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Implementation of Positive Behavior Intervention and Support at the High School Level

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by

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Dr. Stephen A. Sherblom, Dissertation Chair	11/18/15 Date
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Dr. Lisa Powers, Committee Member	11/18/15 Date

Declaration of Originality

I do hereby declare and attest to the fact that this is an original study based solely upon my own scholarly work here at Lindenwood University and that I have not submitted it for any other college or university course or degree here or elsewhere.

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Abstract

With schools having an ever-increasing interest in reducing acts of violence and reducing the incidence of out-of-school suspension, new interventions are constantly being sought. How the program is implemented can play a significant role in program effectiveness. Durlak (1998) found that many evaluation methods did not consider the implementation process because they were done after the implementation of the program. Whether an evidence-based intervention would have a positive effect depended on closely following the details of the implementation process (Durlak, 1998). This study was motivated by four research questions: (a) Was the process used to implement Positive Behavior Intervention and Support at a suburban high school? (b) Were the seven components for Positive Behavior Intervention and Support program development identified by Colvin addressed? (c) What are the adaptations that need to be made to make Positive Behavior Intervention and Support appropriate for high school students? and (d) Do staff members feel Positive Behavior Intervention and Support is having an impact on discipline at the high school level? The purpose of the study was to (a) Document how Positive Behavior Intervention and Support was implemented in a suburban high school, (b) Explore unique challenges at the high school and how the challenges are met, (c) Document the impact on discipline, school culture, teacher perception and (d) Determine if staff members feel Positive Behavior Intervention and Support is having an impact on discipline. The qualitative method is employed to explore the research questions. Staff members at the suburban high school in the study completed an 18-question survey using an online survey tool. Data were also gathered with six staff members who volunteered to participate in the face-to-face interviews. The

online survey tool Survey Monkey was used to gather the data. The findings from the 18 survey questions supported the responses that provided the evidence that implementation processes were followed. The face-to-face interviews allowed the interviewees to share their personal perspectives. The themes that surfaced from the survey questions and the face-to-face interviews were similar. The importance of staff buy-in was a frequent theme that is repeated in the surveys and the interviews. Communication was another common theme. The study highlighted recommendations such as the importance of student involvement at the high school level and student participation of the leadership team for any new initiative that is being implements. Understanding the factors that can influence successful implementation was one of the most important findings of the study.

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Chapter One

Introduction

At the time of this writing, there was an ever-increasing interest in school safety across the nation. With the growing demands for safer schools, there has been more attention on acts of school violence, playground "bullies," and student victimization (Sugai & Horner, 2002). The Center for Disease Control (CDC, 2014) defined school violence as youth violence that occurs on school property, on the way to or from school or school-sponsored events, or during a school-sponsored event. The CDC (2014) further indicated that incidents may include various acts such as bullying, slapping, or hitting that may cause emotional or physical harm. Urban and suburban school districts have been looking for ways to decrease the number of disruptions to the learning environment. Rose, Gallup, and Elam (1997) indicated that while isolated instances of violence contribute to the perception of school violence, community stakeholders are concerned with the perception of the lack of discipline and control in schools. As a result of this perception, schools established policies that tried to increase discipline and control. Schools implemented "get tough" practices to deal with disobedience (Lewis & Sugai, 1999).

Sugai and Horner (2002) defined five elements of this "get tough" philosophy, (a) repeating and restating consequences, (b) increasing the averseness of consequences, (c) establishing a bottom line or zero tolerance level, (d) excluding the student from school with out-of-school suspension, and (e) offering alternative ways of high school (p. 25). However, when the initial policies proved ineffective, schools often responded by "getting tougher." That is, they invested in other security methods (e.g., metal detectors)

and punitive measures (e.g., zero tolerance policies that result in expulsion) that actually have little impact on changing student behavior (Skiba & Peterson, 2000). Skiba and Peterson (2000) defined the term "zero tolerance" ("ZT") as the group of policies that lead to severe punishment no matter how minor the offence. The approach is designed to treat all offenders the same and show an intolerance for students that would break the rules of the school (Skiba & Peterson, 1999). Reactive solutions or punitive consequences for inappropriate behavioral concerns are often viewed as relatively successful for the short term in schools. These aversive consequences are least effective with severe problems and do little to change student behavior for the long term (Sugai et al., 2010). In response to community demands, school districts regularly looked for programs that promised to bring about the desired changes.

The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) of the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) recommended the following solution to address the concerns of the community.

> The 1997 amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) introduced the requirement that individualized education program (IEP) teams consider the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports, and other strategies, to address the behavior of a child with disabilities whose behavior impedes the child's learning or that of others. (Federal Register, U. S. Department of Education, 2008, p. 44230)

In response, the OSEP funded the Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS Center I) in 1998 to assist State Educational Agencies (SEAs) and Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) to address this new statutory

requirement (Federal Register, U. S. Department of Education, 2008, p. 44230). PBIS Center 1 adapted the mental health model for use in schools to address behavioral problems. A framework was developed that consisted of three levels of intervention: primary, secondary, and tertiary. The signature pyramid represents the three-tiered model (Lane, Kalberg, & Menzies, 2009, Lewis & Sugai, 1999).

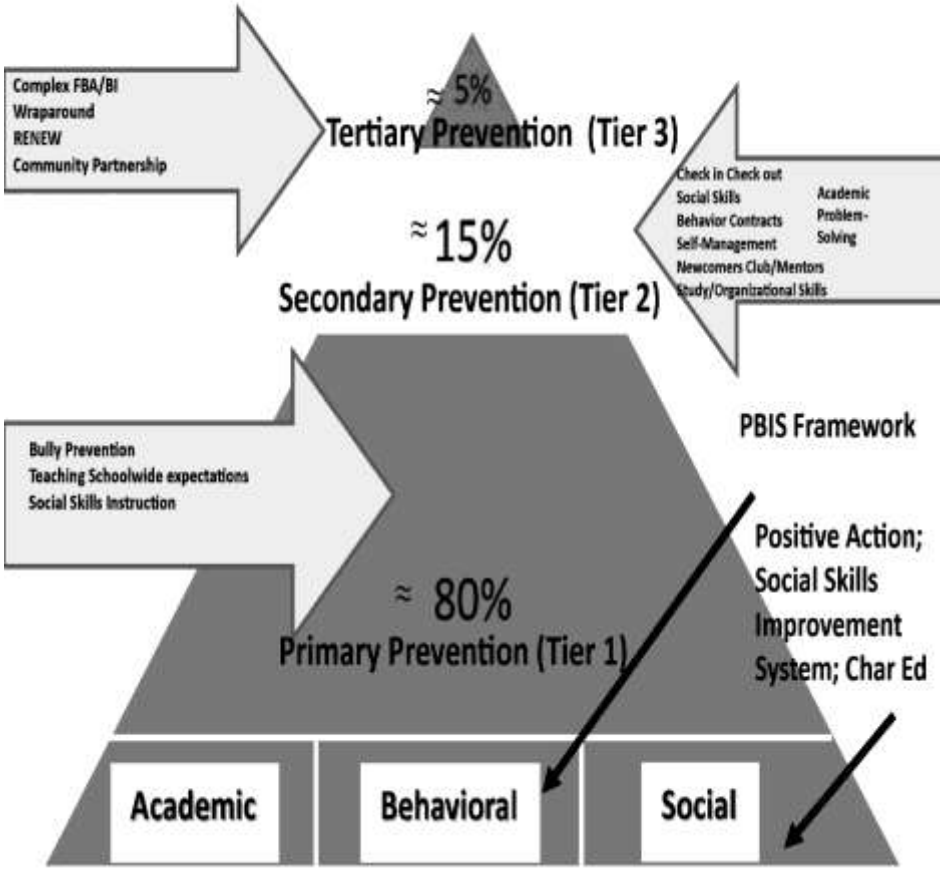

Figure 1. School-wide positive behavior support pyramid. Adapted from Lewis and Sugai, 1999; and Lane et al., 2009.

Primary preventions, Tier 1, are system-wide strategies that support the appropriate behavior of all students in the school or program. Classroom Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) lessons presented to all students, and

preventative practices that involve all students are examples of Tier 1 interventions. Secondary interventions, Tier 2, are targeted interventions for students at risk for behavioral problems. Check and connect, and check-in/check-out are examples of Tier 2 interventions. There are two components involved with check and connect. The 'check' component refers to the process where mentors systematically monitor identified student performance variables (e.g., absences, tardies, behavioral referrals, grades). The 'connect' component refers to mentors providing one-to-one, interventions to help students solve problems, build skills, and enhance competence (Institute on Community Integration, 2016). Check-in/check-out is another example of a Tier 2 intervention that consists of students daily checking in with an adult at the start of school. The student retrieves a sheet with predetermined goals. Teachers provide feedback on the sheet throughout the day. At the end of the day the student checks out with an adult, and the takes the sheet home to be signed (PBIS World, 2016). The sheet is returned the following morning at check in. Tier 3, are the most intensive and robust of the tiered intervention systems.

Tier 3 consists of individualized interventions and functional behavioral assessments for students exhibiting more serious behavior problems. While PBIS was initiated by the Office of Special Education, the target group for implementation was not limited to students with diagnosed disabilities; IEPs (Federal Register, U. S. Department of Education, 2008, p. 44231). PBIS Center I worked to identify the program components that form the bases of the tiered model. PBIS Center I developed the components to address training, coaching and leadership. In order to continue the work

that was started in 1997, PBIS Center II was created (Federal Register, U. S. Department of Education, 2008).

In order to continue the work of PBIS Center I, PBIS Center II was funded in 2003 to strengthen the evidence based PBIS framework. PBIS Center II continued the work of developing and refining the concept of tiered interventions with the implementation of the primary, secondary, and tertiary interventions in schools and programs. While PBIS Center I focused on identification of the program components, PBIS Center II evaluated, documented, and disseminated information on the implementation of PBS components identified during PBIS Center I. PBIS Center II also faced the challenge of providing technical assistance to State Education Agencies (SEA) and Local Education Agencies (LEA) to develop their capacity to implement and sustain the components in schools and programs (Federal Register, U.S. Department of Education, 2008).

Sugai et al. (2000) indicated that School Wide Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (SWPBIS) is characterized as a

> problem solving and action planning process. School leadership teams use this process to (a) review information or data about their school; (b) develop measurable and realistic short and long-term objectives and outcomes; (c) select practices that have demonstrated efficacy in achieving those outcomes, and (d) establish systems to enable adaptation of practices and preparation of implementers for the most effective, efficient, and relevant use of those practices. (p. 15)

Sugai and Simonsen (2012) further described PBIS as an implementation framework. The framework was designed to enhance two areas: academic and social behavioral outcomes. The use of data is emphasized for making informed decisions and measuring implementation fidelity. Expanding on the discussion of social behavioral outcomes, Putnam, McCart, Griggs, and Choi (2009) raised the question of culturally appropriate interventions that considered the unique and individualized learning histories of all who participated (students with problem behaviors, their parents/caregivers and families, teachers, administrators, community advocates and agents, etc.) in the PBS process (p. 456).

Background of the Study

School districts across the country regularly implement new programs and practices. The programs are often introduced with a high level of excitement and enthusiasm. However, all too often, these programs are short lived without any evidence as to the source of the failure. The researcher in this study, participated in the implementation of PBIS at the elementary level in the late 1990's in a suburban school district. Over a five-year period, the program was implemented in each of the six elementary schools within the district. While discipline trends remained stable at the elementary level in the schools that had implemented PBIS, slight increases were noted at the middle and high school levels where PBIS had not been implemented. The increase in discipline referrals and suspensions, while slight, supported the expansion of PBIS to the middle and high school levels being considered for PBIS implementation. In addition, as students moved to the middle school and high school levels, administration wanted to continue what had been taught at the previous levels.

Program implementation is often fraught with contradictions. In many cases, the basis of the contradiction is with the inconsistent use of the term implementation. Authors in literature defined the term implementation differently. Implementation may mean "used" in a general sense or "put into effect" with specific reference to a program or practice. Other times, the term implementation may refer to a set of methods to purposefully help others make use of a program or practice on a broad scale (Fixsen, Naoom, Blase, Friedman, & Wallace, 2005). Numerous authors agreed that implementation of a program is a challenging and complex process. Fixsen et al. (2005) said that the challenges of implementation outweighs the work involved in developing the practice or programs themselves (p. 4). Fixsen et al. (2005) defined implementation as a "specific set of activities designed to put into practice an activity or program of known dimensions" (p. 5). Fixsen et al. maintained, "To qualify as an implementation, the process must be purposeful with a specific set of activities" (p. 5).

