140	0.056
3J: School Staff Meeting	1.00	1.00	11.2	10.6	46.5	-0.235	0.856
*3K: Use of CPI Crisis Team Member or group	1.00	0.00	11.6	09.7	40.0	-0.770	0.535

\*=The data collected in the survey item did not meet assumption 4. Distributions of the scores for the variables were not similar, as assessed by visual inspection.

The hypothesis statements for Research Question 3.2, as well as the number of survey participants, required the use of a Mann-Whitney *U* test to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the two groups' (Grades K-3

teachers and Grades 4-6 teachers) responses to the items in Survey Question 3. In Table 13, I provide the median scores for each of the independent variables and the results of the Mann-Whitney  $U$  test for the items in Survey Question 3. Table 13 shows the Mann-Whitney  $U$  test results for the items in Survey Question 3. For Research Question 3.2, I performed Mann-Whitney  $U$  test to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in the teachers' responses to the items in Question 3 and the teachers' grade level assignment (Grades K-3 or Grades 4-6). Distributions of the scores for the Grades K-3 and Grades 4-6 teachers in survey items 3B, 3C, 3D, 3E, 3G, 3H, 3I, and 3J were similar, as assessed by visual inspection. Distributions of the scores for the K-3 and 4-6 teachers in survey items 3A, 3F, and 3K were not similar, as assessed by visual inspection.

In Survey Question 3E, the use of books/videos and other published materials for teachers to improve their responses to student behaviors, was significantly higher in the Grades K-3 teacher group (*Mean Rank* = 12.9) than in Grades 4-6 teachers' group (*Mean Rank* = 11.5),  $U = 22.0$ ,  $z = .620$ ,  $p = .046$ , using an exact sampling distribution for  $U$  (Dineen & Blakesley, 1973). For Survey Item 3E, I rejected the null hypothesis and accepted a significant difference between the Grades K-3 and Grades 4-6 teachers' use of books/videos and other published materials for improving their response to difficult student behaviors.

My analysis revealed that there were no statistically significant differences between the medians for any of the other items in Survey Question 3 (Items 3A-3D; 3G-3K). I accepted the null hypothesis for all of the other items in Survey Question 3.

Besides survey item 3E, I concluded that there were no statistically significant differences between the medians of the participants' responses to the items in survey question 3 and the teachers' grade level assignment.

**RQ4.1:** Is there a statistically significant difference in the methods experienced teachers (6+ years of experience) and novice teachers (1-5 years of experience) have used to help them deal with difficult student behaviors in their classrooms?

$H_04.1$ : There is no statistically significant difference in the methods experienced teachers (6+ years of experience) and novice teachers (1-5 years of experience) have used to help them deal with difficult student behaviors in their classrooms.

$H_a4.1$ : There is a statistically significant difference in the methods experienced teachers (6+ years of experience) and novice teachers (1-5 years of experience) have used to help them deal with difficult student behaviors in their classrooms.

The hypothesis statements for Research Question 4.1 as well as the number of survey participants, required the use of a Mann-Whitney  $U$  test to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the two groups' (0-5 Years of experience and 6 or years of experience) responses to the items in survey question 4. In Table 14, I provide the median scores for each of the independent variables and the results of the Mann-Whitney  $U$  test for the items in Survey Question 4. Table 14 shows the Mann-Whitney  $U$  test results for the items in Survey Question 4. For research question 4.1, I performed Mann-Whitney  $U$  test to determine whether there was a

statistically significant difference in the teachers' responses to the items in question 4 and the teachers' level of experience (0-5 and 6+ years of experience).

Table 14

*Specific Methods Teachers Use to Deal With Difficult Student Behaviors by Teacher Experience (0-5 Years of Experience and 6+ Years of Experience)*

Question (Supports)	Median 0-5	Median 6+	Mean Rank Value 0-5	Mean Rank Value 6+	<i>U</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>p</i>
4A: Talked it over with the child	3.00	2.00	10.5	10.5	18.0	0.000	1.000
4B: Ignored the bad behavior	1.50	1.00	13.5	10.2	12.0	-0.897	0.516
4C: Verbally reprimanded the child	1.33	1.22	13.5	10.2	12.0	-1.090	0.316
4D: Tried to teach better behavior	2.00	1.50	15.0	10.0	09.0	-1.310	0.316
4E: Use praise to encourage better behavior	2.00	2.00	14.0	10.1	11.0	-1.070	0.442
4F: Sent the child to the corner/back of the room etc.	0.50	1.00	08.0	10.8	20.0	0.839	0.589
4G: Sent the child out of class (time out)	0.50	1.00	09.5	10.6	20.0	-0.297	0.853
4H: Removed privileges	1.50	1.50	13.3	12.5	15.0	0.864	0.758
4I: Detained the child	0.50	0.00	12.0	10.3	15.0	0.457	0.758
4J: Contacted the child's parents	2.00	1.50	15.0	10.0	09.0	-1.130	0.316
4 K: Sent the child to the office	1.50	1.00	14.8	10.0	09.5	-1.720	0.316
4 L: Consulted with school/district social worker	1.50	1.00	12.3	10.3	14.5	-0.512	0.674

Continued



Table 14 (Continued)

Question (Supports)	Median 0-5	Median 6+	Mean Rank Value 0-5	Mean Rank Value 6+	<i>U</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>p</i>
4M: Used seating arrangement	2.00	2.00	14.0	10.1	11.0	-1.050	0.442
4N: Adapted curriculum to suit student needs	2.00	1.50	15.5	09.9	08.0	-1.450	0.263
4O: Used token economies	0.50	1.00	06.3	11.0	26.5	1.330	0.316
4P: Used conflict resolution methods	1.50	1.00	00.9	10.0	08.5	-1.370	0.253
4Q: Called class meeting or discussion	1.50	1.00	15.3	10.0	07.0	-1.590	0.211
4R: Implemented peer support program	0.50	1.00	09.3	10.6	20.5	0.359	0.758
4S: Used behavior modification	1.50	1.00	13.3	10.2	13.5	-0.864	0.516
4T: Referred students for or given Corporal Punishment	0.00	0.00	07.5	10.4	24.0	0.951	0.516

My analysis revealed that there were no statistically significant differences between the medians for any of the items in Survey Question 2, part B. Distributions of the scores for the teachers with 0-5 years of experience and six or more years of experience in all of the survey items, 4A to 4T were similar, as assessed by visual inspection. I accepted the null hypothesis for each item in survey question 4 (items 4A to 4T). I concluded that there were no statistically significant differences between the

medians of the participants' responses to the items in Survey Question 4 and the teachers' teaching experience.

**RQ.4:2** Is there a statistically significant statistically significant difference in the methods Grade K-3 classroom teachers and Grades 4-6 classroom teachers have used to help them deal with difficult student behaviors in their classrooms?

*H<sub>0</sub>4.2:* There is no statistically significant difference in the methods K-3 classroom teachers and 4-6 classroom teachers have used to help them deal with difficult student behaviors in their classrooms.

*H<sub>a</sub>4.2:* There is a statistically significant difference in the methods K-3 classroom teachers and 4-6 classroom teachers have used to help them deal with difficult student behaviors in their classrooms.

The hypothesis statements for research question 4.2, as well as the number of survey participants, required the use of a Mann-Whitney *U* test to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the two groups' (Grades K-3 teachers and Grades 4-6 teachers) responses to the items in survey question 4. In Table 15, I provide the median scores for each of the independent variables and the results of the Mann-Whitney *U* test for the items in survey question 4.

Table 15

*Specific Methods Teachers Use to Deal With Difficult Student Behaviors by Teacher Grade Level (Grades K-3 and 4-6).*

Question (Supports)	Median K-3	Median 4-6	Mean Rank Value K-3	Mean Rank Value 4-6	<i>U</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>p</i>
4A: Talked it over with the child	2.00	2.00	12.3	11.0	18.0	0.000	1.000
4B: Ignored the bad behavior	1.00	1.00	11.3	10.4	44.5	0.390	0.743
4C: Verbally reprimanded the child	1.00	1.00	12.3	08.5	31.5	-1.090	0.197
*4D: Tried to teach better behavior	2.00	1.00	11.8	09.5	38.5	-0.913	0.443
*4E: Use praise to encourage better behavior	2.00	1.00	12.3	12.5	31.5	-1.600	0.197
4F: Sent the child to the corner/back of the room etc.	1.00	1.00	10.3	14.0	59.5	1.000	0.443
*4G: Sent the child out of class (time out)	0.00	1.00	09.5	11.0	70.0	1.830	0.128
4H: Removed privileges	1.00	1.00	11.0	13.5	12.0	0.045	1.000
4I: Detained the child	0.00	1.00	9.75	12.5	66.5	1.600	0.197
*4J: Contacted the child's parents	2.00	1.50	8.00	12.4	28.0	-1.830	0.128
4 K: Sent the child to the office	1.50	1.00	10.3	11.3	58.5	1.040	0.488
4 L: Consulted with school/district social worker	1.50	1.00	10.9	08.3	51.0	0.175	0.913

Continued

Table 15 (Continued)

Question (Supports)	Median K-3	Median 4-6	Mean Rank Value K-3	Mean Rank Value 4-6	<i>U</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>p</i>
4M: Used seating arrangement	2.00	2.00	12.4	11.5	30.0	-1.720	0.172
4N: Adapted curriculum to suit student needs	2.00	1.50	10.8	09.3	52.5	0.302	0.799
4O: Used token economies	0.50	1.00	14.9	10.2	37.0	-1.070	0.400
4P: Used conflict resolution methods	1.50	1.00	11.4	10.3	43.5	-0.460	0.689
4Q: Called class meeting or discussion	1.50	1.00	11.4	10.2	44.0	-0.434	0.743
4R: Implemented peer support program	0.50	1.00	11.4	07.4	43.5	-0.471	0.689
4S: Used behavior modification	1.50	1.00	12.8	12.5	24.0	-2.260	0.067
4T: Referred students for or given Corporal Punishment (Spanking)	0.00	0.00	10.3	12.5	59.5	1.000	0.443

\*=The data collected in the survey item did not meet assumption 4. Distributions of the scores for the variables were not similar, as assessed by visual inspection.

Table 15 shows the Mann-Whitney *U* test results for the items in survey question 4. For Research Question 4.2, I performed Mann-Whitney *U* test to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in the teachers' responses to the items in Question 4 and the teachers' grade level assignment (Grades K-3 or Grades 4-6).

The analysis revealed that there were no statistically significant differences between the medians for any of the items in Survey Question 4. Distributions of the of the K-3 and 4-6 teacher groups in survey items 4A, 4B, 4C, 4F, 4H, 4I, 4K, 4L, 4M, 4N,

4O, 4P, 4Q, 4R, 4S, and 4T were similar, as assessed by visual inspection. Distributions of the scores for the K-3 and 4-6 teacher groups were not similar in survey items 4D, 4E, 4G, and 4J were not similar, as assessed by visual inspection. I accepted the null hypothesis for each item in survey question 4 (items 4A to 4T). I concluded that there were no statistically significant differences between the medians of the participants' responses to the items in Survey Question 4 and the teachers' grade level assignment.

**RQ5.1:** Is there a statistically significant difference in the level of confidence experienced teachers (6+ years of experience) and novice teachers (1-5 years of experience) have with regard to the way they manage student/classroom behaviors and difficulties that arise in their classrooms?

*H<sub>0</sub>5.1:* There is no statistically significant difference in the level of confidence experienced teachers (6+ years of experience) and novice teachers (1-5 years of experience) have in regards to the way they manage student/classroom behaviors and difficulties that arise in their classrooms.

*H<sub>a</sub>5.1:* There is a statistically significant difference in the level of confidence experienced teachers (6+ years of experience) and novice teachers (1-5 years of experience) have in regards to the way they manage student/classroom behaviors and difficulties that arise in their classrooms.

Table 16

*Faculty's Level of Confidence in Managing Student Behavioral Problems That Occur in the Classroom by Teacher Experience (0-5 Years of Experience and 6+ Years of Experience).*

Question (Supports)	Median 0-5	Median 6+	Mean Rank Value 0-5	Mean Rank Value 6+	<i>U</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>p</i>
Question 5	4.00	4.00	8.00	11.50	36.00	1.060	0.412

The hypothesis statements for Research Question 5.1, as well as the number of survey participants, required the use of a Mann-Whitney *U* test to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the two groups' (0-5 years of experience and 6 or years of experience) responses to the items in Survey Question 5. In Table 16, I provide the median scores for each of the independent variables and the results of the Mann-Whitney *U* test for the items in Survey Question 5.

Table 16 shows the Mann-Whitney *U* test results for the items in Survey Question 5. For Research Question 5.1, I performed Mann-Whitney *U* test to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in the teachers' responses to Survey question 5 and the teachers' level of experience (0-5 and 6+ years of experience).

My analysis revealed that there were no statistically significant differences between the medians for Survey Question 5. Distributions of the scores for the teachers with 0-5 years of experience and six or more years of experience in Question 5 were similar, as assessed by visual inspection. I accepted the null hypothesis for Survey Question 5. I concluded that there were no statistically significant differences between the medians of the

participants' responses to the items in Survey Question 5 and the teachers' teaching experience.

**RQ5.2:** Is there a statistically significant difference in the level of confidence Grades K-3 classroom teachers and Grades 4-6 classroom teachers have with regard to the way they manage student/classroom behaviors and difficulties that arise in their classrooms?

$H_o$  5.2: There is no statistically significant difference in the level of confidence Grades K-3 classroom teachers and Grades 4-6 classroom teachers have with regard to the way they manage student/classroom behaviors and difficulties that arise in their classrooms.

$H_a$  5.2: There is a statistically significant difference in the level of confidence Grades K-3 classroom teachers and Grades 4-6 classroom teachers have with regard to the way they manage student/classroom behaviors and difficulties that arise in their classrooms.

Table 17

*Faculty's Level of Confidence in Managing Student Behavioral Problems That Occur in the Classroom by Teacher Grade Level (Grades K-3 and Grades 4-6).*

Question (Supports)	Median K-3	Median 4-6	Mean Rank Value K-3	Mean Rank Value 4-6	$U$	$z$	$p$
Question 5	4.00	4.00	8.00	11.50	36.00	1.060	0.412

The hypothesis statements for Research Question 5, as well as the number of survey participants, required the use of a Mann-Whitney  $U$  test to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the two groups' (Grades K-3

teachers and Grades 4-6 teachers) responses to the items in Survey Question 5. In Table 17, I provide the median scores for each of the independent variables and the results of the Mann-Whitney  $U$  test for the items in Survey Question 5.

Table 17 shows the Mann-Whitney  $U$  test result for Survey Question 5. For Research Question 4.2, I performed Mann-Whitney  $U$  test to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in the teachers' responses to Question 5 and the teachers' grade level assignment (Grades K-3 or Grades 4-6).

The analysis revealed that there were no statistically significant differences between the medians for any of the items in Survey Question 5. Distributions of the scores of the Grades K-3 and Grades 4-6 teacher groups in Question 5 were similar, as assessed by visual inspection. I accepted the null hypothesis survey question 5. I concluded that there were no statistically significant differences between the medians of the participants' responses to Survey Question 5 and the teachers' grade level assignment.

### **Discussion of the Findings**

The results of the analysis I made for this study provide information to REL that can be valuable for decision making and understanding the teachers' concerns about student behavior, teachers' needs to deal with it, methods that are used for dealing with and improving the teachers' dealings with student behavior, and the teachers' confidence in dealing with behavioral issues at both the building level and within demographic groups of the teacher population at REL.



The descriptive statistics in this study show that specific behaviors are of high, moderate, and low levels of concern. The SDs for each of the survey items in Survey Question 2 parts A and B show that teachers strongly agree about what behaviors are most and least concerning and what behaviors provide the most needs for support. Violent behaviors, including bullying, damaging of property, and aggression towards others are the areas where teachers are most concerned. The teachers who participated also expressed that support is needed to deal with these behaviors.

Scholarly reports and findings in scholarly literature reflect similar concerns that the teachers at REL have about violent student behaviors such as violence and destruction of others' property. Brodsky (2016) concluded in a 2014 study that 33 of every 1000 students in U.S. schools is a victim of violence and bullying. The United States Centers for Disease Control (2015) reported that, on average, 1642 youth aged 10 to 24 years of age are treated in emergency rooms each day for injuries from youth on youth violence. Teachers nationwide have also reported increased violence by students to teachers and bullying as a continuing concern in creating a safe learning environment for all children (Bidwell, 2014; Bradshaw, 2015; Rigby, 2014; Zhang, Musu-Gillette, & Ouderkerk, 2015).

The teachers also reported that among other supports, they look to their peers and school counselors to improve their dealings with difficult student behavior. REL's teaching faculty participates in PLCs. A critical aspect of PLCs is the active commitment teachers to collaborate in researching and implementing changes to improve their practice, student learning, and their schools (Dufour et al., 2011).