The study focused on the practices followed in the implementation of the PBIS framework in a suburban high school located in the central corridor of St. Louis County. At the time of this study, the school district in this study had approximately 3,200 students enrolled in six elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. The 2009 MODESE Accountability Report Card indicated that the district was 1.5% Asian, 84.8% African-American, 1.3% Hispanic, .4% Indian, and 12% Caucasian. There were approximately 300 general education teachers, the average years of teacher experience was 14, and 50.3% of teachers had a master degree or higher. The student teacher ratio in the district was 15:1 and the student to administrator ratio was 151:1. The high school

had a graduation rate of 83.8% as compared to the state average of 85% Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education [MODESE], 2009)..

Furthermore, the MODESE School Accountability Report Card indicated that 60% of the students received free and/or reduced meals, 156 students were enrolled as homeless, and 20% of the student population received special education services. The district had full accreditation but had two elementary schools that were considered in need of improvement as defined by No Child Left Behind (Wendell, 2004).

The student population was 85% African-American, while the community in which the district is located did not reflect the same ethnic ratio as that of the school district. While this phenomenon had not been researched, it is speculated that the socioeconomic and religious diversity of the community may have led to many of the children in the district attending private schools.

Table 1

District Demographic Data

Year	Total Enrollment	Asian %	Black %	Hispanic %	Indian %	White %	Free or Reduced-Priced Lunch
2009	3,213	1.5	84.8	1.3	.4	12	59.3
2010	3,188	1.2	83.4	1.5	.3	12.2	63.3
2011	3,049	1.5	82.2	2.0	.4	12.5	60
2012	3,024	1.5	82.2	2.8	.3	12.5	62.3
2013	3,016	1.4	82.5	2.3	.2	12.6	66.3
2014	3,027	1.4	83.5	2.6	.1	11.5	67.7

Note. From the MODESE School Accountability Report Card (2014).

Since 2009, the district has experienced a steady decline in enrollment. The table also illustrates that the percentage of students receiving free and reduced meals had

increased. More specifically, Table 2 demonstrates that the high school demographic data shows a steady decline in student enrollment. Table 2 also shows that there has been a limited ethnic shift in the district.

Table 2

High School Demographic Data

Year	Total Enrollment	Asian %	Black %	Hispanic%	Indian %	White %	Free or Reduced-Priced Lunch
2009	1,034	. 50	90.1	. 70	. 40	8.3	54.6
2010	1,055	. 70	90.4	. 60	. 40	8.0	59.9
2011	928	. 50	89.1	. 80	. 40	9.2	55.4
2012	886	. 80	87.5	1.9	. 50	9.1	61.7
2013	823	1. 0	87.1	1.5	. 40	9.6	62.0
2014	823	. 70	89.2	1.8	. 0	7.8	63.7

Note. From the MODESE School Accountability Report Card (2009).

Schools across the country were plagued with an increase in violent behaviors that created safety concerns for students, parents, and school staff members. Alarmed community members, students, and government officials expected the school community to respond to the concerns. "Lying, theft, fire setting, aggression, vandalism, truancy, and running away" (McCurdy, Mannella, & Eldridge, 2003, p. 158) are just a few of the antisocial behaviors identified that can interfere with normal academic development causing a student's academic success to be interrupted and leading school officials and often times the community to label these students "unmanageable" (McCurdy et al., 2003).

The “get tough” approach to addressing problem behaviors is often seen in high schools. The approach can range from excluding the student from the “privilege” of attending school through out-of-school syspensions and expulsions, and offering alternative ways of completing the high school experience in an alternative setting” (Sugai & Horner, 2002, p. 26). Table 3 illustrates the district discipline incidents that have occurred over a six-year period in the suburban school district that is the focus of this study, as reported by MODESE. In contrast, Table 4 illustrates the building discipline incidents during the same time period. Discipline data is an important factor in the PBIS framework as data driven decision-making is a significant part of the foundation of the framework.

As discipline concerns in urban and suburban settings continued to increase, there was an increasing demand for alternatives to traditional discipline procedures that were usually punitive in nature. Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) had been viewed as a popular alternative to traditional discipline practices (Safran & Oswald, 2003). Interventions within the PBIS umbrella are built on the foundations of applied behavior analysis (ABA) and reformatted into a more positive collaborative and holistic framework (Safran & Oswald, 2003).

PBIS interventions are designed to be proactive to prevent problem behavior by altering a situation before problems escalate, and to concurrently teach appropriate alternatives (Carr et al., 2002).

Table 3

District Discipline Data

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Number of Incidents	126	155	134	149	142	135
Incident Rate (per 100 students)	3.9	4.9	4.4	4.9	4.7	4.5
Number of Offenses by Type						
Alcohol	10	6	20	22	23	12
Drug	0	1	0	0	0	0
Tobacco	3	0	3	1	0	0
Violent Act	43	65	56	86	71	58
Weapon	16	17	12	15	5	15
Other	54	66	43	45	41	50
Number of Removals by Type						
In-School Suspension	0	1	0	0	1	5
Out of School Suspension	126	154	134	149	141	130
Expulsions	0	0	0	0	0	0
Length of Removal						
10 Consecutive Days	115	132	128	129	110	132
More than 10 Consecutive Days	11	23	6	20	32	3

Note. From MODESE School Accountability Report Card (2009).

Table 4

Building Discipline Data

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Enrollment	1,034	1,055	928	886	823	823
Total Number of incidents	78	106	83	89	83	50
Incident Rate (per 100 students)	7.5	10	8.9	10	10.1	6.1
Number of Offenses by Type						
Alcohol	9	6	12	18	21	7
Drug	0	1	0	0	0	0
Tobacco	3	0	3	1	0	0
Violent Act	28	43	34	37	32	17
Weapon	4	8	4	5	0	3
Other	34	48	30	28	28	23
Number of Removals by Type						
In-school Suspension	0	1	0	0	0	0
Out of School Suspension	78	105	83	89	83	50
Expulsion	0	0	0	0	0	0
Length of Removal						
10 Consecutive days	78	95	79	80	52	49
More than 10 consecutive Days	0	11	4	9	31	11

Note. MODESE School Accountability Report Card (2009).

PBIS implementation at the elementary and middle school levels has been documented. However, there has not been the same level of investigation and guidance for implementation at the high school level. How PBIS can be implemented at the high school level has not been as widely demonstrated or documented as that at the elementary and middle school levels (Safran & Oswald, 2003). Implementation studies have shown that PBIS at the high school level may need to be adapted to accommodate three areas specific to the high school level: (a) unique organizational and structural features, (b) progressive social and developmental aspects of adolescence, (c) variation in how problem behaviors and social responsibility are defined and considered at the secondary level (Sugai, Flannery, & Bohanon-Edmonson, 2004). Additionally, Sugai and Horner (2002) found that School-wide PBS is a process that can help schools to identify, adopt, implement, and evaluate evidence-based interventions.

Statement of the Problem

As school districts worked to attain the achievement goals established by NCLB (2001), any interference with the learning and teaching environment had to be addressed. NCLB had four focus areas: (a) a high priority on accountability of educational results for all students, (b) the use of research-based practices, (c) closing the achievement gap by race and class, and (4) reducing the number of children identified for special education services (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). The increase in problem behaviors in schools across the country cannot be ignored. Disruptive school environments not only impact learning, they also impact the culture and climate of the school, which can affect students and staff. There are many factors that were identified as important to improving the learning environment for students and the work environment for teachers, but creating

a supportive and safe school environment was identified as a critical to achieving the goal of student success (U.S. Department of Education, 2004).

Adequate yearly progress was an integral aspect of NCLB. Standardized testing instruments measure student-demonstrated academic success. Assessments focused on reading, and math achievement at targeted grade levels. The results of achievement testing determined individual school success and progress. Schools were rated and funded based on the testing outcomes (U. S. Department of Education, 2004).

School districts formed focus groups, and conducted forums to discuss the growing problem of school violence. High schools were the focus of many of the discussions, but many of the intervention programs did not had a focus on the secondary level. Dolan's Fight Free Schools (Dolan & Wynn, 1998) was a program developed to address discipline concerns in schools. While this program was implemented in the suburban school district in this study at the elementary level, the program did not specifically target concerns at the secondary level. School districts attempted multiple programs to address discipline concerns. However, there was little to no regard as to the implementation process. The researcher in this study sought to examine the ways in which the implementation components were used to implement PBIS in the high school setting (Sugai et al., 2004).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research study was to

(a) document how PBIS was implemented in this suburban high school (compared to "best practices" in the literature)

(b) explore unique challenges at the high school level and how these challenges were met

(c) document the impact on discipline, school culture, and teacher perceptions

(d) determine if staff members feel PBIS is having an impact on discipline.

Importance of the Study

Colvin (2007) identified the components for implementing PBIS school-wide. The researcher believed there was a need to determine if the PBIS implementation plan was followed in this suburban high school. The researcher explored the implementation process in an effort to identify what could be done to improve the process; identified the adaptations that may make PBIS more appropriate for the high school level while identifying implementation challenges that were particularly relevant at the high school level; and investigated what aspects of the PBIS model were appropriate for high school students and what aspects of the program may not be appropriate for the high school level. The information gained from this study may contribute to program implementation practices of PBIS at this high school each year it is implemented, as well as other secondary schools.

Limitations of the Study

Limitations are influences that the researcher cannot control. This researcher saw the sample size as a limitation of the study. While the possible number of questionnaire participants at the school in the study was 72, 54 of the staff members initiated the survey with 53 completing the survey.

Research Questions

In this study, there were four research questions: (a) What was the process used to

implement PBIS at a suburban high school? (b) Were the seven components for PBIS program development identified by Colvin (2007) addressed? (c) What are the adaptations that need to be made to make PBIS appropriate for high school students? and (d) Do staff members feel PBIS is having an impact on discipline at the high school?

Definition of Terms

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) **–** Demonstrated academic success as measured through standardized testing instruments (Wendell, 2004).

Evidence-based practices **–** Refers to strategies, processes, and curricula for which information exists to support adoption and sustained use (Office of Special Education Programs, 2010).

Evidence-based programs **–** A collection of practices that are done within known parameters and with accountability to the consumers and funders of those practices (Fixsen et al., 2005).

High school – High schools are environments that serve the educational needs of students in grades 9-12 (Sugai et al., 2004).

Implementation **–** "Implementation is defined as a specific set of activities designed to put into practice an activity or program of known dimensions" (Fixsen et al., 2005, p. 5). According to this definition, "implementation processes are purposeful and are described in sufficient detail such that independent observers can detect the presence and strength of the specific set of activities related to implementation" (Fixsen et al., 2005, p. 5).

No Child Left Behind Act **(**NCLB) of 2001– required all schools, districts/local education agencies (LEAs) and states to show that students are making AYP. NCLB

required states to establish attendance/graduation rates, and participation rates (U.S. Department of Education, 2004).

Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS), Positive Behavior Support (PBS), and School-Wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS) - The terms PBS, PBIS and SWPBS are used interchangeably in this study as well as in the literature.

> SWPBS is characterized as a problem solving and action planning process through which school leadership teams (a) review information or data about their school; (b) develop measurable and realistic short and long term objectives and outcomes; (c) select practices that have demonstrated efficacy in achieving those outcomes; and (d) establish systems to enable adaption of practices and preparation of implementers for the most effective, efficient, and relevant use of those practices. (Sugai, Horner et al., 2000, p. 2)

Summary

Implementation of the PBIS framework was identified by a suburban high school as a means to address the increase in out-of-school suspensions and decrease the disruptions to the learning environment. The need for intervention was based on the data, which documented 78 out-of-school suspensions in 2009 and 105 out-of-school suspensions in 2010. The out-of-school suspensions translated into a loss of classroom instructional time, a decrease in average daily attendance rates, and a negative impact on school climate. PBIS is an evidence-based application of a behaviorally based systems approach to enhance the capacity of schools, families, and communities to design effective learning environments. It is an implementation framework that is designed to enhance both the academic and behavioral outcomes for students (Sugai & Simonsen,

2012). A critical aspect of PBIS involves changing the existing discipline system. Most school districts follow a reactive, punitive system of discipline. PBIS is a proactive, positive approach to discipline that teaches appropriate social skills (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012).

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The implementation process of the school-wide PBIS framework has been studied from multiple viewpoints. There are medical interpretations, community based agency interpretations, and the mental health arena. The intent of this review of the literature is to examine implementation and more specifically the implementation processes for school-wide PBIS from the educational perspective at the high school level.

Implementation

The study of implementation processes is a growing field of research. Many of the early studies had a focus on health care and human services. The science related to how to effectively implement evidence-based practices and programs has not advanced at the same rate as the science related to developing evidence-based programs (Fixsen et al., 2005). A major challenge of studying implementation centers on defining and using the term implementation. The National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) defined "implementation as a specific set of activities designed to put into practice an activity or program of known dimensions" (Blasé & Fixsen, 2013, para. 1). The NIRN indicated that by definition, "implementation processes are purposeful and are described in sufficient detail such that independent observers can detect the presence and strength of the specific set of activities related to implementation" (Blasé & Fixsen, 2013, para. 1). The NIRN webpage identified two points that are essential when addressing implementation. The two sets of activities are intervention-level activities and implementation-level activities. There are also two sets of outcomes: intervention outcomes and implementation outcomes (Blasé & Fixsen, 2013, para. 3).

In the literature, in addition to discussions related to implementation, two other concepts were introduced, implementation research and implementation science. Eccles and Mittman (2006) presented their definition of implementation research as "the scientific study of methods to promote the systematic uptake of research findings and other evidence-based practices into routine practice, and hence to improve the quality and effectiveness of health services and care" (p. 1). At the annual National Institute of Health Conference on Implmentation and Dissemination, implementation was defined as the "use of strategies to adopt and integrate evidence-based health interventions and change practice patterns within specific settings" (National Institutes of Health, 2016, para. 1). Fogary International Center broadened the definition of implementation to include implementation science that is defined as "the study of methods to promote the integration of research findings and evidence into healthcare policy and practice. It seeks to understand the behavior of healthcare professionals and other stakeholders as a key variable in the sustainable uptake, adoption, and implementation of evidence-based interventions" (Fixsen et al., 2005, para. 1). Further, the definition of implementation looked at a specific set of activities. The activities were not established by chance, they were purposeful and provide specific details as to allow the implementer to be able to identify the specific set of activities (Fixsen et al., 2005).

In the research conducted by Fixsen, Blase, Naoom, Van Dyke, and Wallace (2009) six stages of implementation were identified; exploration, program installation, initial implementation, full operation, innovation, and sustainability. Exploration and adoption are identified as stage one. This stage involved exploring the needs of the community to determine the evidence-based practices and program needs. Social

marketing methods are important at this stage. Social marketing involved using the data to determine the needs of the community and identifying the appropriate interventions (Fixsen et al., 2009). During installation, stage two, the decision is made to move forward with the evidence-based intervention. Funding, the human resources, policy development, and outcome expectations are four of the resources that need to be identified early on in the process (Fixsen et al., 2009). Stage three, initial implementation, is considered the change stage. Training that leads to changes in the skill levels of the staff, development of organizational capacity, and changes in organizational culture are factors that are impacted during program installation (Joyce & Showers, 2002). At stage four the intervention is in full operation—implementation has occurred. The new learning, community practices, policies, and procedures are all in place and have become a part of the culture and is an accepted practice (Fixsen et al., 2009). During the implementation process, some of the changes will be undesirable and will warrant changes that need to take place with the basic model. Winter and Szulanski (2001) noted, "Adaptations made after a model had been implemented with fidelity were more successful than modifications made before full implementation" (as cited in Fixsen et al., 2005, p. 17). The final stage discussed by Fixsen et al. (2009) was sustainability. Sustainability is the goal of implementation. Sustainability is defined as the long-term existence of an intervention. Sustainability is achieved when the intervention becomes institutionalized.

Goggins (1986) reported on implementation from a different perspective. Goggins (1986) found that when examining the research on implementation, the purposes and outcomes are reported differently. Paper implementation, process implementation,

and performance implementation were identified by Goggins (1986) as three perspectives from which implementation can be examined. First, when new policies and procedures are written with the adoption of an innovation as the rationale for the policies and procedural changes paper implementation occurs. Paper implementation often occurs when an outside group monitors the implementation process with a focus on the paper trail. Paperwork alone does not equal putting innovations into practice.

Process implementation is the second implementation process presented by Goggins (1986). Goggins (1986) described process implementation as putting new operating procedures in place. The processes included training workshops, providing supervision, as well as the changing to information reporting forms, with the adoption of an innovation as the rationale for the procedure as process implementation. The third and final form of implementation identified by Goggins (1986) is performance implementation. Performance implementation is defined as putting procedures and processes in place in such a way that the identified functional components of change are used with good effect for consumers.

A third perspective on implementation presented by Sugai and Horner (2002) is the development of structures and processes to aid in the sustainability of the practice. The five steps that characterize the implementation of a SWPBIS approach according to Sugai and Horner (2002) included (a) the establishment of the leadership team, (b) school-wide agreements and supports, (c) data-based action plans, (d) high fidelity of implementation, and (e) data-based monitoring. The establishment of a leadership team was identified as step one. Team members should meet the five criterion suggested by Sugai and Horner (2002): (a) be respected by their colleagues, (b) be representative of the

school staff, (c) have behavioral competence, (d) have a means of communicating with the staff, and (e) be endorsed by the principal. The school principal is a critical member of the leadership team due to his or her leadership skills and authority to make decisions (2002). A study by Richter, Lewis, and Hager (2011) found that there is a viable connection between the research associated with principal leadership skills and practitioners in the field.

The second step that characterizes the implementation of SWPBS according to Sugai and Horner (2002) is securing school-wide agreements and supports. To increase the likelihood of staff agreement, the leadership team addresses three areas with the staff: (a) staff development, (b) a 3-4 year investment in the initiative, and (c) taking a "preventative and instructional" approach to behavior management and discipline (Sugai & Horner, 2002, p. 40). It was recommended that the action plan not be put into place until 80% of the staff support the three school-wide agreements and supports identified by Sugai and Horner (2002, p. 40). In addition to the three agreements and supports outlined, the authors listed fiscal supports, implementation materials, training opportunities, and time for collaboration as important supports (Sugai & Horner, 2002).

The third step that characterizes the implementation of a SWPBS is the development of a data based action plan. At this step in the process, the leadership team collected data to determine the needs of the school. Data types recommended for review are (a) attendance and tardy patterns; (b) office and discipline referrals; (c) detention, suspension, and expulsion rates; and (d) behavioral incidence data (Sugai & Horner, 2002). Data can also be collected through the use of self-assessments, surveys, or checklists. Sugai and his colleagues developed a self-assessment tool (Effective

Behavior Support Survey) that allowed school staff members to identify practices that are in place and areas that need to be improved (Lewis & Sugai, 1999; Sugai, Todd, & Horner, 2000).

According to Sugai and Horner (2002), the purpose of the data, based action plan is to improve one system related objective at a time. Often times, schools select the most troublesome area as a starting point. However, all systems should be addressed at some point in the process (school-wide, non-classroom settings, classrooms, and individual students). The PBS action plans are composed of six areas: (a) measurable outcomes, (b) a 1-3 year timeline of events, (c) participating and leadership level staff members, (d) specific activities that lead to measurable outcomes, (e) staff development and training, and (f) resource and support needs (Sugai & Horner, 2002).

The fourth step that characterizes the implementation of SWPBS according to Sugai and Horner (2002) is high fidelity of implementation. When an action plan has met all the criteria but failed to achieve the desired outcomes, the failure may be related to poor implementation fidelity (accuracy). Collecting the required data points but not using that data to make decisions is an example of poor implementation fidelity. Fidelity involves following through the process. Before attempting implementation, staff members should have a clear understanding of the plan, supports, and leadership that must be in place (Sugai & Horner, 2002).

The fifth step that characterizes the implementation of SWPBS according to Sugai and Horner (2002) is data based monitoring. Data based monitoring involves the establishment of data systems. As mentioned earlier, there are a number of data sources that help schools determine whether progress is being made. Office discipline referrals

(ODR) and attendance are just two examples of data sources that are collected by schools. Sugai and Horner (2002) indicated that three conditions must be satisfied to increase "confidence" in the data: (a) only collect data that will be used to answer questions about the action plan and evaluate progress; (b) develop processes and procedures to store, manipulate. and summarize the data; and (c) implement procedures to facilitate data based decision-making (Sugai & Horner, 2002).

Leadership's Impact on Implementation

Leadership is a critical element to the implementation of PBIS. According to Kasper (2005), there are four key points related to leadership at the high school level: (a) administrators must know the people they are inviting to be members of the team, (b) administrators should attend training sessions with the team as they are role models for the team members—their participation speaks to their level of commitment to the process, (c) administrators must be able to anticipate the needed resources and provide support for planning and meeting times (d) administrators need to keep the momentum going. Maintaining momentum involves building relationships. As the leader, the administrator's role is to empower staff members to develop their leadership skills. The importance of relationship building is central not only to the relationship between the administrator and teacher, but also between teacher and student. The administrator is also a role model for the tenents presented by the PBS model. Adminsitrative support takes many forms: providing guidance, securing resources both financial and material, as well as gaining stakeholder support (Kasper, 2005).

Conceptual Framework

The impact of the lack of a common language in research and studies with a focus on implementation has been documented by Fixsen et al. (2005). The work conducted by these researchers documented the problems related to a lack of a common language and the lack of a common framework as a way of thinking about and looking at program implementation. Fixsen et al. (2005) conducted an extensive review of the literature, which led to the identification of the conceptual framework. The framework is based on documented ideas from the field of computer programming and the creativity fields. From earlier works, the researchers arrived at a conceptual framework for implementation of well-defined programs and practices. As a result of the research by Fixsen et al. (2005), five essential components were identified that formed the foundation of the framework. Essential component number one is a source a "best example," "often a composite of the original practice or program that was developed and evaluated and the best features of attempted implementations of that practice or program" (p. 12). Essential component two is a destination "the individual practitioner and the organization that adopted, housed, supported, and funded the installation and ongoing use of an innovation" (p. 12). Essential component three is a communication link, or "an individual or group of individuals identified in the monograph that was reviewed as purveyors representing a program or practice who actively work to implement the defined practices or program with fidelity and good effect at an implementation site" (p. 12).

Essential component four is the development of a feedback mechanism. This component is defined as "a regular flow of reliable information about performances of individuals, teams, and organizations acted upon by relevant practitioners, managers, and

purveyors" (p. 12). The fifth and final essential component identified by Fixsen et al., (2005) operates within a sphere of influence, which is defined as "social economic, political, historical, and psychosocial factors that impinge directly or indirectly on people, organizations, or systems" (p. 12). An observation noted by Fixsen et al. (2005) was that ineffective programs can be implemented well since implementation components and outcomes are not affected by the quality of the program. When effective programs are implemented with fidelity, the possibility of positive outcomes is increased (Fixsen et al., 2005).

Understanding Implementation Research

Another perspective on implementation was presented by Durlak (1998). Durlak found that many evaluation methods do not consider the implementation process because they are done long after the implementation of the program. Whether an evidence-based intervention will have a positive effect may depend critically on closely following the details of the implementation process (Durlak, 1998). The implementation process is often overlooked and implementation details are not considered important. Research found that less than 5% of over 1,200 published prevention studies provided data on program implementation (Durlak, 1998, p. 6). When examining the success or failure of a program, implementation data were critical to accurately evaluating program results. Durlak's work found that "if implementation is not monitored, there is the potential for useful programs being unfairly rejected for the wrong reasons" (p. 6). To further illuminate the importance of implementation to program success, the term Type III error was coined to describe program evaluations that do not consider implementation (Scanlon et al., 1977).