The results of the Mann-Whitney  $U$  test I conducted for each of the research questions yielded only one statistically significant difference in the teachers' perceptions of student behavior at REL. In Survey Question 3E (Table 13), the use of books/videos and other published materials for teachers to improve their response to student behaviors, was significantly higher in the Grades K-3 teacher group (*Mean Rank* = 12.9) than in Grades 4-6 teacher group (*Mean Rank* = 11.5),  $U = 22.0$ ,  $z = .620$ ,  $p = .046$ . Although the null hypothesis was accepted for the majority of the survey questions in both the level of teacher experience and their grade level assignment, the descriptive statistics provide REL with important information about the teachers' perception of student behavior that will be valuable to guide decision making and professional development directed towards the teachers' concerns.

### **Project as an Outcome**

My findings and the discussions about the findings led me to develop a project that will provide the teachers at REL an opportunity to improve their ability to deal with their most concerning student behaviors and provide further information to REL about student behavior. This professional development project that will occur over a 2-month span at REL will provide the teachers with a collaborative experience in already-established PLCs. The teachers will collaborate with their colleagues of different levels of teaching experience to further develop skills at collecting and analyzing information about student behavior. The teachers will also research and apply new methods to deal with and/or reduce the occurrence of the behaviors most concerning to them, as well as

learn further information about understanding and dealing with student anger and violence/bullying.

### **Conclusion**

In this study, I addressed the need for further information and understanding of the disciplinary issues that exist at REL, a midwest U.S. rural elementary school. To increase these understandings, I conducted a quantitative survey study that collected and analyzed the teachers' perceptions of their concerns about difficult student behaviors, how the teachers deal with student behaviors, how confident teachers perceive they are about dealing with difficult student behaviors, and what resources teachers perceive that they need to better deal with difficult student behaviors.

The data I analyzed can guide decision making about the teachers' approaches to student behavior and what needs are most critical to improve their ability to deal with difficult student behaviors. This detailed information will help to give a clear understanding about the teachers' perceptions of student behavior at REL and help the teachers and administrators to make possible adjustments to practice (Larson, 2016; Osher et al., 2010; Tidwell et al., 2003). These adjustments may positively affect student learning and the perceptions that stakeholders have about the school.

In Section 3 of this study, I will discuss a proposed project that will provide REL the opportunity to use the data collected in this survey as an example to discuss, set goals, collect data, and make changes to their classroom management practices to improve upon their confidence and expand the methods they use when dealing with the behaviors that are concerning to them. The section will provide details about the scope, activities, and

evaluation methods of the project. I will discuss how this project aligns with the literature on professional development. Finally, in Section 4, I will reflect on my work in this study and the project in general.

### Section 3: The Project

#### **Introduction**

In my analysis of the data, I found that teachers had a high level of agreement that violent student behaviors and expressions of anger were the most concerning behaviors and that teachers needed more support in dealing with such behaviors when they occur in the classroom. I also found that teachers collaborated with their peers to learn how to deal with difficult student behaviors. With these considerations in mind, I determined that a professional development project that would allow teachers to further collect information about student disruptive behaviors and address the concerns that were voiced by the teachers would benefit the teachers and administrators at REL.

I have created a professional development project entitled *SMART Decisions for Student Behavior*. During this project, all of the classroom teachers at REL will attend a full-school day workshop to review the findings of my study, discuss their concerns about student behavior, and learn more about dealing with student violence, anger, and bullying. This will be followed by a half school day meeting where individual grade level teams will meet individually to set goals for improvement of how they deal with a specific concerning student behavior, discuss and/or research possible solutions to the specific concerning student behavior, and make plans for the collection of information about the occurrences of the specific student behavior in their individual classrooms. These teams are the same teams that REL administrators already have in place for daily professional development meetings. In the course of a 2-month period, the teachers will implement changes to their classroom practices and collect data about the occurrence of

the concerning student behavior their grade level decided to address. During these 2 months, the teachers will meet in 30-minute meetings every other week with their grade level colleagues. In these meetings, the teachers will collect their own data about their most concerning student behaviors, work together to research and make changes to improve teacher practices, and monitor student and teacher progress. Teachers will then, during a second full school day of professional development, present their learning and changes to their classroom management/student disciplinary practices to their colleagues.

In this section, I will discuss the rationale for this professional development initiative. I will review literature related to PLCs and teacher-guided, job-embedded professional development. I will discuss the goals and purpose of this professional development initiative, detailing the audience this professional development will target. I will explain the components of this project, provide a timeline for implementing the project, discuss the activities that will be performed by teachers, grade level leaders, and administrators in this project, and justify the project genre. I will also describe the resources that will be needed to implement this professional development initiative and provide information about the existing supports and barriers this project will have at REL. I will then discuss a plan to evaluate the professional development plan and how it will lead to positive social change. Last, I will discuss the importance of this project for the students, staff and faculty at REL, and the local community that REL serves.

### **Rationale**

After I completed collecting and analyzing the data and reflecting upon my knowledge of REL's use of PLCs for professional growth, I decided that a professional

development initiative using the PLC format to improve teacher practice was the best method to respond to the data and encourage further collection of information at the school. The data that I collected and analyzed led me to the conclusion that there were student behaviors that were of high, moderate, and low concern. The teachers at REL had a high level of agreement about the levels of concern and what specific student behaviors required extra support for the teachers to improve their dealings with them. The teachers reported with high levels of agreement that they used support from their colleagues, principals, and counselors to deal with difficult student behavior. The teachers who completed the survey showed that they had a general agreement about what specific student behaviors are concerning to them and with their expressed use of each other as a support. Through the use of PLCs, the teachers will collaborate with their peers to further understand and respond to violent student behavior, bullying, student anger, and other possible student behavior issues that I did not explore in the data collection process of this study.

Using PLCs in this project aligns with the practices already implemented at the school. During the last 10 years, REL, as well as its entire school district, has dedicated itself to using PLCs to improve student learning (Personal communication, REL principal, 2016). Studies have concluded that PLCs and collaborative in-school professional development opportunities increase teachers' level of confidence in their work in a school, regardless of their teaching experience (Eraut, 2012; Nolan & Molla, 2017; Whittington, Shore, & Thompson, 2014). As a result of this professional development initiative, teachers may improve student behavior and possibly improve

their level of confidence in dealing with difficult behaviors. Although this project is not a complete solution to the need for more information about student behavior at the school, the information and the project provide the school with a discussion starter about student behavior and will reinforce the use of PLCs at the school at the same time.

### **Review of the Literature**

In this literature review, I will describe the literature about professional development and use of PLCs as a method of professional development. To research and synthesize the literature regarding this professional development initiative, I used the Walden university library's electronic data bases of scholarly journals, including Science Direct, EBSCO Host, ProQuest Central, SAGE Journals, Education Source, Walden University's Thoreau, and Academic Search Complete. I searched online using Google Scholar and Amazon Books. I also used books that I had previously used for academic study. Using these books' bibliographies, I was able to locate further sources using Walden University's *Thoreau* data base. To reach saturation and assure a detailed literature review, I searched for the following terms: *professional development, education history and professional development, data, data-based decision making, SMART goals, SMART goals and education, collegial relationships, collaboration, elementary school professional development, job-embedded professional development, professional learning communities, PLCs, DuFour, Schmoker, student behavior, classroom management and professional development, and school improvement*. I achieved saturation by conducting searches of each of the key words individually and in combination until no new and/or relevant articles were revealed.



### **Concerns About Traditional Professional Development**

In the long history of U.S. education, school leaders have encouraged and even required teachers to attend professional development to improve or change their teaching practices to improve student learning (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009; Gomenoglu & Clark, 2015; Hawley & Rolle, 2007; Ko et al., 2015; Masterson, 2013; Shroyer et al., 2014). Many workshops and professional development sessions have led to advances in student learning and changes to the approaches that teachers and administrators at schools use to improve student learning and student behavior.

In recent years, as the accountability movement has been implemented in U.S. schools, it has also become a best practice for schools to have a unified professional development approach. A central argument by researchers and school experts is that there is value in professional development based on teacher preference/skill through in-service workshops and conferences. However, these experiences do not take into consideration the concerns of the school as a whole (Ko et al., 2006; Gokmenoglu & Clark, 2015; Masterson, 2013). To achieve a successful educational environment, individual teachers must adjust their professional practices to best meet their students' needs and schools must plan professional learning that address school-wide concerns.

Researchers, school leaders, and experts expressed concerns that professional development that is focused only the individual teacher does not address local-level concerns (Gokmenoglu & Clark, 2015; Gray & Summers, 2015; Ko et al., 2006; Masterson, 2013; Nolan & Molla, 2017; Schmoker, 1996), takes time away from learning

in core subjects (Anderson, 2016; Alter et al., 2013; Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Gokmenoglu & Clark, 2015; Gray & Summers, 2015; Ko et al., 2006;), is costly in terms of resources, adds teacher stress, and is not reflective of changing student needs and the changes to curriculum (Anderson, 2016; Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; DuFour et al., 2011, 2010; Gokmenoglu & Clark, 2015; Gray & Summers, 2015; Ko et al., 2006; Masterson, 2013; Nolan & Molla, 2017; Schmoker, 1996; Shroyer et al., 2014;).

Researchers and school leaders concluded that effective professional development for teachers in schools should include professional learning for teachers that is specific to areas of concern that are present in student data and school-level information (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; DuFour et al., 2011; Dufour et al., 2010). When teachers and school leaders collect and use local information, they will be able to develop professional learning experiences that can be shared by teachers in a school as a whole or designed to respond to concerns facing specific teachers or situations. These methods allow for personal and school-level professional development that is specific to the needs of both teachers and the students to improve student learning and climate (Anderson, 2016; Alter et al., 2013; Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; DuFour et al., 2011; Dufour et al., 2010; Gokmenoglu & Clark, 2015; Gray, Lewis, & Ralph, 2015; Ko et al., 2006; Masterson, 2013; Nolan & Molla, 2017; Schmoker, 1996; Shroyer et al., 2014).

## **Professional Learning Communities**

Recent research in U.S. public schools has demonstrated that schools are moving away from traditional workshops, teacher work days without students, and conference attendance for professional development (DuFour et al., 2011; Gray & Summers, 2015). As schools are presented less funding by their state and the federal government, accountability pressures are increased, and increased amounts of data about students is desired by the local and federal governments, school leaders are moving towards school-based, systemic professional development opportunities (Gebbie et al., 2012; Schmoker, 1996). PLCs are schools where school leaders and teachers concentrate on building teachers' skills while addressing specific areas of concern that the teachers and administrators have about student learning and/or the classroom environment (Dufour et al., 2011; Wilson, 2016). In schools using PLCs, teachers take time, daily or weekly, to discuss local data that identify concerns about student learning improvement (Dufour et al., 2011). Using test scores, student work, and school records, school leaders and teachers collaborate to research and analyze the local data that identify areas of concern regarding student achievement or well-being. The teachers, in strategically-grouped teams, collaborate to find solutions to their concerns through implementing new teacher practices using the talents, abilities, and information that individual teachers possess, collect, and share (Gray & Summers, 2015; Hoy, 2002; Hurd, 1997; Little, 2006).

Administrators at schools that use PLCs allow teachers to lead and make changes to professional practice at the school. In PLCs, administrators and/or educational leaders work with teachers and school faculty to create a learning community where teachers

develop and share a sense of shared responsibility and a common vision to improve student learning. This includes setting goals that lead to success for all students and dedicated time for teachers to make inquiry into best teaching practice, develop new teaching skills, and implement new practices through rehearsal feedback about their work from colleagues in a safe and collaborative environment (Anderson, 2016; DuFour et al., 2011; Mintzes, Marcum, Messerschmidt-Yates, & Mark, 2017; Nolan & Molla, 2017). The conceptual framework that underlies the development of PLC's is Bandura's social learning theory where behaviors and knowledge are developed through observation of others, rehearsal of behaviors, and reflection. In a PLC, teachers read articles, observe videos, or each other's teaching to learn about new pedagogical practices. The teachers then collaborate to discuss the new practices and to learn the skills needed to implement them. The teachers work together to rehearse, discuss, and adjust their practices before and while implementing new practices to their classrooms (Mintzes et al., 2017). As the teachers implement the new pedagogical practices, the teachers will reflect on the practice by observing each other, collecting student data that reflect the implementation of their new teaching practices, and sharing their information in a collaborative setting (Dufour et al., 2011; Mintzes et al., 2013).

**Data Collection and Use.** Data including test scores, attendance rates, graduation percentages, and recordings of suspensions and expulsions are commonly used to assess schools and teachers (Bridges, 2012; Dufour et al., 2011; Gibbs & Miller, 2014; Hawley & Rolle, 2007; Marzano, 2003; Shroyer, Yahnke, Miller, Dunn, & Bridges, 2014). Schools using PLCs for school improvement and professional learning

use these sources of data and also collect and study student work, surveys from parents/teachers/stakeholders, local assessments, and observations made by teachers about students and student learning. This data is collected and analyzed by teachers and administrators to understand issues at their school (DuFour et al., 2011; Schmoker, 1996; Shroyer et al., 2014). Having local information that is dedicated to the immediate needs of a school is essential for schools be able to understand the school issues and develop responses that will alleviate and/or improve upon the concerns about student learning and their school in general (Dufour & Marzano, 2011). Without this specific information, as stated by Dufour et al. (2011), “(the data) ...will neither inform nor improve a teacher’s practice... Without relevant information on their (the teachers’ and students’) strengths and weaknesses, teacher conversations regarding the most effective ways to help students...will deteriorate into sharing of uninformed opinions.” (p. 26-27).

The teachers and administrators use local data to inform decisions and set goals that respond to the specific school’s concerns about student learning, teacher development, and/or classroom management (Dufour et al., 2011; Gebbie et al., 2012). Through the thorough study of a variety of data, school wide and small group discussions about specific subject/grade level, building-wide, or district-wide concerns become personal to those involved, allowing teachers and school leaders to develop professional development or change based on the strengths of those who are involved. When outside professional development is needed, an affordable and precise plan to receive this training can be made in a timely fashion (O’Neill, 2000; Schlechty, 2002; Schmoker, 1996). With a variety of local-based and school specific data related to the concerns of a

school or a PLC, deeper understanding about issues and concerns at the school can be reached. Deeper understandings can then be used to guide school improvement at the classroom, grade/subject level, or the school-building level. In PLCs, teachers and school administrators study data to understand issues, develop and research skills to improve teacher practice, and monitor changes through collecting and processing a variety of local information. These methods of collaborative inquiry and professional development lead to professional growth that follows a cycle of research about school-level concerns, implementation of changes in teacher/school practice, and reflection on changes and adjustments to changes as necessary for optimal student success. This continuous cycle of data collection and decision making has been described as critical to the best practices in today's schools (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; DuFour et al., 2011; Schmoker, 1996).

**SMART goals.** As leaders and teachers develop rich understandings using a variety of local-based data, a plan to respond to these understandings should be made by the teachers and/or school administrators if school improvement is to come from a PLC (Dufour et al., 2011; Robinson, Perryman, & Hayday, 2004; Schmoker, 1996). Many schools developing PLCs have used the concept of *SMART goals* as a method to set and plan to improve upon the concerns they identify (Doran, 1981; Robinson et al., 2004). Writing for the best practices for businesses, Doran (1981) suggested the use of long-term continuous goals based on the needs for each individual entity as a method to improve performance. Using the acronym SMART, he suggested organizations set goals for improvement are:

- S: Specific to the school and context of the goal being set

- M: Measurable through data collection and progress monitoring
- A: Agreed upon or developed through consensus of a group and shared by all members.
- R: Realistic, or able to be obtained
- T: Time-oriented, that each goal has a reasonable timeline for completion (Doran, 1981).

Although Doran (1981) developed the concept of SMART goals for businesses, Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock (2001) concluded that the use of SMART goals in the school would provide teachers and stakeholders with a clear concept of where improvement and/or change in practice is needed. With a clear set of realistic goals and a timeline for the school to reach them, teachers are more likely to understand the need for change, leaders will be able to dedicate resources (time, money, and personnel) efficiently, and professional development is more likely to be focused on student needs instead of on new initiatives (Marzano et al., 2001; O'Neill, 2000). Through the development of SMART goals that are shared by an entire school's faculty and their stakeholders, school leaders are able to develop a shared responsibility for concerns at the building level, empower teachers and staff with specific areas to improve their skills, and distribute leadership to all faculty. The development of SMART goals by teachers and leaders is essential when further establishing PLCs within a school (Marzano et al., 2001; Robinson et al., 2004).

The use of SMART goals in PLCs has been found to improve school performance. In a study of the use of SMART goals to guide professional development in

elementary schools, 53 primary schools began using SMART goals to guide professional development for a time period of 2 years (van Geel, Keuning, Visscher, & Fox, 2016). After 2 years, the achievement scores of these schools were compared with the achievement scores of elementary schools that did not use SMART goals in their professional development plans. The students in schools that implemented SMART goals improved their academic achievement levels by one month of school when compared with the group of schools that did not use SMART goals. Further, primary schools in the study that were considered high-poverty had higher academic gains than high poverty schools that did not use SMART goals to develop their professional development (van Geel et al., 2016). Setting goals such as SMART goals have also been discussed as a vital and essential method to improve schools in presentations and studies by Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) and Gurley, Peters, Collins, and Fift (2015).