Table 5

Prevention Studies Linking Implementation to Outcomes

Study	Type/Goal of Program	General Findings
Battistch, Schaps Watson & Solomon (1996)	Improve school practices, organization, climate	Only well-implemented programs has positive effects
Bolvin, Baker, Dusenbury, Bolvin, & Diaz (1995)	Drug prevention	Better implementation associated with stronger effects
Bolvin, & Dusenbury, Baker, James-Ortiz & Kerner (1989)	Drug Prevention	Only well-implemented programs had positive effects
Bush et al. (1989)	Health Education	Better implementation associated with stronger effects
Connell, Turner & Mason (1985)	Health Education	Better implementation associated with stronger effects
Greenwood, Terry, Arreaga-Mayer & Finney (1992)	Classwide peer tutoring	Better implementation associated with stronger effects
Hansen, Graham, Wolkenstein & Rohrbach (1991)	Alcohol prevention	Better implementation associated with stronger effects
McGraw et al. (1996)	CATCH: school-based health education	Better implementation predicted better outcomes
Pentz et al (1990)	Drug prevention	Only well-implemented programs has positive effects
Ross, Luepker, Nelson Saavedra & Hubbard (1991)	High school health education	Only well-implemented programs has positive effects
Taggart, Bush, Zuckerman & Theiss (1990)	Know Your Body health education program	Only well-implemented programs has positive effects
Tobler (1986)	Review of 143 drug prevention studies	Well-implemented programs achieved effect sizes 0. 34 greater than poorly-implemented programs

Note. From Prevention Studies (Durlak, 1998).

Durlak (1998) conducted a study linking implementation to program outcome. Durlak (1998) found that "prevention research offered two clear conclusions regarding

implementation: (a) implementation is variable across change agents and settings and is sometimes seriously compromised, and (b) level of implementation influences outcome" (Durlak, 1998, p. 7). Table 5 summarizes the results from multiple studies linking implementation and program outcomes as presented by Durlak (1998).

In summary, Durlak (1998) concluded that the research clearly documents the importance of program implementation to program success, and poor implementation can jeopardize program impact.

Positive Behavior Intervention and Support

The general focus of this research study was to examine implementation processes, but more specifically the study of PBIS implementation at the high school level. PBIS is an implementation framework or approach comprised of intervention practices and organizational systems (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012). The literature indicates that PBIS is not a model, but a specific set of practices, interventions, and systems change strategies. The framework is designed to enhance the adoption and implementation of a continuum of evidence-based interventions to achieve academically and behaviorally important outcomes for all students (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012, p. 1).

The *School-wide Positive Behavior Support Implementers' Blueprint and Self-Assessment* was a guide developed to aid state and local agencies in their efforts to implement positive behavior support in school settings. The Blueprint outlined six defining characteristics of PBIS: preventive, instructionally oriented, culturally responsive, function-based, systems implementation focused, and evidence-based (Office of Special Education, 2010). The multi-tiered pyramid, which has become the signature

symbol of the PBIS framework is the conceptualization of the three-tiered approach that emphasizes prevention (Lewis & Sugai, 1999).

Implementation of PBIS

Research documented that systems perspectives has been considered widely in other disciplines; however, implementation science had not been as widely applied to educational organizations (Fixsen & Blase, 2006). In education, the work at the National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) had been applied formally and systemically (Blasé & Fixsen, 2013; Fixsen, 2009: Fixsen & Blasé, 2006). This work had impacted educational systems in implementation fidelity, durability, sustainability, and scalability. Program focus has been placed on the following areas: (a) leadership coordination – management and implementation teams, (b) implementation drivers – coaching, professional development, (c) implementation phases – exploration to full implementation, and (d) practice and policy based decision making and planning.

The *SWPBS Implementers' Blueprint and Self-Assessment* (Office of Special Education, 2004) is a manual that has been developed to provide an organizational approach to implementation of evidence-based practices and systems. The implementation elements outlined in the blueprint consist of eight elements: (a) leadership team, (b) coordination, (c) funding, (d) visibility, (e) political support, (f) training capacity, (g) coaching capacity, (h) demonstration, and (i) evaluation (Office of Special Education, 2004). George and Kincaid (2008) indicated that while the SWPBS Implementers' *Blueprint and Self-Assessment* has value as an implementation tool, it does not describe the "how-to" of the implementation process (p. 20).

While planning is not noted by George and Kincaid (2008), in their article as one of the implementation elements, planning is a critical prerequisite to initiating any change process. The District Readiness Checklist is a tool developed from Florida's PBS Project, University of Florida, Tampa, Florida. The purpose of the assessment tool is to determine a district's capacity to implement PBS. The tool also communicated the prerequisites for program participation (George & Kincaid, 2008). A key aspect of the District Readiness Checklist is that it provided a measuable objective that can be used to assess current capacity for implementation (George & Kincaid, 2008). The development of a district action plan is conducted during planning meetings. The action plan outlines the following: (a) district personnel to be assigned to the team, (b) personnel to be assigned as coaches, and (c) the identification of resources. The following are short descriptions of the eight implementation elements outlined in the Florida PBS Project (George & Kincaid, 2008).

Leadership Team. Guiding the implementation process of the school district is the district leadership team. The district level leaderhip team may meet annually or biannually, but it provided the vision, leadership, and resources. The district leaderhip team is formed before the school-based leadership team is put into place. The building level team that is responsible for the school-wide positive behavior support activities (George & Kincaid, 2008).

Coordination. Coordination is the second implementation element identified by George and Kincaid (2008). The identification of a district coordinator is the responsibility of the district leadership team. The district coordinator oversees the day-to-day operation of SWPBS across the district. District coordinator responsibilities may

include managing district budgets, a liaison between regional officials and the district, scheduling training and district-level meetings, as well as securing additional funding (George & Kincaid, 2008).

Funding. The third implementation element as identified in the SWPBS Implementers' Blueprint and Self-Assessment s funding. Some of the areas requiring funding included: (a) school activities, (b) salary of a district coordinator, (c) time provided to school teams by coaches, (d) funds for participation in state and national conferences, and (e) state and national presenters for ongoing training (George & Kincaid, 2008)

Visibility. Visibility was the fourth element discussed by George and Kincaid (2008). These authors indicated that increasing awareness of PBS activities, maintaining communication with all stakeholders and increasing interst in expanding PBS was the purpose of building visability. Visability is critical to any initiative: therefore, the authors of this article have listed several strategies that can be used at the local and state levels: (a) newsletters; (b) features on school, district and state web sites; (c) school board, and partent teacher organization presentations; (d) coaches' trainings; and (e) presentations at administrators' meetings. The goal of visability is to get the word out about SWPBS. Highlighting the outcomes of SWPBS efforts was important. Sharing information will encourage a non-participating school to become active as well as strengthening internal support (George & Kincaid, 2008).

Political support. One area that was not often discussed or thought of as a factor impacting implementation of a program is political support. However, political support refers to the written or verbal commitment to SWPBS that is communicaed to school

administrator, personnel, parents, and students. Political support involves the development of a district policy statement endorsed by the leadership team and the school district leadership. Political support of SWPBS can lead to the support of other district initatives through the use of communication strategies that were listed earlier (George & Kincaid, 2008).

Training capacity. Training is an integral part of SWPBS. The need to decrease dependance on outside trainers has been discussed repeatedly in the literature (Sugai et al., 2010). It be determined whether supplying the trainers from inside the district or the state was feasable. It must also be determined there is a need for SWPBS training curriculum. George and Kincaid (2008) noted four elements of an effective training curriculum. They were very adamant that the curriculum should be (a) comprehensive, (b) provided in multiple formates, (c) organized, and (d) an accurte reflection of effective practice. They also indicated that the curriculum should address all aspects of PBS including the classroom, targeted group, individual student, and coaches' training. They suggested the use of training manuals, case examples, activities and references (George & Kincaid, 2008).

Coaching capacity. The seventh implementation element presented is coaching capacity. Coaching capacity refers to a schools' development of the systems to facilitate training and implementation efforts (Office of Special Education, 2004, p. 37). George and Kincaid (2008) added to that concept that "the coaches are school personnel who are released from some of their prior responsibilities to provide facilitation for the school-based PBS team" (p. 26). Ideally, coaches should have the following: (a) the freedom to move across schools, (b) understanding of the school-wide PBS process, (c) skills

necessary to facilitate teams effectively, (d) ability to attend training, (f) ability to report to the district coordinator, (g) ability to be the main contact person and liaison for the school-based team, and (h) the ability to collect evaluation data (p. 26).

Demonstrations and evaluation. Demonstration and evaluation were the eigth and nineth implementation elements. Demonstration sites are schools that are implementing SWPBS with fidelity and can be models for other schools in their districts as well as surrounding school districts. Additionally, the purpose of demonstration sites is to serve as models for training. They also serve as a model for team observation. A major characteristic of SWPBS is evaluation. The purpose of evaluation is to determine if SWPBS had been effective as well as to evaluate the fidelity of the implementation process. The evaluation process also gathered student data, and assessed other outcomes. The data includes academic, office discipline referrals in-school, and out-of-school suspensions. Evaluation data provides teams and districts the information needed to make data driven decisions. The reports that are generated from the evaluations are also reviewed by the district coordinator, the district, and building level leadership teams (George & Kincaid, 2008).

National Implementation Research Network (NIRN)

Research conducted at the NIRN as changed the direction of implementation of evidence-based practices in education to applications that are more formal and systematic (Blasé & Fixsen, 2013; Fixsen, 2009: Fixsen & Blasé, 2006). NIRN research has impacted educational systems leading them to become more aware of the importance of four areas (a) implementation fidelity, (b) durability, (c) sustainability, and (d) going-to-scale.

Implementation fidelity refers to the degree to which an intervention or program is delivered as intended. Understanding and measuring whether an intervention had been implemented with fidelity allows researchers and practitioners to view the how, and why an intervention worked, as well as to identify the lasting outcomes. Durability is the lasting outcome that is the result of sustained implementation of a practice while sustainability refers to the lasting, data-driven, long-term implementation of a practice at a level of fidelity that continued to produce valued outcomes (Han & Weiss, 2005) and finally scaling up. Fixsen (2009) stated,

> going-to-scale is more than simple implementation as the focus is not only on putting into pace an effective program in a new location. Additionally, scaling up may aim to (a) increase in the depth of a program by offering new and different services and/or (b) increase the number of recipients of a program. (p. 3)

Implementation Foundations

The SWPBS Implementers' Blueprint and Self-Assessment (Office of Special Education, 2010) guide presented 11 considerations that serve as the foundation for SWPBS implementation:

> (a) implementation is interactive and informing; (b) implementation involves stakeholders at multiple levels; (c) implementation occurs in phases; (d) sustainable implementation requires continuous regeneration; (e) implementation success is based on multiple criteria; (f) implementation selects scalable evidence-based practice; (g) practices must be implemented with integrity; (h) policy and practice inform each other; (i) implementation is systemic; (j) implementation

> decisions are based on responsiveness to intervention; and (k) implementation is team-based, strategic, action planning process. (p. 26)

The application of these elements is essential to implementation success. The work of the NIRN has led to a more formal and systematic implementation process of SWPBS in education (Office of Special Education, 2010). The SWPBS Implementer's Blueprint and Self-Assessment further presents a figure that represents the interconnection of four interactive elements that form the basis for effective implementation: (a) outcome, (b) practices, (c) data, and (d) systems. Outcome refers to academic and behavior targets that are endorsed and emphasized by students. The term practice refers to the interventions and strategies that are evidence-based. Data refers to information that is used to identify status, need for change, and effects of interventions. Finally, the term systems refers to the supports that are needed to enable the accurate and durable implementation of the practices of SWPBS (Office of Special Education, 2010).

Suggestions for Improving Implementation

Research by Durlak (1998) suggested steps that could be taken to improve general program implementation. The eight steps, not listed in a particular order of priority include (a) specify the essential ingredients of an intervention, (b) collaborate with change agents in field settings to tailor the program to the target setting, (c) obtain a clear commitment to administer the agreed-upon intervention, (d) train change agents to conduct the program effectively, (e) provide on-going supervision and consultation, (f) prepare for unexpected problems, (g) do pilot work, and (h) designate staff with responsibilities for implementation (p. 14). Research on implementation clearly indicated that implementation is frequently variable and imperfect in field settings. The research

clearly demonstrated that the level of implementation influences outcomes (Durlak, 1998).

As introduced earlier, implementation occurred in phases or stages. In the literature, there were various labels given to the implementation steps, however, in the Blueprint there were four measurable phases common to successful implementation (Office of Special Education, 2010). Phase 1 is exploration, which is defined as need, priority, agreements, resources and outcomes. At this point in the process, the need to be addressed was identified along with the core elements of an evidence-based practice that is to be implemented. Phase 2 is demonstration, which involves the adoption of the process by the local agency. At this stage data collection procedures are assessed to determine fidelity, outcome documentation and visibility. The third phase is elaboration. The objective of elaboration is to assess the factors that affected sustained implementation. Phase three considers evaluation questions, along with possibilities of replication, outcomes, and leadership support. Continuous regeneration or systems adoption is the final implementation phase. The focus at this phase is on determining implementation capacity, durability, and progress monitoring. The overall goal is to establish capacity (Office of Special Education, 2010).

As the study of evidence-based practices continued to advance, the importance of evaluation becomes more evident. Targeted evaluation is necessary to determine whether SWPBS has been effective. George and Kincaid (2008) indicated that the evaluation process assesses fidelity, provides the data required for developing an action plan, as well as identifies areas of success. To support the necessity for evaluation, the Implementation Blueprint identified multiple criteria for measuring success. The six

criteria are effectiveness (desired outcomes documented), efficiency (doable by local implementers), relevance (culturally and contextually appropriate), sustainability (lasting implementation and durable outcomes), scalability (transportable and generalizable), and defendable (conceptually sound and theoretically logical) (Office of Special Education, 2010).

High School Implementation of PBIS

In the previous section, the focus was on the basic implementation guidelines of PBIS. In this section, the focus is on PBIS implementation at the high school level. The idea that PBIS implementation at the high school level had not been as widely or as thoroughly investigated as at the elementary level had been discussed by other researchers (Sugai et al., 2004). Several reasons for this oversight have been suggested, but the primary reason was due to the limited number of high schools that participate in the program. Researchers who have specifically studied implementation at the high school level have found several factors that establish positive implementation patterns in high school implementation efforts (Sugai et al., 2004).

It is important to understand, and acknowledge the differences and similarities in elementary, middle, and high schools that may affect SWPBS implementation (see Table 5 for a complete listing). There are multiple factors that can affect the implementation process of SWPBS at the high school level such as school size. The National Center for Educational Statistics (2003) found that school size may have a direct impact on discipline.

Table 6

Differences and Similarities that Affect Implementation of School-Wide Initiatives

Feature	Elementary	Middle/ Junior High	High
Academic Emphasis	Tool Acquisition & Fluency	Knowledge Acquisition & Fluency	Knowledge Acquisition , Fluency, & Knowledge Generation
Curriculum Preparation	Middle School	High school	College and/or Vocational
Alternative to Traditional Completion	Grade Retention, Charter/ Alternative School	Grade Retention, Charter/ Alternative School	Dropout and/or Vocational
Curriculum Organization	Grade level classroom	Departmental Specializations	Departmental Specialization
Curriculum Preparation/ Planning	Multiple Content Areas	Single Content Areas, Electives	Single Content Areas, Electives, Specializations
Focus for Principal	School	School	School/Community
Administrative Decision Making	Principal/Staff	Principal, Grade Level Team, Departments	Executive Department Head Council, Departmental, Student Council
Size	Small: Neighborhood School	Medium: Multiple Feeder Schools	Large: Multiple Feeder Schools
Attendance	Required	Required	Required, Dropout, Alternative
Scheduling/ Teacher Responsibility	Single Self-contained Classroom	Multiple Period/Block	Multiple Period/Block
Behavior Management Emphasis	Teacher-Directed	Teacher-Directed & Self-Management	Self-Management/Self-recruitment
Academic Incentives (reinforcers)	Tangibles, Social Attention	Tangibles, Edibles, Social Attention, Social Status	Professional Acknowledgements, Student Achievement
Social Behavior Development	Basic Personal & Interpersonal	Self, Peers & Adults, Relations with Opposite Sex	Personal Responsibility (e. g. , Driving, Dating, Sexual Behavior, Jobs)

Table 6. Continued

Rule Violation Consequences	Classroom Managed, Office Referral	Classroom Managed, Office Referral, Suspensions	Classroom Managed, Office Referral, Suspension, Expulsions, Saturday School, Alternative School/Program, Public Safety
Problem Behavior	Minor: Physical Aggression, Temper Tantrums, Not following directions, Possible Gang Affiliation	Defiance, Insubordination, Gang Membership, Fighting, Confrontation, Drug/Alcohol Experimentation	Truancy, Skipping Class, Tardies, Drug/Alcohol/ Cigarette Use/Abuse, Gang Membership
School-Sponsored Extracurricular	Limited	Intra-mural, Clubs	Intermural, Clubs, Social, Sports
Parent Involvement	High	Medium	Low
Neighborhood/ Community Access	Closed	Closed	Open/Closed
Special Education	Student, Teacher, and Family Focus, Academic/Social IEP	Student, Teacher, and Family Focus, Academic/Social IEP	Student, Teacher, Family, and Department Focus, Academic/Social/Adaptive/Vocation IEP

Note. From Sugai et al. (2004).

Traditionally, high schools are larger than elementary and middle schools; therefore, school size is a factor to be considered when considering implementation. Another difference is the focus on the role of the principal at the high school level. At the elementary and middle school levels, the principal has a focus on the school. At the high school level, the principal has a focus on the school and the community (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2003).

The following discussions examined implementation factors specific to the high school level. Sugai et al. (2004) identified five factors that had been learned about implementation of SWPBS in high schools: (a) student involvement increased the effectiveness of the implementation process, (b) the involvement and commitment of

building leadership was especially critical, (c) the smaller the initial scope of implementation, the greater the possibility of success, (d) the vast number of programs that currently existed in the high school setting makes "fitting" in something new a major challenge to be addressed by high schools, and (e) high school enrollments tend to be very large with students coming from multiple middle/junior high schools (Sugai et al., 2004).

Sugai et al. (2004) established guiding principles that supported the high school implementation of school-wide initiatives.

1. Establish and/or consolidate a school-wide leadership team that enables efficient communication and decision making with large number of staff members.
2. Work within existing administrative structures.
3. Start small and prioritize time.
4. Focus on teaching and encouraging positive expectation.
5. Increase focus on teaching and encouraging positive expectations.
6. Maximize administrator involvement.
7. Involve students and staff to greatest extent in decision-making, development, and evaluation activities.
8. Increase opportunities for feedback to students and staff.
9. Specify and focus on measurable outcome indicators.
10. Increase opportunities for academic success and competence of ALL students.
11. Create student communities that are small in size, maximize adult interactions, and enable active supervision.

12. Prioritize, model, prompt, and acknowledge factors that contribute to positive "Sense of Community."

13. Move the school toward three organizational goals: (a) a common vision (i.e., purpose, goal), (b) common language (e.g., communications, terminology, information), and (c) common experience (e.g., routines, actions, activities, operational structures).

With the guiding principles in mind, the work of Sugai et al. (2004) yielded two main recommendations for the high school level. The first recommendation suggests the importance of more demonstrations of high school SWPBS. These demonstrations established what is possible and test what variations and adaptions must be made to maximize implementation outcomes (Sugai et al., 2004). The second recommendation suggests research that results in the most to observable changes in student and adult behavior (Sugai et al., 2004).

To disregard the differences in the elementary and middle school SWPBS implementation process as high school implementation is considered, is to almost certainly doom the initiative to failure. Detailed planning increases the chances of the implementation success. Staff members need the support required to implement as well as to sustain district initiatives of this nature (George & Kincaid, 2008).

Common Implementation Challenges

This section discusses challenges to the implementation process as presented by the High School Tiered Intervention Initiative (HSTII). The HSTII is a collaborative project of three federally funded technical assistance centers. These centers summarized what had been learned about the implementation of another tiered intervention, Response to Intervention (RTI) (National High School Center, 2010). The HSTII initiative found

that the essential implementation components at the elementary and high school levels were essentially the same but may look different due to three unique factors at the high school level: (a) culture, (b) structure, and (c) organization (Duffy, 2007). Positive Behavior Intervention and Support is considered the application of the RTI framework for behavioral difficulties, thus linking the implementation frameworks for these two evidence-based initiatives. Eight high schools were selected to participate in the initiative. Staff capacity, scheduling, resources, and measuring fidelity of implementation were the four common implementation challenges noted (National High School Center, 2010). Staff capacity involved developing staff knowledge of research-based instructional strategies and acknowledging the need for change. Staff professional development was an essential part of developing capacity and must be ongoing (National High School Center, 2010).

In high schools, providing the time to review data and discuss student challenges was even more difficult than at the elementary level due to the complexities of the school day. Teachers must have time to problem-solve, consult with colleagues, and receive coaching and training (National High School Center, 2010). Participating schools in the initiative reported struggling to find the time during the school day to review and analyze data and for planning instruction. Schools address scheduling challenges by identifying problems and making adjustments to their master schedules. Along with the challenge of scheduling is the ongoing demand for funding. Schools indicated that they are required to find creative ways to fund the project. One solution is to combine multiple resources (e.g., reducing supplies and reallocating the funds) (National High School Center, 2010).

In the HSTII 2010 project, the HSTII team defined fidelity, the fourth noted challenge, as "adherence to all aspects of implementation" (National High School Center, 2010, p. 9). Measuring fidelity of implementation is a major challenge due to the coordination of all the components involved in the implementation process. In the 2010 project, the HSII team determined that the complexities of the high school setting lowered the fidelity of implementation (National High School Center, 2010).

The Challenge of Engaging Staff and Students

To increase the likelihood of program success, Sugai and Horner (2002) suggested that at a minimum, 80% of the staff must agree to participate in the implementation of the PBS initiative. Most people consider staff engagement to mean when everyone is in agreement and no one is voicing concerns (Fenning, 2004). However, this was a major misconception. Staff engagement looks different in different settings. In some settings, engagement may mean that staff members feel comfortable enough to voice their concerns about PBS. It may also mean that the participants have an opportunity to speak their minds and take part in the development of modifications to the PBS strategies (Fenning, 2004).

The question arises in all school settings but especially in the high school setting, "How do we define staff?" Fenning (2004) clearly indicated that value must be placed on all staff members in the building. Inclusion of office staff, security guards, and cafeteria workers was important to the success of PBS implemntation. Student engagement is another criticale aspect of program success. As with staff engagement, a major challenge arises with defining what engagement should look like, and determining when engagment has been achieved. Involving students in the PBS process by garnering their opinions of

the process is important. Looking at a cross section of students is one way of measuring engagement. Students who do not have behavioral concerns as well as those who are frequently in the office bring different but important perspectives to the table (Fenning, 2004). High school students, due to their age, and years in school bring important insights to the conversation on programs that work. They are mature enough to participate in planning, and can share their perspectives as to what will engage their peers (Fenning, 2004). To further delineate the implementation process, this literature review includes a review of a research project that illustrates the implementation practices of a high school—The Florida PBS Project— and a survey study by Flannery, Sugai, and Anderson (2009).

Florida PBS Project

The Florida Positive Behavior Support Project (FPBS) is charged to train schools in Florida in the PBS framework. With the increase in the number of schools participating in the project, the demand for more data demonstrating the outcomes of the project also increased. The purpose of the review of the project is to identify the critical barriers, and facilitators of successful program implementation (Kincaid, Childs Blase, & Wallace, 2007).

A statewide implementer's forum for (a) team members with at least one year of implementation experience, (b) coaches, and (c) coordinators was conducted by the project's staff. Cluster analysis techniques were used to identify the six areas that were noted as promoting or inhibiting successful application of SWPBS: administrative support, faculty buy-in, philosophical differences, staff training, student training, and

reward systems (Kincaid et al., 2007). The significance of the study adds to the understanding of the similarities and differences in implementation at the different levels.

Method. The Benchmarks of Quality, a 53-item rating scale, was completed by each of the participating schools attending the forum to determine whether it was a high-implementing (HI) or low-implementing (LI) school. The investigators sorted the items by whether they were generated by a HI or LI group. The identification of themes by statements, computation of the average importance of each statement, and computation of the average feasibility were the three data analyses points that were considered (Kincaid, Childs, & George, 2005).

Implications for practice. As a result of the review of the FPBS Project, several outcomes were identified that impacted three areas of the project's activities: training, technical support, and resources. Table 7 summarizes the themes using two categories: barriers and facilitators (Kincaid et al., 2007)—some themes aligned with only one category and some aligned with both categories.