**Job-Embedded Professional Development.** Leaders and teachers who work at schools using PLCs use the information which is collected by teachers, school administrators, and other school staff, to develop goals and achieve improvements. Professional development is based on goals that the school has set after discussions about the local-level information the teachers and administrators have collected and analyzed. Principals, teacher leaders, and teachers collaborate in meetings in the school building during the school day. During these meetings, teachers, leaders, and/or administrators collaborate in shared common time to collect and discuss information, share with colleagues, set goals, work together and research methods to improve practice, and rehearse and implement new methods together (Anderson, 2016; Dufour et al., 2011;



Little, 2006; Marzano et al., 2001; Schmoker, 1996). To improve student learning relative to different student grade levels or subject areas, teachers and leaders at a school collaborate within groups, such as grade levels in the elementary schools and subject specific teams at the intermediate and high school levels. The teachers in these groups communicate together and with administrators on their concerns, needs, and their successes and shortcomings (Dufour et al., 2010). Principals and teachers work together to address concerns and assist each other on addressing concerns that they have about their students and student learning (Anderson, 2016; Dufour et al., 2016).

Although schools that work as PLCs develop building-level changes to practice, teachers are still encouraged to attend workshops and professional conferences to learn about new skills and materials to share with their colleagues (Dufour et al., 2010; Little, 2006). In PLCs, teachers attend professional development through traditional methods, but also improve their practices through frequent school level, grade level and/or subject departmental meetings to discuss and/or make improvements. Often, the learning that individual teachers gain during their own professional development pursuits is shared at PLC group meetings (Dufour et al., 2010).

In schools using PLCs, grade level, subject specific, or other specific PLC group meetings occur during the school day through daily, bi-weekly, or weekly scheduled meetings (Dufour et al., 2011; Little, 2006; Mintzes et al., 2017; Nolan & Molla, 2017). Often, school principals and leaders will attend these meetings to observe the teachers' progress towards meeting their goals, discuss information/data that has been collected by the teachers, provide advice and assist the teachers and/or resolve conflicts and concerns.

They assist the teachers by providing extra materials and resources. They also help teachers identify colleagues who may have experience with a teaching/management method, subject area, and/or material that a group may be exploring to improve their own practice (Dufour et al., 2011; Little, 2006; Mintzes et al., 2017; Nolan & Molla, 2017; Wilson, 2016). In these meetings, teachers are given data and the necessary resources to research and discuss the causes of concerns, discuss and research new practices, rehearse and observe each other as they implement new practices, and collect data to adjust their practices (Lambert, 2005; Little, 2006). Individual PLC groups share their growth, findings, and suggestions with other groups in the school or with all of the teaching faculty when it is necessary and/or valuable. This collaboration is essential in fostering sustainable, collective growth and improvement based on the needs of each school (Dufour et al., 2011; Gebbie et al., 2012; Guskey & Yoon, 2009; Lambert, 2005; Wilson, 2016). In conclusion, schools that develop PLCs, work to develop realistic, time-based goals based on understood school issues that serve as the basis for local, job-embedded professional development (Doran, 1981; Dufour et al., 2011; Gebbie et al., 2012; Guskey & Yoon, 2009; Lambert, 2005; Little, 2006; Robinson et al., 2004; Schmoker, 1996; Wilson, 2016).

**PLCs and school improvement.** Scholarly and professional researchers studying the effective use of PLCs as a method of delivering professional development have concluded that PLCs have many benefits for local schools (Dufour et al., 2010; Gebbie et al, 2012; Gray & Summers, 2015;). Researchers studying the use of PLCs in a school have concluded that the implementation of PLCs at a school may lead to increased

teacher retention, increased engagement in teaching, and stronger perceptions of trust and collegiality between teachers and their colleagues and/or school leaders (Gebbie et al, 2012; Gray & Summers, 2015; Lambert, 2005; Little, 2006; Voelkel & Chrispeels, 2017). Research has illustrated the value of PLCs to improve student learning. Dufour et al. (2011) observed teachers at a large elementary school using PLCs to improve their students' math achievement test scores. The school's faculty and administrators were disappointed that that data showed that only 78% of their students met or exceeded their district's proficiency score in math. The faculty and administration developed a SMART goal of increasing the percentage of students meeting standards by 10%. Through the development of a local-based assessment, the teachers determined the math concepts where the students showed deficiencies. Collaborating with school leaders, an outside expert discussed the data with the teachers and provided information that the teachers used to practice and develop new teaching methods for their students. Through collaborative work in group meetings, teachers rehearsed skills with each other and developed plans for implementing new teaching methods and materials to use in their classrooms. After these meetings, they implemented the use of the materials and skills they developed in their individual classrooms. Through the process, student learning was measured several times to monitor the success of the new teaching methods/materials and to adjust the methods to meet the needs of their students. Through a major assessment at the end of the observation and interviews with teachers, it was concluded that the teachers were able to not only meet their goal, but to learn about other areas where students needed further intervention. The teachers perceived that they had increased their

own sense of self-efficacy and had increased their collegiality with their fellow teachers (Dufour et al., 2011).

Researchers have also found that PLCs may be conducted in both face to face and in digital platforms (Buffum, Mattos, Weber, & Hierck, 2015; Gebbie et al., 2012). In a study of several American preschool classrooms where teachers expressed concerns about student behavior, school leaders developed a PLC for their Pre-K teachers that placed the teachers in daily meetings using a digital platform (Gebbie et al., 2012). Each day, the teachers collaborated through an internet discussion board after reading a shared series of research materials on classroom management and students with behavioral issues. Reading and analyzing the materials alone before the meeting or sometimes as a group in an online discussion forum, the teachers entered into discussion posts with prompted questions from their schools' leaders. After studying the materials and having discussions in the online forums, the teachers developed a series of goals to improve student behavior. After a period of time, the teachers selected a physical location to share materials and an internet site to chat and observe videos of each other teaching. The authors concluded from this observation and interviews that the digital PLC process gave the teachers the freedom to guide their own professional development based on specific needs. The teachers also reported that their skills improved, student behavior in their classes improved, and they felt more comfortable implementing new classroom management techniques (Gebbie et al., 2012).

The high stakes accountability movement has led many schools to go beyond traditional workshop and conference session methods professional development and to

the development of PLCs at their schools for school improvement (Dufour et al., 2011; Gebbie et al., 2012, Gray & Summers, 2015; Little, 2006; Robinson et al., 2004; Schmoker, 1996). Using PLCs, teachers and school leaders are allowed grow and develop new skills and student interventions at grade level/subject or schoolwide levels with a shared focus on a school's individual needs based on local data and information (Dufour et al., 2011, Gray & Summers, 2015; Ko et al., 2006; Mintzes et al., 2017). Researchers observing PLCs as a method for improving school climate and teacher confidence concluded that teachers and school leaders dedicated to school-specific, job embedded professional development within PLCs perceived sustained success in improving student learning and the learning environment (Gebbie, Ceglowski, & Taylor, 2012; Gray & Summers, 2015; Guskey & Yoon, 2009; Lambert, 2005; Little, 2006; Mintzes et al., 2017; Robinson et al., 2004). The schools' faculty and leaders also reported improved self-efficacy and collegiality in teachers, increased confidence in teaching new materials, and increased teacher retention (Gebbie et al., 2012; Gray & Summers, 2015; Guskey & Yoon, 2009; Lambert, 2005; Little, 2006; Mintzes et al., 2017; Robinson et al., 2004).

In summary, professional development has always been seen as a critical component for schools to improve student learning at all grade levels (Gomenoglu & Clark, 2015; Masterson, 2013, Nolan & Molla, 2017; Shroyer et al., 2014). As the demands for student achievement have increased and the amount of resources for schools have decreased, a need for a simpler, needs-based professional development has become important (Dufour et al., 2011; Masterson, 2013, Ko et al., 2006). Teachers and administrators using PLCs as a delivery method of professional development are able to

provide teacher learning that is streamlined towards responding to local concerns found in data/information about student learning, discipline, and/or school climate (Dufour et al., 2011; Gebbie et al., 2012; Schmoker, 1996). These schools' administrators assign and encourage teachers to collaborate in groupings specific to their school to research the teachers' concerns and set goals to improve their practice. These groups meet during the school day to discuss, rehearse, implement, and reflect on new practices and materials for their students. The faculty in each individual group also collect data about their students' actions as a result of their research and new materials/methods so the teachers may adjust and reach optimal success and successful meeting of goals by their deadlines. (Doran, 1981; Gray & Summers, 2015; Little, 2006; Mintzes et al., 2017; Robinson et al., 2004; Wilson, 2016). Teachers and administrators have reported benefits from using PLCs to improve professional practice. Schools of different grade levels and settings using PLCs have reported increased student achievement, teacher confidence, teacher satisfaction, teacher retention, and improved teacher self-efficacy (Buffum et al., 2015; Dufour et al., 2011; Gebbie et al., 2012; Gray & Summers, 2015; Guskey & Yoon, 2009; Lambert, 2005; Little, 2006; Mintzes et al., 2017; Nolan & Molla, 2017; Robinson et al., 2004). REL's administrators use PLC methods to deliver professional development and SMART goals to improve student learning. Therefore, developing school-based, job-embedded professional development through PLC practices will be the essential framework for this study's project (Doran, 1981; Gray & Summers, 2015).

### **Project Description**

I reviewed literature about the use of local-based PLCs as an effective and powerful framework for teachers and school administrators to improve their professional practice and student learning. The *SMART Decisions for Student Behavior* initiative will involve classroom elementary school teachers in kindergarten through sixth grade classrooms. In this project, the teachers will use the findings from my study to begin discussions about their own concerns about student behavior, make plans to collect and collect data about the frequency that the concerning behaviors occur in their classrooms, research and develop plans to improve their dealings with student behavior, learn from each other, and create sustainable, focused changes to their individual and schoolwide approaches to dealing with and monitoring student behavior (Dufour et al., 2011; Fulan, 2003; Gebbie, et al., 2012; Gray & Summers, 2015; Guskey & Yoon, 2009; Little, 2006).

During this professional development initiative, teachers will attend several workshops and meetings to discuss the results of my study as well as their own concerns about student behavior. They will also have an opportunity to gain further information about student violence/aggression and bullying. The teachers will have an experience that will allow them to rehearse/implement the use of the PLC teams that are already in practice at REL for improving student learning. They will apply these methods to collect data about student behavior, make decisions about what behaviors are most concerning in their classrooms, and research, rehearse, and implement changes to their classroom management/disciplinary methods that may improve concerning student behaviors occurring in their classrooms.

After these initial meetings, the teachers will implement changes to their classroom disciplinary/management practices and monitor their progress at successfully implementing changes to their dealings with concerning student behaviors through the daily recording of the frequency that the concerning behavior they are addressing occurs in the classroom. The teachers will meet in 30 minute, bi-weekly PLC meetings that will occur every other week during a 2-month time span to compile and discuss data that they collect and to discuss their successes and concerns about their ability to improve upon their dealings with and/or reduce the occurrence of the concerning student behavior in their classrooms. Finally, the grade level teachers will work as teams to create a presentation that they will present during a second full professional development day. During this presentation, the teachers will share the new methods they implemented into their practice and discuss their successes and data with their colleagues in other grades and with the entire teaching faculty at REL. This presentation will allow the teachers to demonstrate the improvements they made to their classrooms as a result of their collaborative work. At the conclusion of this project, the teachers will have attended at least 18.5 hours of professional development.

### **Description and Goals**

This professional development project will give teachers at REL the ability to collaborate with their colleagues, study, and reflect upon the data and findings of this study and collect further data about the frequency that specific concerning behaviors occur in their classrooms. Using the findings of my study, the teachers will discuss and reflect on their own concerns about difficult student behaviors with teachers from their



grade level. After these discussions, the teachers will work within their grade level groups to set realistic goals to both collect further data about specific student behavior concerns they have and implement changes to their dealings with student behavior. These changes that they implement may lead to improved student behavior. The teachers will implement the new practices into their classroom management procedures and evaluate the results. At the conclusion of the project, the grade level groups will create and present a presentation that will demonstrate to their colleagues the changes they made to their practice and how the methods they implemented influenced student behavior.

Professional teacher development, as explained by Dufour and Dufour (2011), is a continuous cycle where teachers use local data and collaboration with their colleagues to create local-based results. The goals for this project are for the teachers to:

1. Improve their classroom management skills by learning new disciplinary techniques through the aspects of professional learning communities.
2. Improve their data-collection and analysis skills and applying their analyses to their classrooms.
3. Enhance their abilities to have collaborative discussions with their colleagues about local data and setting/meeting goals to improve classroom discipline/management.
4. Increase their confidence and ability to take ownership of developing their own professional growth through implementing changes to their classroom practices in regards to student behavior.

### **Targeted Audience**

This project will involve all Grades K-6 general elementary classroom teachers at REL. Effective professional development within a PLC involves an emphasis on school faculty setting clear and concise goals in appropriate groups. It is essential for teachers at schools using PLCs to work with specific PLC groups that will allow teachers to research specific concerns to both their school and their own practice (Dufour et al., 2010; Gersten, Dimino, Jayanthi, Kim, & Santoro, 2010). These groups are led by effective peer leadership leaders (Gersten et al., 2010; Kennedy, 2016). These leaders will be the grade level lead teachers. These grade level leaders are selected by the school administrators in each of the grade levels, kindergarten through the sixth grade. The *SMART Decisions for Student Behavior* initiative will involve all of the kindergarten through sixth grade general classroom teachers at REL.

### **Components of the Project**

The *SMART Decisions to Improve Student Behavior* initiative will consist of the following components that are detailed in Appendix A:

**The opening workshop.** The opening professional development workshop will be a full-school day in length and be presented in a face to face format. I, acting as a presenter/facilitator of this project, will begin the workshop with a review of the findings of my study which I conducted at REL. I will facilitate activities and discussions will be led by the facilitator and within grade levels about what behavioral concerns the teachers have that are specific to their grade levels and classrooms. The teachers will have opportunities to review the methods used to set SMART goals at the grade level. These

sessions will be followed by a lecture and/or activity led by an expert from a nearby university. This activity will include discussions about and exercises to assist the teachers in further understanding student violence, anger, and bullying.

The teachers and school administrators will participate in this workshop through a full professional development day at the start of the academic year. The teachers will be given a notice of the upcoming workshop by the school administrators through two post cards mailed to the teachers, as well as email reminders to be sure that teachers are prepared and ready to attend the workshop. I will present this professional development day in the cafeteria of REL, where tables are available as well as presentation equipment and places for the faculty to collaborate and work in as a school-wide team. The opening workshop will begin at 8:30 AM with a presentation of the facilitator by the school district superintendent. The teachers will participate in large group presentations, grade level discussions, and discussions with the presenter, guest speaker, and/or school administrators. At the end of the day, I will give the teachers folders with copies of the PowerPoint presentation and samples of the forms that grade level leaders will use to chart, discuss, and reflect upon their group's work. I will also send the teachers and administrators an email with a sheet of resources for research about student behavior and classroom management.

**PLC Meetings.** On the day immediately after the opening workshop, the teachers will return for a second professional development session that will occur over one half of a school day. This session will allow the teachers to review effective goal setting and data analysis skills that are necessary for successful PLCs group (Dufour et al., 2010; Gray &

Summers, 2015; Schmoker, 1996). After a brief review of the opening workshop, I will facilitate a sample PLC group meeting. The teachers, divided into their grade level teams, will study a case study/scenario. I will provide time for the groups to discuss the data presented in the scenario to make decisions about what concerns about student behavior are present. Then, the groups will use their conclusions to create goals to make improvements to behaviors that present themselves as concerning in the example. One teacher who is appointed by the principal to lead each grade level (Grade level leader) will take notes and describe their group's findings and conclusions to all of the grade level teams at the end of the activity. The scenario is not based on actual data from REL, but it will provide the team with an opportunity to rehearse methods for collaboration and data-based decision making (Dufour et al., 2010; Schlechty, 2002). At the end of this activity, the teachers will discuss their reflections of the experience. The teachers will then meet in their grade level teams to discuss their own concerns about student behavior in their classrooms. Using my findings and their own data and experiences, the teams will discuss and decide what specific student behaviors are most concerning and what they may be able to do to address their concerns. Using a SMART goal worksheet that I will provide (Appendix A), the teachers will develop a plan to decide how to track the frequency that their most concerning behavior occurs in the classroom. They will then select and list possible classroom management/student discipline techniques that the teachers may be able to use to improve their dealings with and reduce the frequency that the concerning student behaviors the grade level team has selected. Finally, they will decide and record the numerical number of occurrences that their concerning behavior

will be reduced as a result of this professional development. After these meetings, I will present the teachers a final timeline for implementing their goals and will fill out a reflective survey form about their experiences in these meetings (Appendix A). The teachers will then begin to implement the methods they have discussed in this meeting into their classroom practice.