Survey Study

A study by Flannery et al. (2009) was designed to learn how those responsible for SWPBS described their efforts to adopt the program for use at the high school level. Surveys were sent to teams that had been at least one leadership team meeting and having aspects of SWPBS in place for at least one year. Forty-three surveys were returned, however, the actual number of eligible teams that were invited to participate is unknown. The 43 respondents that did participate represented 12 different states. Of the participating schools, 11 were in an urban setting, 17 were in a suburban setting, and 15 were in a rural setting (Flannery et al., 2009).

Table 7

Theme Alignment with Two Categories: Barriers and Facilitators

Themes generated	Barriers	Facilitators
Funding	✓	✓
Staff recognition/reward	✓	✓
District support	✓	✓
Communication	✓	✓
School-level/team training	✓	✓
Use of data	✓	✓
Administrative support	✓	✓
Parent/community support	✓	✓
Staff buy-in	✓	✓
Reward systems	✓	✓
Team process/functioning	✓	✓
Miscellaneous	✓	✓
Plan implementation	✓	✓
Coaching		✓
Integration into school		✓
Positive student outcomes		✓
Student buy-in		✓
Positive behavior project support		✓
Team membership		✓
Staff and student turnover	✓	

Table 7. Continued

Staff implementation	✓
Philosophical differences	✓
Understanding principles of behavior	✓
Misperceptions of what PBS is	✓
Academic-behavior relationship	✓
Frequent fliers	✓
Time	✓

Note. From Kincaid et al. (2007).

For the Flannery et al. (2009) study, the Survey of PBS Implementation in High Schools was designed to be completed in 20 minutes and gather information concerning implementation of SWPBS. School demographics, staff participation and support, expectations and type of acknowledgements, leadership team membership, and priorities for the year's action plan were the five areas that were examined by the survey (Flannery et al., 2009). The initial results of the survey indicated that while there are similarities of SWPBS implementation at the elementary, middle and high schools levels, high schools face unique challenges that may affect their success. There were three areas that were highlighted from the study: leadership team representation, faculty participation, and the role of acknowledgement systems.

The size of the leadership team in the Flannery et al. (2009) study may have been larger due to the average size of the school. The team membership may have included more administrators, chairs from the various departments, and students. At the high school level, students play a more active role in school activities so their involvement with SWPBS should be a natural fit (Flannery et al., 2009).

The results of the Flannery et al. (2009) survey suggested that little over 50% of the school staff were generally supportive of adopting SWPBS; however, active participation was lower. Flannery et al. indicated that the information was very disappointing. The study suggested that there is a need to determine if the 80% staff participation level recommended by Sugai et al. (2010) for effective program implementation was appropriate for the high school level. The need for more systematic research was recommended. Finally, a little less than half of the survey respondents indicated that they had plans to implement or were implementing strategies to positively reinforce student behavior (Flannery et al., 2009). The researchers surmised that high school educators may not view acknowledgement systems (positive reinforcement) as relevant (Flannery et al., 2009).

Measuring SWPBIS Implementation Fidelity

The extent to which PBIS is implemented with fidelity is of importance to researchers, and schools because it allowed them to assess the impact of implementation on the success, and sustainability of the program. In order to consider SWPBIS a research-based practice, researchers must be able to provide evidence of the effectiveness of SWPBIS. Three measures were developed to access the extent to which SWPBIS is being implemented: (a) The Team Implementation Checklist (TIC), (b) The Benchmarks of Quality (BoQ), and (c) School-wide Evaluation Tool (SET) (Horner et al., 2004; Sugai, Lewis-Palmer, Todd, & Horner, 2001).

Team Implementation Checklist (TIC). The TIC (Sugai et al., 2001) consisted of a total of 22 items grouped into six subscales: (a) establish commitment, (b) establish and maintain team, (c) self-assessment, (d) establish school-wide expectations, (e)

classroom behavior support systems, and (f) build capacity for functions-based support. A 3-point scale is used to score the items. The items are rated "in progress" if not yet fully implemented, "achieved" if fully implemented, and "not yet started." The team made up of school staff members completed the TIC, which on the average required approximately 10 minutes to complete. The TIC is widely used due to it being cost effective and easily administered. The desired administration is quarterly, although research by Tobin (2006) indicated actual use varies widely. The goal of the process is to have teams complete the TIC quarterly until at least an 80% participation criterion is achieved (Tobin, 2006). The work of Bradshaw, Debnam, Koth, & Leaf (2009) documented a major limitation of the tool. The TIC is a self-assessment survey administered by school team members who may find it difficult to be totally objective when rating themselves (Bradshaw et al., 2009).

Benchmarks of Quality (BOQ). The BOQ is a self-assessment that allowed a school's Tier 1 Systems Team to evaluate if the foundational elements are in place to support Tier 1 implementation and systems. The BOQ consisted of 10 subscales: (a) PBS team, (b) faculty commitment, (c) effective procedures for dealing with discipline, (d) data entry and analysis plan established, (e) expectations and rules developed, (f) reward/recognition program established, (g) lesson plans for teaching expectations/rules, (h) implementation plan, (i) classroom systems, and (j) evaluation. There are a total of 53 items associated with the 10 subscales. Each subscale item is scored as in place (++), needs improvement (+) or is not in place (-). Schools that score at or above 70% of total points on the BOQ usually experience a decline in office referrals (Kincaid et al., 2005).

School-wide Evaluation Tool (SET). The SET was developed by Sugai et al. (2001) as a research based tool to measure implementation. Seven key implementation features of SWPBIS were identified as critical to implementation fidelity: (a) expectations defined, (b) expectations taught, (c) expectations rewarding, (d) response to problems, (e) monitoring/decision making, (f) management, and (g) district-level support. The seven implementation features yielded a subscale score range from 0-100—the higher the score, the greater the program fidelity (Sugai et al., 2001). The SET, unlike the previously mentioned implementation measures, is not a self-assessment, it is completed by a trained external observer who assesses for the seven critical features. The SET assessor must participate in a two-day training before serving as an evaluator. The SET assessment involves the gathering of evidence to determine to what extent each of the critical factors is in place. The assessor evaluates written materials (e.g., building student and staff handbooks, comprehensive school improvement goals, discipline reports, office referral documents) as well as discipline procedures to determine the level of fidelity. Additionally, the SET involves building walk-throughs noting visual displays of behavioral expectations posted throughout the building (e.g., hallways, classrooms, cafeterias, play areas). An implementation manual provides guidance and technical assistance to schools wishing to use the tool (Todd et al., 2005). Student and staff interviews are a major aspect of the SET. The interviews are conducted individually with administrators, teachers, and students about school procedures, policies, rewards for following demonstrating positive behavior, and the consequences for misbehavior. The articulation of this information demonstrates a working knowledge of the program by students, staff and administrators (Horner et al., 2004).

The SET is usually administered annually and by a trained assessor. An experienced assessor completes an assessment in two to four hours depending on the size of the school. Scoring of the instrument requires an additional hour. The cost involved in hiring, training, administering and scoring the SET is considered arduous for school districts implementing SWPBIS in multiple schools (Horner et al., 2004).

While there may be aspects of the SET considered burdensome, research by Horner et al. (2004) indicated that an 80% on both the overall SET summary score and the Behavioral Expectations Taught subscale is indicative of high levels of program implementation which is a strength of the instrument, thus making it beneficial. Horner et al. (2004) also indicated that the SET has strong "test-retest" reliability. On the other hand, an identified limitation of the SET is its focus on the primary prevention features of SWPBS (Horner et al., 2004).

Summary

The availability of research relative to high school implementation of SWPBS is not as abundant as that of the elementary and middle/junior high levels. While limited, there is research to suggest that SWPBS implementation at the high school level is possible. The research supports the importance of considering the factors that make high school, elementary, and middle/junior high implementation different.

Chapter Three: Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodology used to conduct this qualitative study. The chapter consists of eight sections: participants, qualitative research, research site, survey development, qualitative interviews, data collection, analysis, and summary.

Participants

The participants in this study were staff members from the high school selected for the study. The staff members were not individually selected, but responded to a group invitation to participate in the study. The researcher visited the high school and orally presented the purpose of the study, how the information would be collected, and how the results of the study would be shared with the staff. The majority of the participants were teachers, however some were support staff members: counselors, nurses, and secretaries, and one was an administrator. The volunteers met with the researcher as a group during a presentation by the researcher, not individually. Following the presentation, there were several questions concerning the data collection tool, the length of the survey, and the window for responding to the survey. Table 8 outlines a six-year picture of the student/teacher ratio and student/administrator ratio of the school.

Table 8

Student/Teacher and Student/Administrator Ratios

Year	Students per Teacher	Students per Administrator
2009	13	185
2010	14	211
2011	13	160
2012	13	160
2013	12	143

Note. From MODESE (2013).

In response to discipline referrals and the increase in the suspension rate, the ABC High School (pseudonym) in this study joined the elementary and middle school that had been implementing PBIS for several years. The framework was piloted at one elementary school with the other five elementary schools coming onboard over a three-year implementation period. The researcher in this study was involved in the implementation of PBIS at the pilot elementary school. The researcher had been tracking PBIS implementation at the other elementary and middle school levels and was very interested in how the program would look at the high school level because at the time, the high school had not decided to implement PBIS.

The three data points that influenced the building administration's decision to implement the framework included the increase in the number of suspensions, the drop in the attendance rate and the declining enrollment. An assumption was that the increase in suspensions may have a direct impact on the declining enrollment, and a drop in the attendance. Data reported by MODESE (2013) (see Table 9) illustrates the attendance rate over a five-year period. The attendance rate indicates the percentage of days students at ABC High School attended school.

Table 9

Missouri/District/ABC High School Attendance Rates from 2009-2013

	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009
Missouri	94.1	94.4	94.4	94.3	94.4
District	94.1	93.4	93.3	92.9	92.9
High School	92.2	89.9	90.3	89.6	89.8

Note. From MODESE (2013).

Qualitative Research

The purpose of the study was well suited to the qualitative research method. The researcher's goal was to add to the body of research related to PBIS at the high school level. The perspectives of the staff members involved in the implementation process were central to this study (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). McRoy (2009) indicated that when the research is not concerned with statistical inquiry and the analysis is based on inquirers of a social nature, qualitative research is the method that best supports these inquirers. The qualitative method is about understanding experiences and this study is about understanding the experiences with the implementation of PBIS at the high school level (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). Qualitative research is akin to the exploratory scientific method (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). The components of the qualitative research method, as identified by Flick (2008), influenced the researcher's use of this method. Qualitative methods (a) use text instead of numbers, (b) start with social construction, (c) focus on participant thoughts and feelings, and (d) place emphases on everyday practices and knowledge as they relate to the study (Flick, 2008).

Johnson and Christenson (2008) identified six general steps related to implementing qualitative research: (a) determine the research topics, (b) select the research participants and settings using sampling techniques, (c) collect the data, (d) analyze the data to determine patterns and themes, (e) generate and validate conclusions, and (f) write the research report. The six steps outlined by Johnson and Christenson (2008) served as a guide to the researcher in this study.

The Research Site

The site selected for this study was a suburban school district with an enrollment of approximately 3,200 students. There were six elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school.

The high school had a traditional organization that consisted of four grade levels, nine through 12. The administrative team was comprised of a head principal and four assistant principals; one team assigned to each grade level. There were four counselors; one assigned to each grade level, and a college and career counselor. Ninety-nine percent of the teachers were certified in their instructional area and 100% of the classes were taught by highly qualified teachers (MODESE, 2014).

The research site was selected due to the researcher's experience with PBIS implementation at the elementary schools in the district. The researcher also noted that research involving implementation at the high school level was limited and had not been documented as widely as that at the elementary level (Sugai et al., 2004). The researcher participated in a study of Colvin's 2007 book *7 Steps for Developing a Proactive Schoolwide Discipline Plan: A Guide for Principals and Leadership Teams* that ignited the interest in PBIS implementation. The book contains several checklists that served as a model for the survey used in the study.

The Survey

The survey was the data gathering method used in this study. When compared to other data collection methods, the online survey method was selected because it was found to be relatively inexpensive, could be done quickly, and largely eliminated the manual inputting of data (Ritter, 2007; Ritter & Sue, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c). There were

advantages and disadvantages to the use of the online survey. When compared to the postal mail survey, the telephone survey, and face-to-face interviewing, the online survey eliminated many of the concerns associated with those more traditional survey methods. However, while there are advantages to the online survey, there are other factors to be considered. Ritter and Sue (2007b) identified three factors to be considered before undertaking an online survey: (a) respondent factors, (b) questionnaire factors, and (c) evaluator factors.

Respondent factors. Internet access was required for a respondent to participate in an online survey. The respondent must have the ability and skill to navigate the Internet. The respondent was not restricted to a particular time of day or place to complete the survey. Use of the online survey could expand the target population. Email was an asset to any person who wanted to participate in the online survey (Ritter & Sue, 2007b).

In addition to Internet access, respondent factors also included sampling frame, which was the list of all potential respondents who could be invited to participate in the online survey through email. The use of email eliminated concerns with geographical location. Participants could be in close proximity or across the country (Ritter & Sue, 2007b).

Questionnaire factors. Questionnaire factors included the types of items, the nature of the items, and the length of the items. The questions could be open- or closed-ended. Anonymity allowed the researcher to address sensitive topics and to probe more deeply. The length of the items was vital to the completion rate of the questionnaire.

Ritter and Sue (2007b) identified technical problems and items that were too long as the two main reasons why some participants did not complete the questionnaires.

Evaluator factors. Ritter and Sue (2007b) identified three evaluator factors that could affect the survey project; time frame, budget, and technological expertise. Time frame involved the evaluator's ability to determine how long the survey will remain in the field. The online survey allowed for a wide variation in the cost associated with launching the survey—the budget can be adjusted to meet the parameters of the evaluator. Thirdly, technology expertise involved the creation and management of the selected online tool. Survey Monkey, the online vendor selected for this project, offered both a free and paid service. Survey Monkey provided online technical support, tutorials, and a variety of features from those that could be mastered in minutes to more difficult features for the more advanced skilled user.

Survey Development

The survey was a type of research design (Mathers, Fox, & Hunn, 2009). While there were many different data collection methods, this researcher determined that the survey/questionnaire would be the data collection method for this project. Questionnaires can be used either in paper-based or web-based projects (Thomas, 2004). Thomas (2004) found that there are four situations in which to use questionnaires in a survey project when particular information is desired: (a) when existing information is not available to answer items presented, (b) when a questionnaire is the more effective means to gather the information, (c) when the man power and the budget are available to complete the project and, (d) when there is a purpose and plan for using the results. Thomas further found that questionnaires had several benefits: (a) they can involve a wide range of

participants, (b) they are able to gather a wide range of perspectives, and (c) questionnaires can determine the level of support of a proposed project (Thomas, 2004).

Questionnaires are an essential part of data based decision making. The items presented in a questionnaire can be related to the objective of the project (Ritter & Sue, 2007c). According to Ritter and Sue (2007c), good questionnaire items are short, self-explanatory to the reader, and meaningful. The use of jargon is highly discouraged in a survey project. Questionnaires can be used to inform decisions. The questions in this study were adapted from the PBIS Team Implementation Checklist developed by Sugai et al. (2004).

The questionnaire was developed with closed-ended items; however, a space for a short written response was provided at the end of each item. Prior to launching the questionnaire, it was shared with Lindenwood University staff members and classmates. Six school district staff members, who would not be taking part in the actual project, were selected to review the items on the questionnaire. The sample group was asked to review the items and orally respond to the following items: (a) Is the question length appropriate? (b) Is the scale understandable? and (c) Are the items clear?

Closed-ended items allowed respondents to select from a set of options. Ritter and Sue (2007c) reported that closed-ended items make up the majority of online survey items because they were easily answered, were familiar to most participants, and provided reliable measurement. There are four common formats for closed-ended questions: dichotomous, multiple choice, rankings, and rating scales. The questionnaire developed for this project consisted of a 5-point rating scale format. The items were written in a statement format so that the respondents had to indicate to what extent they

agreed or disagreed with the statement. The Strongly Agree, Disagree, etc. scale is considered one of several standard scales as determined by Ritter and Sue (2007a). To ensure clarity, each point on the scale was labeled in a descending order. The points were labeled Strongly Agree, Agree, Don't Know, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. If the respondents Strongly Disagreed with a statement, they were asked to explain. Ritter and Sue (2007c) noted that by labeling the points on the scale, the respondents consistently attached the same meaning to each position on the scale. Additionally, when the scale is fully labeled, Krosnick and Fabrigar (1997) indicated that the scale is more reliable than numeric scales.

Survey Monkey was the online tool selected for this project. Survey Monkey offered free online survey development. The process began with the researcher creating an account. A user license was not required since software was not purchased. All survey information is hosted on the Survey Monkey site and servers. Survey Monkey provided an online users' manual with step-by-step directions.

As in many research projects, a specific population was identified to be invited for participation in the project. In this project, the investigator was interested in the opinions of members of an identified high school, a closed population. A closed population as defined by Ritter (2007) referred to a comprehensive sampling frame, such as employees. Prior to the tool being launched, the researcher visited the school site to recruit participants. A short presentation explaining the project, how the data would be used, and the benefit of the study to the school and district was shared with prospective participants. The oral presentation was followed by an email invitation. The email reiterated the information shared at the presentation and included the link to the survey

and a timeline. The survey was available online for four weeks. An email reminder was sent each week following the initial launching of the survey. The email also contained an invitation requesting six volunteers to participate in a face-to-face interview in addition to completing the online survey. At the close of the survey, a basket of fruit and snacks were placed in the teacher's lounge along with a thank you to the staff. An email thank you message was also sent to notify the staff of the thank you basket in the lounge.

Qualitative Interviews

Kvale (1996) stated,

> Conversation is a basic mode of human interaction. Human beings talk with each other, they interact, pose items, and answer items. Through conversations, we get to know other people, get to learn about their experiences, feelings, and hopes and the world they live in. (p. 5)

Interviews are forms of conversation that can be used in research. Interviews are professional conversations but they are not conversations between equals because the researcher controls the topic and the direction the interview takes (Kvale, 1996).

Valenzuela and Shrivastava (2008) researched interviews. They outlined four aspects of the qualitative research interview that makes it different from the paper questionnaire: (a) what the respondent says can influence the interview, (b) interviews are more personal because the interviewer works directly with the interviewee, (c) the interview allows the interviewer to probe or ask clarifying items, and (d) interviews can be time consuming. Valenzuela and Shrivastava (2008) also identified four of the major interview types: informal, conversational interview; general interview guide approach; standardized, open-ended interview; and closed, fixed-response interview. The informal,

conversational interview does not use predetermined items. The general interview guide approach uses predetermined items to ensure a level of consistency of the information collected from each interview. In the standardized, open-ended interview approach, the same open-ended items are asked. This approach facilitates faster interviews, yielding information that can be more easily analyzed and compared. When the interviewees are asked the same items and asked to choose from a specific set of answers, the closed, fixed-response interview approach is being implemented. For those who are not experienced with interviewing, the closed, fixed-response interview approach format could be the most useful (Valenzuela & Shrivastava, 2008). The researcher in this study chose to use the standardized, open-ended interview approach because data could be easily analyzed and compared. While there is more structure with this approach, there is still a degree of freedom and flexibility (Valenzuela & Shrivastava, 2008).

The interviewees volunteered to participant in the face-to-face interviews following their completion of the online survey. The interviewees reported to the researcher that they felt comfortable with the face-to-face interview because they had an idea of the topic being discussed. The interviews lasted an average of 30 minutes, were recorded, and were conducted in various locations selected by the interviewees. The interviews were transcribed to allow for more thorough analysis.

The researcher formulated the six interview items around three of the nine formats described by Kvale (1996). Introducing items: “What are your feelings . . . ?” Specifying items: What changes would . . . ?” and Indirect items: “How are the school-wide . . . ?” The interviewer had to be an active listener and maintain control of the

interview by managing the length of the answers and keeping the interviewee focused on the topic.

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

A district recruitment letter was sent to the school district asking for permission to recruit staff members for the study. After the approval was received, a visit was made to the school to meet with the staff members during a staff meeting to explain the purpose of the study, address confidentiality, describe how the results would be used and how long the survey would be available online. Survey Monkey was selected as the data collection tool. A response window was established and communicated by email to the participants. The school district email system allowed the researcher to send an email link to all staff members at the same time without identifying them individually. The online tool contained adequate space for the written responses. Secure Sockets Layer is the standard security technology for establishing an encrypted link between a web server and a browser. This link ensures that all data passed between the web server and browsers remain private and integral. While Survey Monkey did not provide SSL encryption for extra security, it was determined that is was not needed for use with this survey.

During the response period, the researcher kept track of the questionnaires that were being completed which allowed the researcher to send reminder messages to encourage non-respondents to complete the survey. Survey Monkey allowed for real-time viewing of the responses. At the end of the response period, Ritter and Sue (2007c) recommended a process referred to as data cleaning. Data cleaning involved the process of identifying, and when necessary, correcting program errors before analysis begins. Following this process, the data can be exported for analysis. A response summary page

was created within the program that showed the data in a bar graph format. The analyze section allowed for analysis through the use of filtering and exporting. The process of filtering involves the user selecting what tables are to be included and the information that is to be included in the tables. For this study, responses were filtered by response. Survey Monkey provided the total sum of responses, the percentage of responses for each item, as well as bar graphs of the collected data.

Summary

Chapter Three: Methodology, outlines how the researcher will gain the information necessary to answer the research questions. This chapter involves establishing systematic methods of problem solving. The researcher selected the qualitative method for the study because it allows the researcher to focus on the feelings and thoughts of the participants rather than the quantitative method that has more of a focus on statistics. The online survey was selected as the data- gathering tool, and Survey Monkey was identified as the user friendly program for collection and analysis of the data. Throughout the data collection process, the proper procedures were taken to ensure the protection and confidentiality of the research participants. In addition to the online surveys, face-to-face interviews were also used as a data-gathering tool. As part of the protection of human subjects, all materials used for data collection were maintained in a secure environment, and at the completion of the study, all paper documents were shredded and disposed of properly.

Chapter Four: Results

The qualitative results of the data gathered to investigate the implementation process of the PBIS program at a suburban high school are contained in this chapter. The implementation of this process was linked to the feedback and perspectives of staff members who were responsible for the implementation of the framework. The staff survey items can be found in Appendix A. Individual staff interview items can be found in Appendix B.

The survey was available to all 72 members of the staff that were composed of teachers, support staff, and administrators. Fifty-three staff members actually responded to the survey for a response rate of 72%. For the purpose of survey reporting, all survey respondents were treated as one group, falling under the label of staff. Fifty-three surveys were completed and were addressed in the reporting process. The reporting process begins by addressing each survey item to determine the identified levels of agreement or disagreement. The survey results will be reported followed by the interview results.

Staff Survey Responses

Fifty-four staff members completed the online survey. The survey consisted of 18 items; 16 of the items required responses to a Likert scale. Items 17 and 18 required written responses. Item 1 of the survey examined three areas, participant information (gender), participant position in the high school (teacher, administrator, support staff, and other), as well as the number of years the staff member has been in the building (1-3 years, 4-6 years, 7-10 years, and more than 10 years). Of the 54 survey participants, 46 responded to the item related to gender indicating that 13 participants were male and 33

were female. Thirty-five of the participants were teachers, 10 were support staff, one was an administrator, and two were listed as other. To the item that addressed the length of time the participants had been in the building, two participants were in the building less than a year, eight were in the building between one and three years, 12 were in the building between four and six years, 12 were in the building between seven and 10 years, and 11 were in the building more than 10 years (see Table 10).

The survey documented that 54 staff members logged into the survey with one respondent skipping Item 1. However, there are several areas where all participants did not respond to all sections of Item 1. For example, 13 males and 33 females responded to the request for gender identification, which is less than the 54 total responses. The researcher did not program the survey to require a response to each question before the respondents were allowed to proceed to the next item. The researcher did not require a response in an effort to make the instrument more user friendly.

Table 10

Item 1: Participants

Male	Female	Teacher	Administrator	Support	Other
13	33	35	1	10	2

In building less than 1 year	In building 1-3 years	In building 4-6 years	In building 7-10 years	More than 10 years
2	8	12	12	11

Item 2 asked if staff members were involved in the selection of the PBIS building level leadership team. Of the 54 respondents logging into the survey, 52 responded to the item with two skipping the item for an average rating of 3.38. The Table 11 illustrates the percentage and number of responses. Three respondents took the opportunity to provide comments to this item. One respondent stated, “We were told that this is what

we were doing. We had no choice or discussion about the matter." Another respondent indicated, "It was clear that this was an administrative choice and it was manipulated upon staff through required training."