**Implementation of changes to teacher practice.** Over a 2-month period after the PLC meetings, the teachers will implement the changes to their classroom management methods and/or dealings with student behavior that they have discussed and planned with their grade levels at both the opening workshop and the PLC meetings. Every day, the teachers will record the frequency that the concerning behavior occurred in their individual classrooms. The teachers may use a spread sheet or other data collection method to collect this information.

Every other week during the 2-month period, the teachers will meet again in their grade level teams twice a week in 30-minute meetings to discuss their progress towards their set goal and collaborate to improve the individual teachers' implementation of their SMART goal plans. The grade level leaders will set these meeting times aside exclusively for the teachers to address this project. The teachers will present their grade level leaders with the daily occurrences of the concerning student behavior on a spread sheet or a report from another collection method. The grade level leader will compile each classroom teachers' reports onto one spread sheet report that will be updated every other week. A copy of this report will be sent by electronic mail by the grade level leader every week to the principal and the facilitator. This report will be presented along with a

weekly journal form where the grade level leader will report the team's progress towards meeting their improvement goals. A copy of both the spread sheet and journal are included in Appendix A. In each of these bi-weekly meetings, the teachers will have tasks to revise their goals, research new methods to deal with the concerning behavior(s), rehearse and implement new methods to respond to the behavior(s), and reflect on their collected data about the behaviors and their work as a grade level team. During the 2-month duration of the project, it is expected that the teachers will carry out the implementation of their SMART goal to improve student behavior and collect data about their process.

**Demonstration of learning/work.** During the final week of the project, a full teacher professional development day will be held where the teachers will make presentations about what they learned during the 9-week PLC meeting process. The principal and district administration and I will present a day of presentations where each grade level will present their findings, their responses to the findings, and the methods they created to improve upon classroom behaviors. Each grade level team will give a presentation to the entire teaching body. In this presentation, the teachers will report their grade level team's SMART goals, what methods they implemented to meet these goals, and their reflections about the grade level team's success and/or learning as a result of this project.

As a result of the *SMART Decisions for Student Behavior* professional development initiative, the teachers will have participated in over 3 school days of professional development activities, blocked into two professional development days, a

half school day of dedicated PLC meetings, and approximately six 30-minute follow-up PLC meetings. After the opening workshop, the half day of PLC meetings, the follow-up meetings during the implementation of SMART goals, and the demonstration of learning day, the teachers will have attended a total of 18.5 hours of professional development during this professional development initiative.

**Implementation.** I will implement this project at the beginning of the school year using professional development days that are already part of the school calendar. By implementing the project at the beginning of the school year, I will provide the teachers an opportunity to sustain any changes they make to their classroom management practices or dealings with student behavior through the entire school year. There are several resources needed to implement this project. In the next section, I will discuss the supports and resources that will be needed in the implementation of this project, as well as describe a method to overcome any potential barriers to this project and provide a proposed timetable for the implementation of the project.

### **Potential Resources and Existing Supports**

The *SMART Decisions for Student Behavior* PLC initiative will require several resources to be successfully implemented.

**Time.** This project will require a commitment of time from the school's daily schedule and calendar, from the teachers' weekly meeting times, and an extra half of a school day from the grade level lead teachers. The school currently has 3 professional development days which are used for professional growth. Two of these days would be required to perform the opening day workshop for the teachers and the workshop and

showcase of teacher learning at the end of the project. The grade level leaders will also need to be released from a half of a school day for their professional development meeting for grade level leaders. Finally, the teachers will meet for 30 minutes of PLC meeting time twice a week. This will occur over a total of 10 school weeks. Teachers may require some time on their own to prepare, research, and compile data regarding their portion of the project.

**Logistical and technological resources.** The *SMART Decisions for Student Behavior* initiative will need several resources that are necessary for implementation and affordable for the school's budget. The workshop held on the first day of the project and the workshop and presentation of teacher learning at the end of the project will both be held in REL's cafetorium. This room provides large tables with seating for each grade level, as well as wi-fi access and a computer and presentation equipment for PowerPoint displays. A stage is also available for me to lead the opening presentations and for teachers to make their presentations during the workshop. The grade level leader workshop will be held in the school conference room, which is quiet and provides a large table for an individual group meeting. I will provide copies of slide presentations at all three workshops and pens/pencils, markers, and paper for note writing.

For the bi-weekly grade level meetings, the teachers will select their own meeting space at REL. I will provide a list of research resources (see Appendix A) and the grade level leaders will be responsible for keeping the weekly journal and an excel spreadsheet of the occurrences of the behavior goal in each of their level's classrooms. As the teachers in their groups create and make changes to their classroom management and/or



response to student behaviors, materials may be needed that are not available the school. The principal and superintendent will provide access to these items when possible and needed. The teachers will also be provided with a presentation computer, display supplies (poster board, art supplies, etc.) by the school to make their presentation. Most of the materials and items are already available at the school, reducing cost for REL and teachers.

**Human resources.** I will serve as the presenter and facilitator of this project. I have performed the research in this study and have created the project and will assure implementation. REL building and school district administrators will also be involved in the implementation of this project. During the opening workshop and the teacher leader review session, I will encourage and invite school leaders to participate. REL's principal and district superintendent are experienced and trained in using PLCs in schools. I will ask and encourage them to provide remarks and can provide assistance through observing and working with teacher groups during meetings. The administrators will also be welcome to observe and visit with teachers during their own individual grade level PLC meetings. Due to my professional commitments, I cannot be in the building during the bi-weekly PLC meetings. These meetings will be facilitated by grade level leaders in each grade level and the principal and district superintendent will provide support and supervision as needed. My school district will allow professional development days for me to perform the workshops and be on site on occasion to observe grade level work and provide guidance. Arrangements for the guest speaker will be made by the facilitator.

**Possible outside supports.** There are also some organizations outside of REL and its district that may be of benefit for the school and the project. Within 60 miles from REL, a branch campus of REL's state's largest university has offered their services to all area schools by providing access to library research, support materials, and even professors acting as a consultant to aid in issues related to teacher education and school improvement (XXX University Library, Email Communication, March, 2017). As the facilitator, I will work with the university to establish access to the university's digital library and provide information to the teachers about how to access the university's digital collections from the REL's computers. Support in terms of materials and coaching from outside professionals may also be sought out from REL's regional educational resource center. This center provides educational resources and professional workshops throughout the year. During this project, school administrators may be able to send individual teachers to appropriate workshops and meetings that are sponsored by the educational resource center. These teachers would then share the materials and learning from these events with those in their PLC groups. This group, as well as the local university, would be able to provide for us a guest speaker who will be able to lead training in student violence and/or bullying. I, as the facilitator, will work with the center to obtain the guest and deal with any logistical concerns.

### **Potential Barriers**

No known barriers to the implementation of the *SMART Decisions for Student Behavior* initiative are present. However, teacher resistance to change and the need for a flexible timeline must be considered while the project is being implemented. Anderson

(2016), Dufour et al. (2010), Marzano (2003), and Sugai & Simonsen (2012) concluded that teacher resistance to change is a constant concern to implementing any kind of professional development that involves changing practice, including changes to classroom management. Teachers who are asked to make change to their practice may question the validity of the process, the changes to their practice, and express discomfort or refusal to collaborate with others. To further assure buy in, all teachers and the administrator will be involved in the professional development process and all teachers will be given opportunities to express ideas with their leadership teams and administrators (Marzano, 2003; Dufour et al., 2011).

### **Proposal for Implementation and Timetable**

As discussed in the implementation process, I propose that this professional development program be presented at the start of the school year. The program would follow the following timeline:

- Week 1: One day professional development workshop.
- Week 1: PLC workshop (Half of a school day).
- Weeks 2-9: Six 30-minute PLC meetings held every other week for 2 months.
- Week 10: One school-day long PLC presentation of teacher learning and review of SMART goals.

The dates of every event may be adjusted to accommodate calamity days, testing, and needs for extra time for the teachers to successfully complete their plans and collect data. Extra time may be made available in the school's schedule by the administrators as

needed and possible. If more time is needed to prepare the presentation or implement changes to professional practice, the administrators will give teachers extra time. A final report of the entire project and the data from the teacher teams will be prepared and presented by the grade level leaders to REL administrators no more than 14 days after the final workshop.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

I will serve in this project as a presenter and facilitator. I will be present at both the full-day and half-day opening workshops and the demonstration of work/learning workshop. I will lead discussions, present information, discuss the projects, and facilitate the activities at each session. I will work with the teachers and administrators to foster communication about the project and introduce it to the school, answer questions about the project, and address teachers' concerns about the research, their project, or any of the initiative's components. During the implementation of the PLC meetings, I will attend at least two of each grade level's PLC meetings to make observations and assist in collaboration. I will share my observations at the display of learning workshop.

The responsibility of the classroom teachers in the school is to participate in the PLC and provide their insights, research, and comments to their peers. All teachers will be required to participate. All teachers will be expected to participate in the opening workshop and be involved in creating and participating in the final sharing of learning at the end of the project.

Grade level leaders will attend all professional development days including the half-school day workshop. The grade level leaders will be required to assure that

meetings will be held about the project bi-weekly and that effective collaboration and communication skills are fostered. They will delegate duties within their grade level for research, rehearsal, and data collection. They will also fill out and return the weekly journal of progress each week. It should be noted that grade level leaders are paid a small stipend each year to carry out these activities and the work is expected (REL District Board Manual, 2017).

REL district administrators will be directly involved in the implementation process of this study. During the introductory workshop, they will be available to answer questions, observe and press teachers forward in their work in group activities, and assist the facilitator when needed. During the 8-week implementation process, the principal will regularly attend PLC grade level meetings to observe and assist grade level leaders and teachers in their inquiry and ensure that the work is being completed. The principal will also ensure that data and journal entries are completed and submitted by grade level leaders each week. The superintendent at REL will also attend PLC meetings to participate as time in his schedule permits. Both the principal and the superintendent will participate in support roles in the end of project display of learning through giving time for the teachers to prepare, asking questions about learning, and providing assistance to the facilitator.

### **Project Evaluation Plan**

To improve student behavior, school administrators and teachers must be able to track the effect that supports and/or methods the teachers implement in their classroom have on the frequency of student behavior incidents. This information can come through

data collection and observation (Freeman et al., 2015; McLeskey, Waldron, & Reed, 2014). To determine whether the professional development initiative is a successful and worthwhile experience for the teachers to address their concerns about difficult student behavior, several evaluations of the project will be made. I will facilitate the collection of timely data through reflective surveys at the end of the first professional development day, the PLC goal setting meeting, and the demonstration of learning (Appendix A). To evaluate the progress that the grade level teams have made at reaching their goals for reducing the occurrence of a specific student behavior, grade level leaders will compile weekly data charts on spread sheets. The grade level leader will also fill out a weekly journal to reflect on their team's work, discuss learning and discoveries made through their work, and discuss the progress their group has made toward meeting the goals that they set. Copies of each reflective survey, the behavior tracking sheet, and the grade level leader's journal form is presented in Appendix A.

After each professional development day and the half school day grade level leader workshop, all participating teachers will fill out a survey to reflect on their learning and the project. These surveys will be in a brief questionnaire format and be used to inform the school administrators and the presenter about the teachers' perceptions of the project, questions about the project, and reflections of their own practice.

During the 8 weeks of biweekly PLC group meetings, the grade level leaders will reflect on their group's work by filling out a weekly journal form. They will respond to the following questions:

1. What activities/tasks did your group work on during your meetings this week?

2. What reflections did the teachers in your grade level have this week as a result of the work for this project? Please share any critical observations, reflections, or interesting points your grade level teachers had about their work and/or student behavior and classroom management.
3. What help does your grade level or the individual teachers need to improve upon their dealings with specific student behaviors or meeting your SMART goal?

This process will allow the grade level leader to reflect on what their group learned. The grade level leaders will forward these journal forms to the principal and the facilitator, allowing them to participate in the process:

With these journal entries, the school leaders and the facilitator will be able to monitor connections between the data that is being collected, and the changes to teaching practice that occur as a result (Harlen & James, 1997). They will also be able to ensure that the teachers are provided with timely assistance, assistance with physical needs, clarity, and allow for adjustments to be made to the implementation of using the PLC process to understand and improve student behavior. With these kinds of informative reflections, decisions about the process being used to improve student behavior will be made by grade level leaders and administrators that lead to faster adjustments to the inquiry, research, and rehearsal process for the teachers (Freeman et al., 2015; Harlen & James, 1997).

To further assess and monitor the success of using SMART goals to improve student behavior and the success of this project, weekly summative data about the

frequency that concerning behaviors occur in the classroom will be collected by teachers and compiled by the grade level leaders during the project. With quantitative data about the frequency of difficult student behaviors, school leaders and the grade level teams will be able to track their success, discuss further concerns, and decide if the changes the teachers made to their practice are leading towards successful meeting of their created SMART goals are being met and if adjustments are needed to reach these goals (O'Neill, 2000). The student behaviors that are most concerning and that will be tracked by the teachers will be decided by the grade level teams at the opening workshop of the project. At this workshop, the teachers, working with the other teachers in their grade level, will study the findings from my research. The teachers will be asked by the presenter to discuss the findings and reflect on what behaviors are most concerning in their classrooms. Next, the teachers, within their grade levels, will finalize the specific behavior(s) that are most concerning to their grade level and make plans to research methods that may lead to improving their ability to deal with the selected behaviors. They will then decide on a method that they will use to track the number of times that the concerning behavior occurs in their classroom each day.

Starting in week 2, the teachers will track the number of times they deal with their selected concerning behavior each day. Each week, they will present the grade level leader with a report they create that tracks the occurrence of the concerning behavior each day through the week. The lead teachers will tabulate each teachers' report and track the grade level's progress meeting their goals on a provided spreadsheet. The grade level leaders will submit this spreadsheet with their weekly journals to their principal. This



information will allow the teachers to compare their progress in reducing the number of occurrences of the concerning behavior each week in their classes as they implement new methods of classroom management and dealings with student behavior. The administrators and I will review and discuss this data to track the level of progress the teachers are making towards decreasing concerning student behaviors. We will also be able to see concerns in the data so that we may answer questions of help teachers find solutions to their specific situations. This will further assist in implementing the project successfully.

Together, the quantitative data from these spreadsheets and the qualitative reflections from the journal entries from grade level leaders will provide information to the facilitator and school principal so they may provide assistance to grade levels where behaviors are not improving as needed, answer questions about their work or the project, and/or make adjustments to the project to guarantee a successful implementation of the project. This method of data collection and analysis reflects best practices for using data in PLCs, following a cycle where data is collected to guide decisions and goal setting, making changes to practice monitoring teacher progress, and reflecting on their learning through the implementation of changes to professional practice (Dufour et al., 2011; Freeman et al., 2015; Harlen & James, 1997; O'Neil, 2000).

### **Project Implications**

This project may contribute a better working/learning environment for the teachers, administrators, and students and may contribute to social change at the local level. Teachers working in schools that use methods that are involved in PLCs have

reported reduced teacher stress and an increased sense of satisfaction the teachers have with their job (Katz, 2013; Kurland & Hasson-Gilad, 2017). Teachers working at schools that are PLCs reported increased confidence in understanding concerns about their students and their teaching abilities. Administrators at schools using PLCs report increased success in recruiting and retaining teachers. As the teachers at REL begin to study behavioral data from their school and implement changes in PLC grade level teams that are already in practice at the school, the teachers' satisfaction with their job may increase (Alonderiene & Majauskaite, 2016; Dufour et al., 2010; Gebbie, et al., 2012; Gray & Summers, 2015; Guskey & Yoon, 2009; Nolan & Molla, 2017; Zee, de Jong, & Koomen, 2017). Teachers and administrators at other schools may be able to use this project in their schools. While they must collect their own information to guide decision making, the project may be a beneficial and effective professional development program they may use to improve student behavior and/or classroom management.

As teachers develop new methods to improve their dealings with student behavior, students will learn in a safer learning environment. When classrooms are safer, students are more likely to obtain increased levels of learning, increased levels of engagement, and increased academic achievement (Alonderiene & Majauskatie, 2016; Bear et al., 2014; Caldrerella et al., 2011; Cohen et al., 2009; Freeman et al., 2015; Grady et al., 2010; Mariani, Webb, Villares, & Brigman, 2014, Schlechty, 2002; Schueler et al., 2014; Smolkowski, Strycker, & Ward, 2016; Snyder et al., 2014; Tillery, Varias, Meyers, & Collins, 2010). In a study by Zee et al. (2016), the authors concluded that teachers' sense of self-efficacy and relationships with their students can be codependent.

When teachers are able to improve their ability to control their classroom environment, students have a closer bond with their teachers and have a deeper sense of trust in them (Freeman et al., 2015; Mariani et al., 2014; Sugai & Horner, 2015).

This project may also lead to local-based social change. The teachers' improvements to their classroom management skills may create a safer learning environment at REL. A safer school where students are less distracted by student misbehavior will allow for students to feel safer and possibly develop life-long social skills. A safer school may also increase the community's confidence in REL and REL's entire school corporation. Parents may also be more willing to be involved in the school and school activities. Although it is a far-reaching goal, it is possible that this increased confidence may also lead to increased positive notoriety about the school and lead to more families considering relocation to the community. This notoriety may also lead to the need for more educators and school staff due to increased school enrollment, which may increase job opportunities for the citizens, the recruitment of strong teachers, and improved quality of life in REL's surrounding community.

### **Conclusion**

I will provide the findings of my study to the school to increase the teachers and principal's understandings of and possibly guide decision making regarding difficult student behaviors. My analysis showed that there was a high level of agreement among the participants that student anger, violence, and bullying are of high concern. I also concluded that some assistance was needed for the participants to further deal with these situations in the classroom. The participants reported using their colleagues as a support

to improve their dealings with difficult behavior and there was a statistically significant difference in the means of novice and veteran teachers' level of confidence in dealing with problematic student behavior as it arises. As a result of these conclusions, I created a professional development initiative that the school could use that would allow them to improve student behavior through their professional learning communities (Dufour et al., 2011). In this section, I described the *SMART Decisions for Student Behavior*, a 12-week professional development plan that would allow the school to use PLCs to discuss, research, collect data about, and make plans to enhance the teachers' methods they use and their confidence level in dealing with specific difficult student behaviors. Through this project, the teachers will research and understand issues in data about student behavior and decide upon grade level-specific concerns about student behaviors and work to make changes in their practice that may improve the learning environment for teachers and allow teachers to improve their professional practice. I described the project's goals and activities and examples of presentations, assessments, reflections, and a schedule for the entire project are provided in Appendix A. In the final section of this study, I will reflect on this project, my own practice as a scholar and practitioner, the strengths and weakness of this project study and a plan to address limitations in the project. I will also reflect on the development of this project and its implications on my professional and personal development.

## Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

### **Project Strengths and Limitations**

I developed this professional development initiative, *SMART Decisions for Student Behavior*, using PLCs to address the findings of this study. This project will provide the teachers with the opportunity to collect further data about difficult student behavior at the grade level and set goals to improve their dealings with these behaviors. The teachers will also increase leadership skills and ability to research new methods/approaches to classroom management through collaborative grade level groups. In this section, I will discuss my reflections about and conclusions to this project study. I will discuss the project's strengths, limitations and recommendations for alternative approaches to the problem that was addressed in the study. I will discuss reflections about what I learned about scholarship, leadership, and achieving social change. I will also discuss the importance of this study, applications of the study, and directions for future research.

#### **Project Strengths**

My project has many strengths. The project involves locally-focused professional development, involves best practices for professional development, encourages the development of teacher leadership at REL, and allows for grade level and school-level teacher collaboration.

**Locally-focused professional development.** This project is a professional development program for an individual school as opposed to a generalized program that could be implemented in many schools. Because of budgeting concerns, schools must

create professional development with fewer resources (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Ko et al., 2006; Masterson, 2013; Shroyer et al., 2014; Smylie, 2014). Professional development with a local focus will allow the school to save money and resources. Teachers would be encouraged to and may attend workshops as needed and use PLC time to teach and discuss methods they learned with their colleagues. Teachers will be able to share their learning during PLC meetings. This will allow REL administrators to use their resources more efficiently and conduct professional development that is focused directly on their school and its needs.

This project is directed towards the needs and experiences of the local school, REL. The school faculty will be able to research and create professional learning and/or changes to teacher practice that address concerns of classroom teachers. This project will allow the teachers to collaborate to address concerns using groupings and frameworks that they are already accustomed to as a method to address student behavior. A professional development program that is locally-focused may lead to increased teacher buy-in, as the teachers will be using familiar practices to address their concerns.

**Best practices for professional development.** Organizing schools into PLCs for professional development has been recommended by many researchers and experts (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Dufour et al., 2011; Sugai & Simonsen, 2012; Thornton & Cherrington, 2018; Zhang, Wang, Losinski, & Katsiyannis, 2014). The teachers who participate in this project will collaborate to discuss the data I collected about their school with regards to student behavior, collect further information about student behavior, implement changes in practice to response to concerns they see in the data, and reflect on

their practice to adjust their disciplinary and classroom management practice to deal with student behavior. This practice of teachers collecting and analyzing data, setting goals, and reflecting on their practice to respond to teacher concerns is considered an essential practice for professional development (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Dufour et al., 2011; Zhang et al., 2014).

**Development of teacher leadership.** This project will encourage teachers to take responsibility for making changes necessary to improve their dealings with difficult student behaviors and encourage teachers to collaborate to successfully research and implement changes to their professional practice. Often, administrators and legislators research and develop changes to teacher practice and teachers are expected to follow their directions. In this project, the teachers will collaborate to research and implement changes to their own practices based on their own data, judgement, and ideas. This will give the teachers at REL opportunities to build both stronger student-teacher relationships and leadership/collaboration skills with their colleagues (Dogan, Pringle, & Mesa, 2016). Teachers participating in this project will be allowed to make their own decisions and lead changes to classroom practice that will benefit their own classrooms and the school as a whole.

**Grade level and school level collaboration.** Teachers at the school will have an opportunity to use methods that may increase teacher collaboration, teacher leadership skills, and teacher collegiality at REL through my project. The *SMART Decisions for Student Behavior* professional development project will give teachers opportunities to collaborate with their peers about student discipline and behavior, that may lead to

increased levels trust and collegiality the teachers have with each other. Grade level leaders will receive further practice using skills in delegating tasks and sharing responsibilities with their colleagues. The presentation of the work session held on the last day of the project will challenge teachers to present their professional learning to the school faculty and allow them to have dialogue with teachers from different grade levels at the school about their professional learning. Through the practice of collaborative skills that the framework of PLCs demands, the teachers may improve their collaboration skills.

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

This project has two limitations. First, there is not a follow up project or plan to follow this initiative after the 10-week professional development. PLCs are described as a never-ending cycle of data collection, decision making, research and implementation of new ideas, and reflection and/or adjustment of the ideas through the continuous collection of data (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Dufour et al., 2011; Gray & Summers, 2015; Alter et al., 2013). I recommend that the school continue this initiative after the project is completed and continue to address student behavior through their work in PLCs. The collection of data about and discussing further concerns about student behavior may provide the school opportunities to address other concerns about student behavior and classroom management as they arise.

A second limitation is that the study and the project are specific to classroom teachers. The project does not involve teachers at REL who teach exploratory subjects such as music or physical education, or teachers in special education classroom settings. I



recommend that the school create PLC teams with exploratory teachers and special education teachers. These groups may collect data about their specific settings and create and implement changes to their practice that reflects their specific learning environments.

### **Recommendations for Alternative Approaches**

An alternative approach that REL could implement would be a school-wide approach to dealing with inappropriate student behavior. The problem this project study addressed was the teachers concerns about an increasing number of difficult student behaviors and the need for more information to gain an understanding about these concerns and provide information for possible decision making. Another approach to collecting information about student behavior and dealing with increases in concerning student behaviors would be the implementation of a school-wide framework to such as the PBIS/SWPBIS framework.

The PBIS/SWPBIS framework includes the collection of data about student behavior into spreadsheets and/or PBIS-data collection systems. These systems, such as the School-Wide Information System (SWIS) allow teachers to record student behaviors by student, category of student behavior, frequency the behavior occurs, and locations where student behaviors occur (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012). The information collected in this program can be generated into reports that can be useful to the teachers and administrators to make decisions about how to address concerns they see in the information about specific student behaviors and/or individual student's behaviors in the classroom (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012).

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

### **Scholarship**

Through this doctoral study experience, I have been challenged to use scholarly methods to research a problem that I am passionate about. During this experience, I have learned how to use evidence to define a problem and write a proposal, research and develop arguments using scholarly research, and how to collect, analyze and present quantitative data. Through the doctoral capstone process, I was challenged to report data and ensure that my entire study was based on the data collected and without personal bias.

### **Project Development and Evaluation**

As a result of this project study, I have gained expertise in developing professional development that addresses local problems. I learned that professional development must be driven not only by the information, but also by the local context. After analyzing the data and discussing it with my supervising professor, I decided that using an organized professional development approach, PLCs, would be the most effective way to help the teachers collect more information about student behavior and make adjustments to their dealings with difficult student behavior. Reviewing the literature, I learned a great deal about a method of professional development that will develop the teacher's professionalism and their abilities simultaneously. The literature review also helped me to design a project based on best practices and the professional needs for a school.

Designing the 10-week professional development initiative taught me how to implement professional development that goes beyond commonly-perceived methods of teacher learning. Through research of the literature and the application of information collected in my survey, I realized that teachers should be given the opportunity to collect further data and be given opportunities to collaborate and make decisions based on the information that they collect. Traditional professional development such as workshops and clinics are valuable types of professional development. However, as schools are forced to make more progress with fewer resources, they will need to develop professional development that addresses both individual teacher concerns and the specific and most pressing concerns present in an entire school. I have learned that PLCs are a professional development approach that, when implemented correctly, give schools a rich professional development program that is based on what students need most while saving critical financial and other resources. By designing this project, I learned that all professional development that I design should be based on critical concerns and needs of a school.

I learned through the research and development of a project using PLCs that I must allow teachers the opportunity to make decisions about their professional development and guide some of the decision making about what needs to be addressed. I have learned that PLCs, like other professional development initiatives, must have goals, structure, plans for evaluation, and timelines. It is important that there are reasonable timelines and goals for success that are related to the learning objectives that have been

set. This project has taught me the importance of teacher and administrator participation and the importance of having structure in any kind of professional teacher learning.

Finally, as I developed the project, I learned how to develop evaluations for projects and developed deeper insight into their value. I have learned the importance of creating and/or presenting tools that evaluate professional development before, during, and after the professional development is complete. I learned how to develop questionnaires/surveys and the use of locally-collected data as guides to determine the success of any professional learning. I now have a deeper understanding of the importance of using the words of the participants and their perceptions of the professional learning along with the results in student data to decide what adjustments must be made to ensure that professional development is a solid investment of time that leads to continuous improvement in schools. As schools need data to ensure student success, I will strive to collect data to ensure that teachers are gaining deep understanding and are able to improve their craft through any professional development that I design.

### **Leadership and Change**

I have been a music educator in the primary, elementary, and middle/high school environment in various rural locations for 15 years. I have also completed internships and training to be a school administrator and implemented some survey research. Although I have worked in school leadership in the past through committee leadership and internships, I have never had an opportunity to use my leadership experiences to make lasting change. Through this project study, I have developed investigative skills by asking questions about a school and using literature to develop a deep understanding of a school

and the problem at hand. Through collecting data and analyzing it, I was able to see the importance of understanding teachers' perceptions and how they can influence change in the school. These insights helped me to develop a plan to implement concise action that is based on what is best for the school to develop deep, lasting change to the way teachers manage their classrooms.

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

Through my process of learning in my MS, EdS, and my EdD classes, I have developed scholarly skills. This research project has forced me to leave my comfort zone as a teacher and student and move towards work as a leader and an individual scholar without the safety of other colleagues and classmates. I was forced to make decisions based upon information that may have conflicted with my personal opinions in some situations. This doctoral study taught me how to critically read and decipher information from professional and research literature and draw conclusions from facts in the information. I also developed and now have skills in preparing and implementing a research tool that will effectively collect data. I learned skills in analyzing data and studying it to make conclusions. Then, I developed the ability to apply my understandings of these analyses and conclusions towards a response that would improve a school. This cycle of questioning, reading, researching, drawing conclusions, expressing my conclusions clearly, and developing a response to my conclusions that is valuable to the audience I am addressing is critical to being a scholar in education. Further, I have developed the ability to persevere over setbacks, personal issues, and several major changes to my work. This required me to develop time management skills,

the ability to balance several tasks at one time, and the willingness to reach out to outside resources when help was needed. These skills will be essential for me as a scholar and as a leader of teachers.

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

This study allowed me to practice skills that will be needed to become a more-effective practitioner. This process has taught me about the importance of the use of scholarly inquiry into all of the concerns in my classroom and in my own practice. I have developed leadership skills through reaching out to a school, making decisions on what will best improve their work, and using scholarly study and local information to encourage school personnel to look within their school for solutions to concerns. I am confident in my ability to choose methods to create student (or adult learner) driven learning that addresses real concerns and challenges at a school or another facility of learning. I have researched multiple methods of delivery for professional development as well as making changes to a school's approach to classroom management and dealing with student behavior. I have the ability to critically study the information about a school and compare it to research in best practice. With this knowledge, I will be able to make decisions that are best to deal with a situation, regardless of my own bias about a subject or concern.

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

In the process of developing the project, I learned how to create a project that is based on research, findings from a study, and the problems and challenges of a school. This project strengthened my ability to develop a program to encourage teacher learning

with goals, objectives, and plans to evaluate the program as it is implemented. Teachers must have the information they need to make decisions and a project allows them to use information in a professional development project that has clear directions goals, and objectives. I have learned to create a plan for professional growth that is detailed in content and allows for teachers to guide their own learning and professional improvement. Although I will not be able to improve overall societal issues with this project study, REL and other schools may be able to use this project to develop their own projects and/or initiatives to understand student behavior and allow the teachers to have ownership of their own professional development. Because the teachers have control of their own professional learning, they will have the responsibility and the opportunity to improve the quality of life for their school, the students, and possibly their community.

As an educator, I believe that teachers must be able to use their talents and abilities to create quality student learning and safe and positive classroom environments that will lead to student success. Developing the project, I have realized that teachers will be able to further help their students academically and socially when the teachers have a sense of professional freedom to develop their own solutions to concerns and are given guidance to make plans, research and collect information on methods that will improve their craft. As a developer of professional development, I have learned how to create professional development that is part of the work day and allows the teachers to be creative and solve problems with solutions that fit their needs. To be a successful developer of professional development, I must encourage and assist the teachers in setting their own goals and designing their own work. This assistance and encouragement

will allow me to be a facilitator of teacher learning. I can now develop programs that are efficient in schedule and budget that allow teachers to develop goals that are relevant and will allow them to be successful. These successes will increase teacher confidence and will allow them to be encouraged to reach out and solve more concerns they find in their classrooms.

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

The findings and conclusions I made in this study will provide information to REL that will help the teachers and administrators understand difficult student behavior at their school and guide decision making. I developed a project that allows teachers to collaborate to collect further information about student behavior and develop changes to their practice to improve their dealings with difficult student behavior. Researchers in recent studies have concluded that collecting data about and performing detailed and site-specific professional development in relation to classroom management is essential for improving student behavior with lasting results (Gage, MacSuga-Gage, & Crews, 2017; Hemmeter, Snyder, Fox, & Algina, 2016; Reinke, Stormont, Herman, Wang, Newcomber, & King, 2014; Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss, & Shapley, 2007). The data that was collected and analyzed for this study will provide information that can allow REL to make informative and lasting decisions about what is best to help their teachers and improve the learning environment for REL's children. As teachers and administrators at the school implement the proposed project and/or create professional development in response to their own data, they may increase their levels of confidence in collecting



information about student behavior and/or creating solutions to dealing with difficult student behaviors as they arise.

Researchers have concluded that PLCs are an effective framework to deliver professional development to teachers that leads to increased academic success (Dufour et al., 2011). REL's faculty already uses the PLC framework to improve student learning. This project will give the school an opportunity to further apply the methods of collaboration, local based data decision making, and job-embedded and goals-based professional development with clear goals to improve student behavior and the teachers' ability to deal with specific concerning student behaviors. This may strengthen the teachers' ability to collaborate and develop collegial bonds within the faculty at REL.

Some recommendations for further research arise from this project study. This research and the project in this study are specific to elementary school classroom teachers at one elementary school in a rural school district. Future studies could include implementing both this project's survey and then the professional development project to the REL again along with the middle/high school in REL's district and/or the teachers in content-specific classrooms and support staff (Librarian, student aids, custodians, bus drivers, etc.). The perceptions of the teachers as an entire school district may provide further insight to the overall concerns and provide for future planning and decision making for district administrators. The survey used in this project may also be used in a larger setting, comparing the perceptions and providing information about student behavior about a larger area of teachers, including any elementary school, school district, or beyond. This could provide information on a larger scale about the teachers concerns

about and/or responses to difficult student behavior. This information could help in the development of pre-service training and/or professional development that will improve the ways teachers deal with difficult student behaviors. Also, the professional development project that I created could be used in schools using PLCs for professional learning to understand the concerns that teachers have about student behavior and what kind of methods may be further studied to implement changes to their practices in managing classrooms.

### **Conclusion**

In this study, I addressed the need for further information and understanding of the disciplinary issues that exist at REL. I conducted a cross-sectional survey study that explored teachers' perceptions regarding what specific student behaviors are most concerning to REL's teachers, how teachers respond to these behaviors, and for what areas they feel they need additional support to improve their ability to deal with specific behaviors. I analyzed the responses from participants by comparing the differences between the responses of teachers who teach students in Grades K-3 and Grades 4-6 and veteran teachers and less experienced teachers. Using the analysis, I created a 10-week professional development initiative using the concept of professional learning communities that would help to strengthen the school's use of PLCs to interpret the data, set goals for improvement, research, rehearse, and implement new procedures to deal with behaviors that the teachers in each grade level find most concerning in the data. This plan, detailed in Section 3 and located in Appendix A, challenges the teachers to collaborate within their school to improve their dealings with difficult student behaviors.

In the final section, I reflected on my study and the learning which I developed in this doctoral study. I discussed how I developed data collection and analysis skills and developed deeper understandings about the research processes and best practices for schools. I also reflected on how I developed skills as a designer and practitioner of professional development that may lead to lasting change in teacher practice and increased confidence in teachers' abilities to manage student behavior in their classrooms. With information that can guide decision making, a school may be able to make decisions that lead to lasting change and improvement to the way it educates its students.

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## Appendix A: The Project

## A.1: Professional Development Plan and Schedule

<b>SMART Decisions for Student Behavior</b>					
<b>Schedule of Events for the Program</b>					
<b>Introduction to SMART Decisions to Improve Student Behavior</b>					
<b>Professional Development I: Full School Day (6 hour) Workshop and Training</b>					
<b>Activities</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Location and Mode of Delivery</b>	<b>Presenter /Sponsor</b>	<b>Materials Needed</b>	<b>Overview of Activities</b>
<b>Welcome and Introduction (ALL Teachers)</b>	60 M	Cafeteria	Principal/Sup erintendent and Facilitator	Computer with Projector or Smart Board  Pencils and Scrap Paper  Overhead Presentation and Copies of presentation for each staff Member	Welcoming and introductions.  Discuss Student Behavior and present survey results.  A discussion of teacher reactions will be performed
<b>Break</b>	10 M				
<b>Breakout Discussion Assignment 1</b>	30 M	Cafeteria in groups	Facilitator Teachers at Each Table	Pencils and Scrap Paper Copies of Data Presentation (P.1)  PowerPoint on Display with questions  Copies of Presentation	With Grade Levels, discuss the findings from the analysis of the survey and reflect upon teacher practice. Answer questions on the PowerPoint to present to other teachers in discussion

# SMART Decisions for Student Behavior

## Schedule of Events for the Program

### Introduction to SMART Decisions to Improve Student Behavior

### Professional Development I: Full School Day (6 hour) Workshop and Training

Activities	Duration	Location and Mode of Delivery	Presenter /Sponsor	Materials Needed	Overview of Activities
				and Large Paper Sheets/Tape	
<b>Lunch</b>	60 M				Lunch will be provided by the school district.
<b>Breakout discussion Assignment 2</b>	45 M		Facilitator, Grade Level Leaders	SMART goal worksheet 1.1 PowerPoint Presentation Tables for teachers  List of research resources <i>(Note: These will also be emailed to all participants)</i>	The grade levels will meet to discuss what behaviors, on the data reports or not, are most concerning to their grade level. They will also discuss what they could do to improve upon these concerns and collect data about them.  After this meeting, the grade levels will also discuss their concerns and plans with the other grade levels.
<b>BREAK</b>	10 M				
<b>GUEST PRESENTATION</b>	110 M	Cafeteria	GUEST FROM LOCAL UNIVERSITY	PowerPoint, Media Display, Space for Activity	The teachers will have a presentation about bullying and techniques to deescalate violent behavior from a local university. This presenter will have 90 minutes for this presentation and the teachers will have up

# SMART Decisions for Student Behavior

## Schedule of Events for the Program

### Introduction to SMART Decisions to Improve Student Behavior

#### Professional Development I: Full School Day (6 hour) Workshop and Training

Activities	Duration	Location and Mode of Delivery	Presenter /Sponsor	Materials Needed	Overview of Activities
					to 2 10-minute breaks.
<b>Reflection/ Transition</b>	30	Cafeteria	Presenter Administrator	Reflective Survey	<p>The presenter and administrators will conclude and answer questions about the presentation and the day.</p> <p>The teachers will discuss the next day's activity.</p> <p>All teachers will complete a reflective survey before they leave.</p>
<b>Discussion of Activity</b>	30 Minutes	Cafeteria	Teachers and Presenter		<p>The Presenter will ask each group to discuss the following questions aloud to the teacher group:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What behavior is the most concerning to your grade level?</li> <li>2. Did your group discuss methods that may improve behavior in their classroom?</li> <li>3. What will your grade level use to collect the data to track behavior?</li> <li>4. How do you feel</li> </ol>

<b>SMART Decisions for Student Behavior</b>					
Schedule of Events for the Program					
Introduction to SMART Decisions to Improve Student Behavior					
Professional Development I: Full School Day (6 hour) Workshop and Training					
Activities	Duration	Location and Mode of Delivery	Presenter /Sponsor	Materials Needed	Overview of Activities
					your group worked together in reaching the goals of the activity? Do you feel there are areas you may be able to improve your work together as a collective team?
<b>Introduction to project</b>	20 M	Cafeteria	Presenter	PowerPoint	<p>The presenter will review the work of the day's activities.</p> <p>A discussion will occur about the upcoming bi-weekly meetings to explore, set final goals for improvement, research, and implement new changes to student behavioral plans. Also, a brief overview of the final presentation of learning at the end of the project will occur.</p>
<b>Dismissal</b>	5-10 M	Cafeteria	Presenter	Survey of	Teachers will be asked

# SMART Decisions for Student Behavior

## Schedule of Events for the Program

### Introduction to SMART Decisions to Improve Student Behavior

### Professional Development I: Full School Day (6 hour) Workshop and Training

Activities	Duration	Location and Mode of Delivery	Presenter /Sponsor	Materials Needed	Overview of Activities
			REL Administrators	workshop	to complete a survey about the day's work and submit before they leave.

<b>SMART Decisions to Improve Student Behavior</b> <b>Professional Development Meeting II: Grade Level SMART goal setting (3.5 Hours)</b> <i>Grade Level Leaders will be dismissed from classroom activities for this training.</i>					
Topic/ Activities	Duratio n	Location	Presenter	Materials Needed	Summary of Activities
<b>Welcomin g and Discussion</b>	15 M	Workshop area (Meeting room on campus)	Facilitator (Duane Davis) Administrators	Facilitator / Student Volunteers	An introduction of the day's activities will be presented.
<b>SMART goals meeting Assignme nt 3</b>	60 M	Cafeteria, teachers in grade level groups	Presenter Grade Level Leader	SMART goal worksheet 1.1 PowerPoint Presentatio n Tables for teachers  List of research resources ( <i>Note: These will also be emailed to all participant s</i> )	The teachers will be guided in an activity to prepare to track and improve upon concerning behaviors
<b>BREAK</b>	10 M				
<b>Assignme nt 4 Setting of smart goals</b>	40 M		District Administrators, Facilitator and Teachers	PowerPoint (P.1) and SMART GOAL Chart from School's professiona l developme nt plan  Individual grade level	We will discuss and review the school's SMART goal plans and discuss how student behavior records can be used. The Grade Level Leaders and teachers will formally set a plan to improve their dealings with a specific behavior. These will be rough drafts and the teachers will decide



				groups' notes as needed	<p>how to collect data.</p> <p>Each group will discuss their grade level's concerns and make decisions and goals for improvement. They will rehearse the SMART goals form and present it to other grade levels in reflection.</p>
<b>Break</b>	10 M			Drinks	
<b>Setting of SMART Goals and PLC Team Meeting</b>	50 M	Teacher selected meeting spaces (Classrooms, Library, Meeting rooms, etc.	Facilitator and Grade Level Leaders  Teachers with their grade level groups	<p>Presentation Guide (1.1) Brief presentation on PowerPoint above</p> <p>Data sheets, SMART Goals Worksheets</p>	<p>The teachers will use the survey results. With their grade level leaders, they will discuss the survey results and their own concerns to share with the peers to answer 3 discussion questions.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are the most concerning behaviors for our grade level?</li> <li>2. What do you feel may be causing these behaviors?</li> <li>3. What methods, specifically, are you using to deal with his particular behavior.</li> </ol> <p>The teachers with the grade level leader will decide one specific grade level concern to research in depth.</p> <p>They will then prepare a final SMART Goals sheet which will be their official statement of professional</p>

					<p>growth. They will prepare a plan to collect data to track the process of their goal and they will complete the draft of the following statement:</p> <p>“Students will reduce the occurrence of _____ in the classroom by _____ Number _____ in the next 6 weeks.”</p> <p>Afterwards, the teachers with the facilitator, will discuss how they will track these occurrences. With the behavior journal. SHEET 1.4 will be submitted by the grade level leader</p> <p>The facilitator will rotate to the different groups to answer questions or provide insight.</p> <p>The teachers will reflect with the grade level leader on their SMART goal. The teachers will spend the last 15 minutes discoursing and preparing plans for the experimental method they will employ, and delegate plans for research and implementation.</p>
<b>Break</b>	5 M				
<b>Wrap up and Reflection</b>	20 M	Cafetorium Grade levels sit	Facilitator	PowerPoint	The facilitator will wrap up the session by explaining the timeline

		together			<p>for implementing and evaluating progress. The “Presentation of Learning” Workshop will be introduced and forms will be presented to grade level leaders.</p> <p>All teachers will fill out a reflective survey form.</p>
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**SMART Decisions to Improve Student Behavior**  
**Weekly Professional Development Meetings**  
 Each held by Grade Level Leaders at appointed times 30m each meeting 2X per week for 9 Weeks: 9 Hours Total  
 Schedule will vary by grade level, but the plan for each week is below. All meetings will be grade level specific and involve the grade level leaders and grade level teachers. Guests will be listed in the materials section. Each week, the grade level leaders will complete a journal, included in this packet, to track goals PLEASE NOTE, GRADE LEVEL LEADERS WILL RECEIVE A COPY OF THIS SCHEDULE TO PREPARE FOR WEEKLY MEETINGS. Each scheduled meeting is 30 minutes in length.

Week Number	Meeting (1) and (2)	Materials Needed *Guests Included*	Overview of Activities
1	1.	SMART GOALS sheet. Copies of data that the grade level leader will provide. Journal sheet (1.3), Data collection sheet.  *Facilitator will be present in weeks one and three**	<p><u>Through This week, the teachers will record the amount of times they observe the behavior concern in their SMART GOAL occur in their classroom.</u></p> <p>Meet with the teachers, review rules for discourse and SMART GOALS. Discuss the survey results through handouts. Goal for teachers, reflect on the materials and think of one specific student who is an example whom comes to mind in reflection of the data report</p>
	2.	Large Sheet Paper or Marker board. The materials will be determined by grade level as well as the site for meetings. *Facilitator will be present*	<p>Review the individual students which were asked to be described earlier. Create a list of the specific behaviors this student demonstrates. The leader will place these onto the weekly reflection report. The administrator or facilitator will record both building wide and grade level concerns into a chart for the future meetings. The teachers will finalize the selected methods they will use to improve their response to their selected behavioral concern.</p> <p>The Grade Level Leader will update the SMART Goal Sheet with this change in hand and submit it with the weekly journal.</p> <p>WEEKLY GRADE LEVEL JOURNAL DUE FORM 1.3</p>

2	N/A	.	<p><u>Through This week, the teachers will record the amount of times they observe the behavior concern in their SMART GOAL occur in their classroom.</u></p> <p>During this week, the teachers will research and implement the methods that they will use to deal with the concern that was decided as most important for their grade level. The grade level leaders will ask teachers to search methods, student discipline methodologies, counseling sessions, supplementary materials, and new methods to reward and respond to behaviors. Google Scholar, Education Blogs, and State University Library Database will be used as available and as the skills of teachers will match</p> <p>On the last day of the week, the teachers will give their data of weekly behavioral occurrences to the grade level leader who will update and present the sheet to the administrator/facilitator.</p>
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6.	N/A		<p><u>Through This week, the teachers will record the amount of times they observe the behavior concern in their SMART GOAL occur in their classroom.</u></p> <p>On the last day of the week, the teachers will give their data of weekly behavioral occurrences to the grade level leader who will update and present the sheet to the administrator/facilitator.</p>
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7.	1	Each week, materials will be determined by the grade level leaders at a site determined by the leader.	<p><u>Through This week, the teachers will record the amount of times they observe the behavior concern in their SMART GOAL occur in their classroom.</u></p> <p>Before this meeting, the teachers will have observed each other. During this meeting, the grade level leader will lead a discussion about the observations that will be included in the weekly journal. The grade level leaders will lead the teachers in reflection and discuss changes to their techniques or procedures implemented to respond to the concerning behavior. All discussions will be recorded for journaling later in the week. In this session, the grade level leaders will focus discussion on colleague observations. The discussions will focus on the following points.</p> <p>What Changes did you make to your practice? Did you change anything you have done previously and what changes occurred if you did?</p> <p>What activities were occurring in the classroom as you were observing? Were any concerning behaviors presented during the activities? Do you know why or why not?</p> <p>While watching the classroom management of the class, as well as the responses to disruptive behavior, what was a method, idea, or item that you could implement in your class and why?</p> <p>(Grade Level Leader): What questions does the teacher who was observed if they had any questions for the observing teacher?</p> <p>During this session, the teachers and grade level will begin to prepare their final presentation that was introduce in week 7. The grade level leader will discuss the project, that should include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discussion of the concerning behavior</li> <li>2. Goals set and methods created to reach them.</li> <li>3. A presentation, demonstration, or discussion of the processes used to deal with or prevent the concerning behavior</li> <li>4. The level of success in data (provided from the tracking sheets), observations of the learning made, and directions for further improvement.</li> </ol> <p>The grade level leader, with their colleagues, will create and develop their presentation for the school.</p> <p>GRADE LEVEL JOURNAL DUE. EACH JOURNAL WILL ALSO INCLUDE A COPY OF THE ENTIRE GRADE LEVEL'S TRACKING OF CONCERNING BEHAVIOR OCCURANCES.</p>
	2		



<b>SMART Decisions to Improve Student Behavior</b>					
<b>Full Professional Day of Wrap-Up, Reflection, and Long-Term Goal Setting (5 hours total). This session will involve discussing reflection of the professional inquiry, individual grade level successes and challenges, and discussion of building-wide reforms for long term improvement.</b>					
<b>Activities</b>	<b>Durati on</b>	<b>Location and Mode of Delivery</b>	<b>Presenter /Sponsor</b>	<b>Materials Needed</b>	<b>Overview of activities</b>
Introduction and welcome speech	15 m	Presentation and discussion in cafeteria	Facilitator and Administrator	Presentation (PowerPoint) P2	The facilitator will review the goals of the professional growth initiative and goals for the day.
Presentation of findings: K-3	45 m	Cafeteria	Grade Level leaders and teachers for K, 1, 2, and then 3.	Varying by group, but presentation software, computer, and sound will be ready.  SMART GOAL and Data Reports without teacher names.	Each grade level will present their findings and discuss with the teachers what their findings are.  Each group will be asked to demonstrate a method that they used to improve concerning behaviors.
Break	15m			Drinks and light snack	

Review of SMART goals	20 m	Cafeteria, group activity	Facilitator	Sample data about a concerning behavior (High office referrals for hitting) Sheet 1.5	The facilitator will review the method for creating SMART goals and then the staff will, as a school, create a goal for the sample concern.
Presentation of Findings: Grades 4-6	45m	Cafeteria, presentations.	Grade Level leaders and teachers for 4,5, 6.	Varying by group, but presentation software, computer, and sound will be ready.  SMART GOAL and Data Reports without teacher names	Each grade level will present their findings and discuss with the teachers what their findings are.  Each group will be asked to demonstrate a method that they used to improve concerning behaviors.
LUNCH	60M			Lunch on teachers' schedule	

Building wide Discussion	30m	Classrooms as decided by groups. Small group discussion	Grade level leaders and teachers	<p>Drawing with numbers 1-4 equal to number of teachers.</p> <p>Copies of survey results</p> <p>Sheet Paper.</p>	<p>Allow teachers to draw number to go into groups. Each group will have one grade level leader as a recorder.</p> <p>The teachers will go into discussion to select one finding that they can agree is a building wide concern. They will also record what methods they feel may aid in their response to these concerns.</p>
--------------------------	-----	---------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Building Discussion	30 M	Common area	Administrator, teachers, facilitator	Information from discussion groups	<p>During this time, the Principal will ask each group to discuss their findings and as the question to each:          “What do you feel is the next goal our entire school should set to improve the student behavior?”</p> <p>Time for questions about other areas will also be given.</p>
Break	15 m				

Wrap-up session/celebration	20m	Common Area	All	<p>Reflection Survey</p> <p>OPTIONAL: Door Prizes</p> <p>Presentation</p> <p>P.3.</p>	<p>The facilitator and principal will both give closing remarks.</p> <p>A time for grade level leaders to address their reactions to the project will be given.</p> <p>A review of the work completed will be made, and A final reflective survey of the experience will be filled out by teachers and left.</p> <p>OPTIONAL: The School may choose to give door prizes if they choose.</p>
-----------------------------	-----	-------------	-----	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

A.2 and A.3: Presentation Slides for Opening Workshop and PLC Workshop (Copies of the slides in note format will presented to participants for note taking and reference)

# SMART Decisions for Student Behavior

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A PLC-BASED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

## Welcome!!!

---

### Procedures for This Day

1. Have an Open Mind
2. Safe Zone! Feel free to discuss your thoughts freely
3. Relax! Walk around, visit the restrooms as needed, and take advantage of refreshments!
4. Take notes! Use copies of the presentation to take notes.
5. Take Your breaks!! There will be several
6. Use your phones and lap tops to research! Google it!



## What is SMART Decisions for Student Behavior

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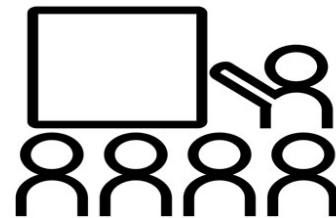
1. Remember your Grade Levels?
2. SMART Goals for Learning

Ex: 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade 2015: The students will increase their reading test pass rate from 89% to 92%.

3. Same Goals, but to Improve Student Behavior!!!



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from Noun Project



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from Noun Project

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## Teacher Perceptions of Student Behavior Survey (2017)

1. This survey was taken by teachers in 2017
  2. 24 of the 31 teachers who were asked to take the survey completed them!
  3. Most teachers are still present, though some may have retired/moved on
-

## Teacher Perceptions of Student Behavior Survey (2017)

Faculty Levels of Concern About Specific Behaviors		
High Level of Concern	Middle Level of Concern	Low Level of Concern
Students Expression of Anger Students Being Physically Violent/Bullying their Peers	Students Inability to Wait for Teacher Attention Students Disrupting Classroom Activities Excessive Student Demand for Teachers' Attention Students Easily Distracted from Activities Students ignoring the Feelings of Others Students not Getting Along With Their Peers Students not Following Class Rules Students Damaging Property Inappropriate Language Use	Students Leaving Seats Without Permission
What Other Concerns Do You Have?		

## Teacher Perceptions of Student Behavior Survey (2017)

Faculty Expressed Need for Support to Deal With Specific Student Behavior		
High Level of Support Needed	Middle of Support Needed	Low of Support Needed
None	Students Being Physically Violent/Bullying their Peers Students Damaging Property Students not Getting Along With Their Peers Inappropriate Language Use Students Expression of Anger	Students Inability to Wait for Teacher Attention Students Disrupting Classroom Activities Students Easily Distracted from Activities Excessive Student Demand for Teachers' Attention Students Leaving Seats Without Permission Students ignoring the Feelings of Others Students not Following Class Rules

Of these areas where support is ranked as a middle or moderate concern, Students being physically violent/bullying peers and expression of anger are ranked as high concerns. Are these areas where we could focus our attention? Are there other behaviors not listed that concern you?

## Teacher Perceptions of Student Behavior Survey (2017)

Supports Used by Faculty to Improve Their Response to Difficult Student Behavior		
Highly-Used Supports	Moderately Used Supports	Low/Infrequently Used Supports
Fellow Teachers/Colleagues School Counselor Students' Parents	Internet Websites/Blogs/Boards School Principal Professional Literature/Online Reading	Teacher in-services Family Members/Friends University Courses and Staff School Staff Meetings CPI Interventions/CPI Training
Are There Other Supports You Use? What Are They?		

## Teacher Perceptions of Student Behavior Survey (2017)

Specific Methods Teachers use to Deal With Difficult Student Behavior		
Most Frequently Used Methods	Moderately Used Methods	Least Frequently Used Methods
**Discussing Behaviors With Students Adjusting/Assigning Classroom Seats Creating Curriculum to Meet Student Needs Verbal Reprimands Behavior Modification Contacting Parents Office Referrals Counselor Referrals Praise Appropriate Behaviors Tokens/Tickets/Points  **All teachers reported this method as frequently used.	Ignoring Student Behaviors	Assigning Corporal Punishments (Spanking) Detentions Assigning Students to Peer Support Groups Class Meetings Conflict Resolution Time Out
What Other Methods do You Use? Would Others Be Interested?		

## Teacher Perceptions of Student Behavior Survey (2017)

Mean Scores: Teachers Confident in Dealing With Difficult Student Behaviors as They Arise. (1-Strongly Disagree, 2- Disagree, 3-Neither Agree or Disagree, 4-Agree, 5-Strongly Agree)				
Total Sample	K-3 Teachers	4-6 Teachers	Teachers With 0-5 Years Experience	Teachers With 6+ Years Experience
4.29: Agree	4.29:Agree	4.29:Agree	4.00:Agree	4.33: Agree
What Group had the Highest Mean? The Lowest Mean? What Does This Mean to our School?				

## Discussion/First Impressions

---

What Are Your Feelings About

Student Behavior at Your School?

What You and Your Colleagues Use to Support Your Dealings With Student Behavior?

What Methods of Addressing Student Behavior are Standing Out To You?

Other Impressions?

# BREAK!

---



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from Noun Project

... "Tea Time" by elwar Hossain. Used by permission from the Noun Project

---

## Assignment 1

---

Go to Your Grade Level and Discuss...

1. Do our "worst" behaviors match this survey? Either way, what behaviors are the most concerning to us?
2. How often does it happen in our room?
3. How do we take care of that behavior? Is it the right thing to do?
4. Is there someone who can help us with support or more information?

**\*\*Grade Level leaders: Please use the large sheets to make some notes to share!\*\***

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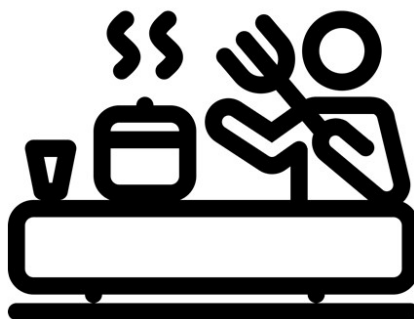
## Discussion of Assignment 1

---

LUNCH TIME!!

---

See you in one hour!!



"Lunch" by forz. Used with permission from the Noun Project

# Let's Improve The Behavior!!

---

Let's Improve The Behavior!!

Identify the Concerns

+What concerns us the most? Was it in the presentation earlier or something else?

DATA is IMPORTANT

+What data is there? (Please tell us a data source)

---

## Collection of Data

---

Old Fashioned

+Spread Sheet, Record Book, Student Chart, Students make tally marks?

-Make it Specific to the Behaviors that are Most Concerning

New/Technology Base

---

## Assignment 2

---

Go to Your Grade Level and Discuss...

1. What behavior can we, as a grade level, agree would best improve learning if we reduced its occurrence? Is it one from the data we saw, or something different?
2. How do we collect data about it? Make a plan for this collection!
3. Can we think of any new methods or something we have seen that may improve our way of dealing with the behavior and reduce the occurrence of it in our classes?

**\*\*Grade Level leaders: Please use the large sheets to make some notes to share!\*\***

---

## Discussion of Assignment 2

---



## Break Time!

---

See you in one hour!!



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## The Bullying, Anger, and Violent Concerns...

Our Guest Speaker

(Image of Speaker Withheld)

---

## Questions and Closing Remarks!

---

Please be sure to fill out the project survey, obtain resources sheet, and keep the notes from this presentation!



Created by Lucas Dino Nolte  
from Noun Project

"high five" by Lucas Dino Nolte. Used with permission from the Noun Project

# SMART Decisions for Student Behavior

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PLC TEAM MEETING

---

## Welcome Back!!!

---

### Procedures for This Day

1. Have an Open Mind
2. Safe Zone! Feel free to discuss your thoughts freely
3. Relax! Walk around, visit the restrooms as needed, and take advantage of refreshments!
4. Take notes! Use copies of the presentation to take notes.
5. Take Your breaks!! There will be several
6. Use your phones and lap tops to research! Google it!

## What is SMART Decisions for Student Behavior

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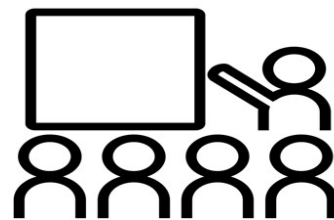
1. Remember your Grade Levels?
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Ex: 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade 2015: The students will increase their reading test pass rate from 89% to 92%.

3. Same Goals, but to Improve Student Behavior!!!



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from Noun Project



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## SMART Goal Setting

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Remember, these goals should be

- S** specific towards a point of concern
- M** Measurable with data
- A** Achievable goal that can be reached
- R** Relevant to the school and/or the concerns
- T** Time oriented, based on timelines and deadlines for completion

---

## SMART Goals for Student Learning Example

---

"The fifth grade students will increase their achievement in reading comprehension exams from 89% to 91% by April of this year.

S: The 5<sup>th</sup> grade comprehension scores

M: Achievement Assessment Scores

A: 2% increase, what specific groups of students?

R: Reading comprehension is critical for our school

T: August to April timeline

---

## SMART Goals for Student Behavior!!???

---

# WHY NOT?!!!



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from the Noun Project



Created by Naveen Cs  
from the Noun Project

---

## Assignment 3- Let's Do this Together!

Let's use the survey from above: The most concerning behavior is violence

If there is over 30 recorded violent student incidents in the last 60 school days in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, how can we reduce those and by how much? Let's do it!

S:  
M  
A  
R  
T

---

## Reflection...

---

What are your findings and discussions?

---

## BREAK TIME!

---



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from Noun Project

"tea time" by elwar Hossain. Used by permission from the Noun Project

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## Assignment 4

---

SMART GOALS FOR

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

- +Please see the sheet on your tables...
- +What are our current SMART goals dealing with?
- +Can you make this about student behavioral concerns? YES!!
  
- +Go with your grade level and discuss your behavioral concerns from yesterday.
- +Grade Level Leaders, use the SMART goal worksheet to draft a goal plan!



## Assignment 4 Reflection

---

Let's Share Our Work...



## BREAK TIME!

---



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from Noun Project

"tea time" by elwar Hossain. Used by permission from the Noun Project

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## PLC Meeting

Go to Your Grade Level and...

1. Make a final decision of what you will improve
2. Create your smart goal and add a realistic number (Perhaps, 1-3 incidents a day or 6 a week, etc.)
3. Fill out the SMART goal draft sheet Add in how you will collect data. You will add that later on...
- 4, THE TIME LINE IS 8 WEEKS, meetings every other week (2 meetings, Tuesday and Thursday)

**\*\*Grade Level Leaders: Make a Final Draft and submit to the facilitator\*\***

---



# PLC Meeting

---

Each Grade Level Will Discuss their Sheet

Feel free to ask questions!

---

## How are We Going to Meet These Goals?

---

1. 8 weeks!!!!
  2. 2 of your PD meetings each week will be about this project!
  3. Spend this time wisely. There will be a schedule for your grade level leader. You will work on this in PLC meetings twice a week, every other week, for 2 months!
  4. You will research ways to improve Student Behavior, but You are Not Alone!!  
Resource Sheet!!!  
\*\* University Library
  5. Time to research, discuss, practice, share, and put it to practice!!
  6. Make adjustments
  7. Track your progress using data!!
  8. Implement your changes each day.
-

## Share Your Work!

---

End of Project Workshop!

All Grade Levels will Present Just like this!



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from Noun Project  
"energy saving" by Symbolon. Used with permission from the Noun Project

---

## You Are Not Alone

---

Resources are here!

-Resource Sheet!

People!

-Principals, University Library, Myself!!



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from Noun Project  
"support" by Gregor Cresnar. Used by permission from the Noun Project

## Questions and Closing Remarks!

---

Please be sure to fill out the project survey, obtain resources sheet, and keep the notes from this presentation!



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from Noun Project

"high five" by Lucas Dino Nolte. Used with permission from the Noun Project

# SMART Decisions for Student Behavior

---

A PLC-BASED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

---

## A.4 Slides for Celebration of Learning Workshop

# SMART Decisions for Student Behavior

---


CELEBRATION OF TEACHER WORK!!



## Welcome!

---

In this session, We will...

1. Have presentations about how each grade level worked on student behavior and the data they collected
  2. Review and set another sample SMART Goal
  3. Discuss concerns on a building level and set a building wide direction for future improvement
- 

## Presentation: Kindergarten

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*Note: Slides 3-10 (Except the Lunch Slide) reserved for grade level presentations that would be added later*

## Presentation: 1<sup>st</sup> Grade

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Presentation: 2nd Grade

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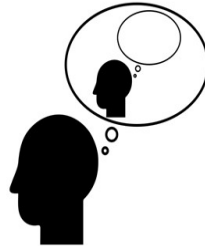
Presentation: 3rd Grade

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## Reflections and Break

---



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from Noun Project

"Self Reflection" by Aenne Briemann. Used with permission from the Noun Project

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## Building Wide SMART goal

Example: According to a file from the office, there have been over 25 incidents of hitting and fighting this month 22 were boys and 3 involved girls, all in grades 3 and up.

Discuss with the group...

What is the issue, what info is present, and how can we improve upon this? Let's set a goal with our group

Remember to make it SMART

S:

M: What will measure it? Online source? Hand collection? Office tracking?

A:

R:

T: Let's say 4 months...

Presentation: 4<sup>th</sup> Grade

---



Presentation: 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

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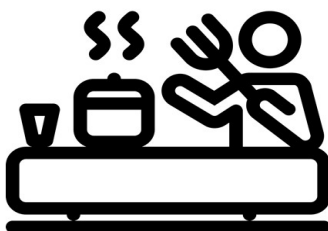


## Presentation: 6th Grade

---

LUNCH!

---



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## Welcome Back!

---

Please Take a Number and Sit at the Corresponding Table!



## Building Wide Goals

---

Let's Plan for the Future:

1. Select a group recorder, use the paper on the table
2. Pick a location, anywhere you wish in the school.
3. Discussion Questions:
  1. After this project, what concerns do you think still exist within the school with student behavior?
  2. Do you feel this behavior can or is being tracked accurately by teachers and/or office staff? How could it be?
  3. Do you think there are ways to improve/methods to deal with it differently?
  4. What timeline do you think is needed to improve the behavior/reduce the occurrences of it in the school?

You have 30 minutes for the activity, and then 15 minutes for a break



## Discussion of Building-Wide Goals

---

Reflection of Each Group's Discussion




## Discussion of Building-Wide Goals

---

Principal's Discussion

**What do you feel is the next goal our entire school should set to improve the student behavior?**



## ...In Reflection

---

**\*\*Please fill out the reflective survey about this day and this project\*\***



Thank You for Your Hard Work!

Let's Make Some New Goals!!

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from Noun Project  
"Handshake" by Hare Krishna. Used with permission from the Noun Project

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# SMART Decisions for Student Behavior

---

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!!!

---

## A.4: Opening Workshop Survey

**SMART Decisions for Student Behavior***Introduction Workshop Survey*

Thank you for your attendance and participation in this workshop! As we begin this initiative at your school, you can provide assistance through this survey. Please answer each question honestly and do not place your name onto the survey. The results of this survey will help the school and the presenter to guide this initiative, improve upon the delivery of the content of this program, and aid in providing any answers to your questions and/or needs for more information or resources.

**1.** Please Circle the Grade Level You Teach In:

K    1    2    3    4    5    6

On questions 2-5, please rank your level of agreement with each question on a scale of 1- Strongly Disagree, 2- Disagree, 3- Neutral, 4- Agree, or 5- Strongly Agree

**2.** This workshop taught me something new about student behavior at our school.

1    2    3    4    5

**3.** This workshop helped me to understand the concept of setting goals and changing what I do in my classroom to benefit my students.

1    2    3    4    5

**4.** This workshop allowed me to collaborate with my peers to discuss student behavior and how we may be able to deal with behaviors differently.

1    2    3    4    5

**5.** This workshop prepared me to perform the tasks required in our upcoming professional learning team meetings (Only 2 of 5 meetings a week) to work on improving student behavior concerns we have.

1    2    3    4    5

**6.** Please answer Briefly: What discoveries, questions, concerns, or insights about students and student behavior came to mind in this workshop?

*Please leave this survey at your table and THANK YOU  
for your participation!*

## A.5 PLC Workshop Survey

## SMART Decisions for Student Behavior

*PLC Workshop*

Thank you for your attendance and participation in this workshop! As we begin this initiative at your school, you can provide assistance through this survey. Please answer each question honestly and do not place your name onto the survey. The results of this survey will help the school and the presenter to guide this initiative, improve upon the delivery of the content of this program, and aid in providing any answers to your questions and/or needs for more information or resources.

On questions 1-4, please rank your level of agreement with each question on a scale of 1- Strongly Disagree, 2- Disagree, 3- Neutral, 4- Agree, or 5- Strongly Agree

**1.** This workshop allowed me to review how to study data and find understand information from it with regard to student behavior.

1      2      3      4      5

**2.** This workshop helped me to understand the nuances of setting SMART goals with regards to improving student behavior.

1      2      3      4      5

**3.** This workshop allowed me an opportunity to rehearse with colleagues in my grade level the methods to distribute tasks and assisting each other in setting and reaching goals to improve student behavior.

1      2      3      4      5

**4.** This workshop prepared me to perform the tasks required in our upcoming professional learning team meetings to work on improving student behavior concerns we have.

1      2      3      4      5

**5.** Please answer briefly: What questions do you have about this process that were not answered? Do you need assistance, further resources, or concerns about the project?

**6.** Please answer briefly: In your opinion, what are you and your grade level's concerns about student behavior? Do you have any ideas about what can be done to address the concerns?

*THANK YOU for your participation!*

A.6 Resources for Student Behavior Research (This material will also be mailed electronically to the teachers and school administrators)

## SMART Decisions for Student Behavior

Resources for Student Behavior and Classroom Management

This sheet is a descriptive list of resource start research and/or developing ideas to deal with classroom behaviors and/or changes to classroom management. The majority of the sites are FREE, with the exception of books and/or items that are on pay sites.

Purchases are NOT required and if there is an item your grade level is interested in purchasing, please message your principal (ADDRESS), as some funds may be available.

### **Research of Scholarly Journals and/or Magazines**

<https://libraries.██████████/academic-search-ebco> XXXXXXXXX University Library's EBSCOHost is available to you! Please see your principal for access

### **Websites with Links to Blogs, Free or Pay Materials, and Other Websites with Valuable Research**

#### Teachers Pay Teachers

This website has many free and/or low-cost consumables and materials to develop and/improve classroom management skills. Here are some examples:

<https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Browse/Search:students%20can%20behave>

<https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Browse/Search:classroom%20management>

<https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Browse/Search:student%20behavior>

#### Other Sites with Resources

<https://www.crisisprevention.com/Blog/December-2015/How-to-Talk-a-Student-Down-From-Violence> Techniques to descale violent student behaviors.

<http://www.interventioncentral.org/behavioral-intervention-modification> A LARGE list of links to sites for defusing behaviors, interventions, individual student management, and behavioral interventions

<https://www.edutopia.org/blog/30-techniques-quiet-noisy-class-todd-finley> This site will require you email address but provides methods to allow students to talk in class without being disruptive.

<https://www.cultofpedagogy.com/student-talking/> A discussion about student talking and approaches to it.

<https://www.aft.org/periodical/american-educator/winter-2003-2004/how-disruptive-students-escalate-hostility> Details on how to deal with students being violent.

<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/articles/teaching-content/25-sure-fire-strategies-handling-difficult-students/> Methods for dealing with difficult student behaviors.

<https://cehdvision2020.umn.edu/blog/aggressive-behavior-in-students/> Tips and methods for dealing with hostile student behaviors.

<http://www.hotchalkeducationnetwork.com/harry-wong-interview/> Tips from Harry Wong, an expert in Student Discipline.

<http://www.effectiveteaching.com/> Links to videos, products, and a blog with tips and pointers from Harry Wong.

<https://www.123magic.com/> 1-2-3 Magic classroom management technique for dealing with student behavior.

<https://www.teachervision.com/teaching-strategies/behavior-management> A list of reports, sheets, rewards, and ideas for classroom management and discipline.

<https://thecornerstoneforteachers.com/behavior-management/> Videos demonstrating student behavior management.

<https://www.edutopia.org/article/new-teachers-classroom-management-resources> Tips and resources for establishing effective classrooms and managing behaviors.

## **Models for Behavior Management**

### ***CPI Non-Violent Crisis Intervention***



<https://www.crisisprevention.com/> Information about non-violent crisis intervention. Teachers at our school are trained in this and may be able to help implement the methods into your classrooms to stop and avoid student crises.

### Restorative Justice

<http://restorativesolutions.us/resources/best-restorative-justice-books> This site provides links to pages, books, and materials for the Restorative Justice program for schools and classrooms.

<https://k12engagement.unl.edu/strategy-briefs/Resources%20for%20Restorative%20Practices%202-25-2014.pdf> This site has information about what the Restorative Justice system is and information on how to implement it in schools.

<http://neatoday.org/2016/08/25/restorative-discipline/> Several links and videos on how Restorative Justice works in schools.

### Assertive Discipline

<https://books.google.com/books?id=L3gXBwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=assertive+discipline&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjA3ZPh1trYAhUh5oMKHYprAGwQ6AEIJDA#v=onepage&q=assertive%20discipline&f=false> A description of assertive discipline.

### PBIS

<https://www.pbis.org/> National website detailing Positive Behavior Intervention Supports. Also, the research of Sugai & Horner and /or Sugai, Horner, Simonsen and Sugai and Simonsen for great materials and/or details on PBIS in schools, grade levels, and classrooms.

<https://www.crisisprevention.com/Blog/September-2010/Top-10-Positive-Behavior-Support-Online-Resources> Resources for PBIS in classrooms and schools.

### Classroom Design/Engagement

<https://www.classcraft.com> Changing instruction through gamified classrooms.

<http://ditchthattextbook.com/> Blog and links to technology and ideas to change classroom instruction to engage learners.

<https://www.schlechtycenter.org/tools/> Tools and materials to allow students to discuss their concerns and also design and monitor engaging learning in schools.

## **Books**

<https://books.google.com/books?id=L3gXBwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=assertive+discipline&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjA3ZPh1trYAhUh5oMKHYprAGwQ6AEIJDA#v=onepage&q=assertive%20discipline&f=false> *Assertive Discipline-Positive Behavior Management for Today's Classrooms* (Canter and Canter)

<https://books.google.com/books?id=i34XBwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=assertive+discipline&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjA3ZPh1trYAhUh5oMKHYprAGwQ6AEIQDAF#v=onepage&q=assertive%20discipline&f=false> *Lee Canter's Assertive Discipline Elementary Workbook* (Lee Canter).

<http://www.effectiveteaching.com/store/products/books> *The First Days of School: How to be an Effective Teacher* and *THE Classroom Management Book* (Wong & Wong).

<https://www.123magic.com/positive-parenting-solutions/1-2-3-magic-in-the-classroom.html> *1 2 3 Magic in the Classroom: Effective Discipline for Pre-K through Grade 8* (Phelan and Schonour). \*\*Facilitator Note: The facilitator has seen this method work in the classroom. \*\*

<https://www.weareteachers.com/classroom-management-books/> 15 different books recommended for addressing student behavior.

[http://www.yesnet.yk.ca/pdf/11-12/10tips\\_classroom\\_management.pdf](http://www.yesnet.yk.ca/pdf/11-12/10tips_classroom_management.pdf) FREE: 10 tips to build a positive climate.

## **Teacher Data Collection, Classroom Management, and Parental Communication Tools**

<http://teacherkit.net/> Teachers can create behavioral reports for each child to track issues and also log other classroom materials.

<https://www.classdojo.com/> Similar to teacherkit, but free. Also, can be used on smartphones and provide teacher communication to parental email or data reports to grade level leaders or administrators.

[https://www.redcritterteacher.com/classdojo\\_alternative](https://www.redcritterteacher.com/classdojo_alternative) This program recognizes positive achievements and behaviors. A free demo is included.

## A.7: SMART Goal Worksheets

**SMART Decisions for Student Behavior**

## Form 1.1. SMART GOAL STATEMENT DRAFT

Grade Level (Bold or Circle) K 1 2 3 4 5 6

*Please answer the questions below after discussing them with your grade level team. After discussing the questions, please write out your SMART goal as a team. This goal will be tracked daily and will be presented to your grade level leader at your first weekly meeting.*

1. What is the most concerning behaviors in your grade level overall? (Circle the category)

Following Class Rules

Bullying

Inappropriate Language

Disrespect to teachers/peers

Physical Violence

2. List several ways which teachers are working to respond to this behavior in your grade level.

3. What kinds of ideas do you have for improving this concerning? What resources may you need?

4. Record, by estimate, how often these behaviors occur in the classroom each day. Describe how it impacts other students.

5. Please decide how much you can control this with a change in your methods of dealing with it. Then, create your smart goal by filling in the blanks below:

“Students will reduce the occurrence of \_\_\_\_\_

in the classroom by \_\_\_\_\_ in the next 6 weeks.”

# SMART Decisions for Student Behavior

## Form 1.6. SMART GOAL FINAL STATEMENT

Grade Level (Bold or Circle) K 1 2 3 4 5 6

*Please answer the questions below after discussing them with your grade level team. After discussing the questions, please write out your SMART goal as a team. This goal will be tracked daily and will be presented to your grade level leader at your first weekly meeting.*

1. What is the most concerning behaviors in your grade level overall? (Circle the category)

Following Class Rules

Bullying

Inappropriate Language

Disrespect to teachers/peers

Physical Violence

2. List several ways which teachers are working to respond to this behavior in your grade level.

3. What kinds of ideas do you have for improving this concerning? What resources may you need?

4. Record, by estimate, how often these behaviors occur in the classroom each day. Describe how it impacts other students.

5. Please decide how much you can control this with a change in your methods of dealing with it. Then, create your smart goal by filling in the blanks below:

“Students will reduce the occurrence of \_\_\_\_\_  
in the classroom by \_\_\_\_\_ in the next 6 weeks.”

A.8 Collection of Student Behavior Worksheet

# SMART Decisions for Student Behavior

## 1.3 Behavioral Tracking Guide (Sample of Excel File)

*SMART Decisions for Student Behavior—Behavioral Occurrence Tracking Log*

Grade Level: \_\_\_\_\_ Leader Name: ENTER HERE

Please write in your SMART goal:

Grade Level Leaders: Please collect your grade level teachers' report of the number of times your behavioral concern occurs in the classroom. Each week, please submit this form with your weekly grade level journal entry. You do not need to write in the teacher's names and you may print this form or submit both the journal and this sheet electronically. Please contact the principal or the Facilitator (EMAIL) with any questions.

Week of Project	Classroom K1	Classroom K2	Classroom K3	Total of All Classes
Week 2				
Week 3				
Week 4				
Week 5				
Week 6				
Week 7				
Week 8				
Week 9				

## A.9: Weekly Grade Level Leader Reflection Journal

**SMART Decisions for Student Behavior**

1.4 Weekly Grade Level Leader Journal (Each grade level leader will receive one copy of this form each week of the program)

*For each week, please type or write in the answers to the following questions below. Also, please provide any questions or further details you wish to share.*

Dates of Meetings \_\_\_\_\_ Grade Level (Bold or Circle) K 1 2 3 4 5  
6

What activities/tasks did your group work on during your meetings this week?

What reflections did the teachers in your grade level have this week as a result of the work for this project? Please share any critical observations, reflections, or interesting points your grade level teachers had about their work and/or student behavior and classroom management.

What help does your grade level or the individual teachers need to improve upon their dealings with specific student behaviors or meeting your SMART goal?

**PLEASE RETURN BY FRIDAY EVERY OTHER WEEK TO THE ADMINISTRATION OFFICE  
ALONG WITH YOUR GRADE LEVEL BEHAVIORAL TRACKING SPREADSHEET! THANK YOU**

## A.10: Survey for the Celebration of Learning

**SMART Decisions for Student Behavior***Celebration of Learning Workshop Survey*

Thank you for your attendance and participation in this workshop! As we begin this initiative at your school, you can provide assistance through this survey. Please answer each question honestly and do not place your name onto the survey. The results of this survey will help the school and the presenter to guide this initiative, improve upon the delivery of the content of this program, and aid in providing any answers to your questions and/or needs for more information or resources.

**1.** Please Circle the Grade Level You Teach In:

K    1    2    3    4    5    6

On questions 2-5, please rank your level of agreement with each question on a scale of 1- Strongly Disagree, 2- Disagree, 3- Neutral, 4- Agree, or 5- Strongly Agree

**2.** This workshop taught me something new about what my peers are doing to deal with student behaviors.

1    2    3    4    5

**3.** This workshop helped me to further understand the use of our learning communities to improve student behavior.

1    2    3    4    5

**4.** This workshop allowed me to collaborate with peers from across the school to discuss school-wide disciplinary concerns

1    2    3    4    5

**5.** This workshop challenged me to think about my school and its needs to overall improvement

1    2    3    4    5

**5.** Please answer Briefly: What discoveries, questions, concerns, or insights about students and student behavior came to mind in this workshop.

*Please leave this survey at your table and THANK YOU  
for your participation!*

Appendix B: Staff Perceptions of Student Behavior Survey

**STAFF PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT BEHAVIOR SURVEY**  
 Revised and used by permission from a study by Martin, Linfoot, & Stephenson  
 (1999)

**SECTION ONE**

1. What grade level do you mainly teach? *(please select one)*

- K-3 General Classroom
- 4-6 General Classroom

2. How many years have you been teaching?

- 0-5 years
- 6+ years

**SECTION TWO**

In this section we would like to know about the types of behaviors in your classroom that may prove more difficult to manage. For each question, we would like you to circle the number in Column A which describes how concerned you are about that particular behavior. In Column B we would like you to circle the number which indicates the amount of additional support you might need in dealing with that particular behavior. If the behavior does not occur in your classroom, then just circle **NA** (Not Applicable)

<b>CHILD'S BEHAVIOR:</b>	<b>A. MY LEVEL OF CONCERN</b>				<b>B. SUPPORT NEEDED</b>				<b>NA</b>
	<i>Not at all</i>	<i>Some what</i>	<i>Quite</i>	<i>Extremely</i>	<i>Not at all</i>	<i>A little</i>	<i>Some</i>	<i>A lot</i>	
A Demands must be met immediately/cannot wait for attention	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	NA



B	Disrupts the activities of others	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	N A
C	Doesn't remain on-task for a reasonable time	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	N A
D	Excessive demands for teacher's attention/doesn't work independently	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	N A
E	Distractibility or attention span a problem/does not listen	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	N A
F	Argues when reprimanded or corrected	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	N A
G	Leaves their assigned are in the classroom without permission	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	N A
H	Ignores the feelings of others	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	N A
I	Does not get along well with other children	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	N A
J	Does not follow established class rules	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	N A
K	Expresses anger inappropriately	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	N A
L	Is physically aggressive with	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	N A

	others/bullies									
M	Damages others' property	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	N A
N	Uses obscene language or gestures	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	N A

***PLEASE TURN OVER TO SECTION THREE***

### **SECTION THREE**

When we feel concerned about difficult behavior in our classes, we sometimes look for information, advice, or help from others. Here is a list of some support sources that you may have used in the past when you have experienced some difficult behavior in your class. Please tell us how often, if ever, you have used these support sources by *circling* the appropriate number.

	<b>SUPPORT USED</b>	<i>Never used</i>	<i>Sometimes used</i>	<i>Frequently used</i>
A	Other class teachers	0	1	2
B	Principal or other executive	0	1	2
C	School counselor	0	1	2
D	In-service/professional development	0	1	2
E	Books/videos, other published material	0	1	2
F	Friend/family member	0	1	2
G	University courses/staff	0	1	2
H	Parents	0	1	2
I	Internet resources such as websites, social networking, newsgroups, and/or email	0	1	2
J	School staff meeting	0	1	2
K	Use of CPI Crisis Team Member or group	0	1	2

***PLEASE TURN OVER TO SECTION FOUR***

#### **SECTION FOUR**

Many of us use different methods to deal with difficult behavior in our classes. Here is a list of ways some teachers might deal with behavior that is a concern to them. Please tell

us how often, if at all, you might use each method in the list by *checking* the appropriate number.

<b>TO DEAL WITH BEHAVIOR THAT IS A CONCERN TO ME I HAVE</b>		<i>Never used</i>	<i>Sometimes used</i>	<i>Frequently used</i>
A	Talked it over with the child	0	1	2
B	Ignored the bad behavior	0	1	2
C	Verbally reprimanded the child	0	1	2
D	Tried to teach better behavior	0	1	2
E	Used praise to encourage better behavior	0	1	2
F	Sent the child to the corner/back of the room etc.	0	1	2
G	Sent the child out of class (time out)	0	1	2
H	Removed privileges (eg: Loss of recess or field trip)	0	1	2
I	Detained the child	0	1	2
J	Contacted child's parents	0	1	2
K	Sent the child to the Principal/executive	0	1	2
L	Consulted with school/district social worker	0	1	2

<b>TO DEAL WITH BEHAVIOR THAT IS A CONCERN TO ME I HAVE</b>		<i>Never used</i>	<i>Sometimes used</i>	<i>Frequently used</i>
M	Used seating arrangement	0	1	2
N	Adapted curriculum to suit student needs	0	1	2
O	Used token economies	0	1	2
P	Used conflict resolution methods	0	1	2
Q	Called class meeting or discussion	0	1	2
R	Implemented peer support program	0	1	2
S	Used behavior modification	0	1	2
T	Referred students for or given Corporal Punishment (Spanking)	0	1	2

In summary, I am confident with the way I manage classroom behavior and difficulties as they arise (*please select one*)

Strongly disagree	1
Disagree	2
Neither disagree nor agree	3
Agree	4
Strongly agree	5