Table 11

Item 2: Staff Members Involved in the Selection of PBIS Building Level Leadership Team

Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
23.0% (12)	26.92% (14)	21.15% (12)	23.08% (12)	5.77% (3)

Item 3 focused on administrator support and involvement (see Table 12). Of the 54 staff members logging into the survey, 51 responded to the item and 3 respondents skipped the item for an average rating of 3.25. Three staff members who Strongly Disagreed with Item 3 reported the following: "I know there is an administrator on the team b/c that's the way it needs to be, but I guess they support it but they are not active," "I haven't seen evidence that they support it other than obligatory remarks introducing the PBIS committee at faculty meetings," and "From my observation, the administrators are not actively involved, however they may be very supportive."

Table 12

Item 3: Administrators are Supportive and Actively Involved

Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
7.84% (4)	47.06% (24)	17.65% (9)	17.65% (9)	9.80% (5)

Beginning with Item 4, a change was noted in the number of participants that was consistent for the remainder of the study. The system recorded only 53 participants for items 4 through 18, which differs from the 54 participants recorded for Items 1, 2 and 3. While the computer program cannot identify why a participant does not complete the

survey, the most plausible assumption is that one participant did not log back into the program after completing the first three items.

In Item 4, staff members were prompted to respond to the statement "A PBIS purpose statement was developed and communicated to staff, students, and parents." To item 4, there were 50 responses. Sixty-four percent (31 respondents) of the responses were in the areas of Strongly Agree and Agree. Table 13 displays the remainder of the table data. A total of 4 comments were generated from this item. The comments that were generated included the following statements: "We are pretty much told what we are doing, and there is little discussion," and "I do not know how the purpose has been communicated to students and to their parents. There are many kids that do not know about this project."

Table 13

Items 4: PBIS Purpose Statement Developed and Communicated to Staff, Students, and Parents

Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
22% (11)	42% (21)	18% (9)	14% (7)	4% (2)

"School wide behavior expectations are taught and reinforced regularly" was the fifth item presented to the staff. Of the 50 staff members responding to this item, 34% (17 respondents) Agreed with this statement. For the first time, none of the respondents marked Strongly Agree. Disagree was the most frequent response to this item. The item generated 13 comments. The Disagree and Strongly Disagree statements are exemplified by five comments that included, "Too many staff members express that students should "know" how to behave. Staff members express an I am too tired to mess with this approach when it doesn't change behavior of the top of the pyramid," "There is no

consistency. Students are allowed to do what they want," "I think some expectations are unrealistic and therefore not re-enforced. There doesn't seem to be agreement on what to expect from the students. That may reflect age, culture, social-class, economic class etc.," and finally, "Too many staff members express that students should *know* how to behave." One staff member expressed, "I am too tired to mess with this approach when it doesn't change the behavior of the students at the top of the pyramid." Table 14 displays the percentages and number of responses to the item.

Table 14

Item 5: School Wide Behavior Expectations are Taught and Reinforced Regularly

Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
0%	34% (17)	8% (4)	38% (19)	20% (10)

In response to Item 6, "PBIS professional development has been ongoing," 50 staff members responded to the item. Of the respondents, 64% (32 respondents) Agreed with the item (see Table 15). Seven staff members submitted a comment to the item. Limited amounts of time seem to be the overarching theme in the reported comments. Staff members reported "PBIS professional development dropped off this year." Another comment noted, "It has been dropped from our plate due to a priority of another program (Professional Learning Communities)." A final statement indicated, "We have had too many other ongoing projects at the same time. Yes it is ongoing, but it is difficult to keep the surge of positive energy when the irons are in too many other fires."

Table 15

Item 6: PBIS Professional Development has been Ongoing

Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
4% (2)	64% (32)	4% (2)	18% (9)	10% (5)

Fifty-one of the 53 participants responded to Item 7, which stated, "The PBIS building leadership team is representative of the building staff (administrators, general education teachers, special education teachers, support staff, etc.) (see Table 16). The most frequent response to the item was Agree (50.98% or 26 respondents) followed by Strongly Agree (13.73%). There were six comments recorded in response to this item. A sample of the comments included the following statements: "I don't know of any support staff that is on the team," "It is a group that covers the areas described, but it is not representative of all faculty members. It is primarily composed of a click of teachers," and "I don't know any administrators or support staff who are on the committee."

Table 16

Item 7: The PBIS Building Level Leadership Team is Representative of the Building Staff (Administrators, General Education Teachers, Special Education Teachers, Support Staff, etc.)

Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
13.73% (7)	50.98% (26)	23.53% (12)	7.84% (4)	3.92% (2)

Fifty-one of the 53 participants responded to item 8, which stated, "The PBIS leadership team share discipline data with staff regularly" (see Table 17). The most frequent response was Agree (41.18% or 21 respondents) followed by Disagree (37.25% or 19 respondents). Strongly Agree (13.73%) and Agree (41%) responses combine for 53.91% positive responses. Disagree (37.25% or 28 respondents) and Strongly Disagree (7.84%) combine for 45.09% (23 respondents) negative responses. Eight comments were generated from the Strongly Disagree responses to the item, which focused on communication. "I have not received anything," "A newsletter once in a while", and "Yes, they do a good job of collecting and sharing data." Unfortunately, since all of our time goes to PLC, we often get the reports via email now, rather than a presentation at a

staff meeting. We learned more when the data presented. We could also ask items." The comments reflect the desire to have consistent methods for sharing the data.

Table 17

Item 8: The PBIS Leadership Team Shares Discipline Data with Staff Regularly

Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
13.73% (7)	41.18% (21)	0%	37.25% (19)	7.84% (4)

Of the 53 participants surveyed, only 51 participants responded to Item 9, "The behavior expectations are posted throughout the building" (see Table 18). The most frequent response to this item was Disagree (62.75% or 32 respondents). Disagree and Strongly Disagree combine for 72.55% negative responses to this item. Eight comments were generated from this item. The responses reflected that 72.55% negative responses with comments such as "I have not seen it posted," "Classroom behavior is not agreed upon throughout the building so there is no posting of expectations, just general slogans," and

> There are so many things that get posted once and as soon as the students tear them down or they fall down, they never get put back into place. Also, there is so much junk on the walls mandated to be hung with much verbiage in classrooms it would be difficult to have it stand out any longer.

Table 18 reflects the percentages and numbers garnered from the item.

Table 18

Item 9: The Behavior Expectations are Posted Throughout the Building

Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
7.84% (4)	17 65% (9)	1.96% (1)	62.75% (32)	9.80% (5)

Fifty-one of the 53 survey participants responded to Item 10, "Staff and administration agree on what problems are office managed and what problems are staff managed" (see Table 19). Disagree (47.06% or 24 respondents) was the most frequent response. Disagree and Strongly Disagree combine for 53.9% negative response to this statement. Six comments were generated from this item. Comments such as, "This should be clarified. Students have a way of bending truth when staff handle problems. We all should be on the same page. The students know that we are not", and "No way! That's one of the many reasons staff do not feel supported in this building" are examples of the feelings that generated the 53.9% of negative response to this item.

Table 19

Item 10: Staff and Administration Agree on What Problems are Office Managed and What Problems are Staff Managed

Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
7. 84% (4)	21. 57% (11)	15. 69% (8)	47. 068% (24)	7. 84% (4)

In response to Item 11, "System for rewarding student behavior is established" there were 50 responses to the item. Three respondents failed to respond to the item. The most frequent response was Agree (70% or 35 respondents) followed by Strongly Agree (14% or seven respondents). Eight comments were generated by the respondents to this item. Three of the responses mentioned lion bucks in the following ways: "If you mean good behavior, giving the Lion Bucks, then I agree," "I don't know if Lion Buck rewards are still being distributed. Haven't heard much about it lately" and "Lion Bucks." "There is a reward system but I am not sure all the students know" and "Not enough focus on positive kids what they are supposed to do" are two additional comments that were made (see Table 20).

Table 20

Item 11: System for Rewarding Student Behavior is Established

Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
14% (7)	70% (35)	6% (3)	8% (4)	2% (1)

"Clearly defined and consistent consequences and procedures for undesirable behaviors are in place and enforced" was addressed by Item 12 (see Table 21). Of the 53 survey participants, 50 responded to this item. Disagree 58% or 29 respondents was the most frequent response followed by Strongly Disagree 24% or 24 respondents for a combined negative response of 82%. Seventeen comments were generated from the item. Inconsistency and consequences was a repeated theme in the comments.

> Having taken courses pertaining to school business management, I understand the monetary importance in getting students to come to school and keeping them there. However, safety in my opinion trumps that. There have been incidents that of course didn't make the news or papers, that have put the school environment in harms way and yet those students remain here. Repeat offenders in most cases. PBIS focuses too much on wording than addressing the actual issue, thus the debate over the consequences. There really aren't any and students know that.

"Better this year than past but still inconsistencies in application of consequences especially for repeated minor offences," "Consistency is an ongoing problem," "Stronger consequences for tardy to class need implementation," and "Totally inconsistent and often ignored by administration with no explanation, even when approached" are strong examples that reflect the 82% negative response to the item.

Table 21

Item 12: Clearly Defined and Consistent Consequences and Procedures for Undesirable Behaviors are in Place and Enforced

Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
2% (1)	12% (6)	4% (2)	58% (29)	24% (12)

Fifty of the 53 survey respondents, responded to Item 13 (see Table 22), "Discipline data are gathered, summarized, reported to staff, and used to make decisions." Three of the 53 respondents failed to respond to this item. Of the 50 responses, Agree (38% or 19 respondents) was the most frequent response, followed by Disagree (30% or 15respondents). Strongly Agree and Agree combine for 46% positive response to the item. Eight comments were reported in response to the item. The comments supported the 36% negative responses to the item. Examples of the negative comments are as follows: "Not aware of this"; "We are moving towards that, but we are not there yet"; "still waiting for the reports"; and "I don't know if the data is used to make decisions."

Table 22

Items 13: Discipline Data are Gathered, Summarized, Reported to Staff, and Used to Make Decisions

Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
8% (4)	38% (19)	18% (9)	30% (15)	6% (3)

Item 14 stated, "Funding had been allocated for the PBIS program" (see Table 23). Fifty-one staff members responded to the item. This item had the highest number of Don't Know responses (76. 47% or 39 respondents) of any item in the survey. No respondents marked Strongly Disagree to this item. There was only one comment in

response to this item. The comment indicated that the respondent did not know about the funding but that better rewards/incentives are needed for high school students.

Table 23

Item 14: Funding has Been Allocated for the PBIS Program

Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
3 92% (2)	17.65% (9)	76.47% (39)	1.96% (1)	0%

Item 15 stated, "A monitoring plan has been developed to ensure that staff members are implementing the program with fidelity" (see Table 24). No one responded Strongly Agree to the item; however, 40% (20 respondents) responded Don't Know. There were six comments listed in response to the item. The high number of Don't Know responses is best illustrated by the following statements: "Never heard of such", "No one has ever checked or even mentioned checking," and

> If this is occurring, I do not see the documentation. It would be great to have a large poster that indicates our progress in the main hallway. Students also need to know that the school is moving forward and addressing the discipline concerns.
>
> A group of students decided to post "I wish statements" in the cafeteria. If the student were made aware of PBIS and its purpose, maybe the "I wish" statements would have been avoided.

Table 24

Items 15: A Monitoring Plan has been Developed to Ensure that Staff Members are Implementing the Program with Fidelity

Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
0	10% (5)	40% (20)	38% (19)	12% (6)

Fifty-two of the 53 respondents marked a response to Item 16. Item 16 stated, "The PBIS program has had a positive impact at ABC High School (pseudonym)" (see Table 25). Don't Know (32.69% or17 respondents) was the most frequent response to the item. Interestingly, Disagree (26.92% or14 respondents) and Strongly Disagree (13.46% or seven respondents) combined for a negative response of 40.38% (21 respondents). There were 14 comments in response to the prompt, 'If strongly disagree, please explain.' The comments ranged from "I don't see anything positive about it. It does not work for African American children," to "It will if we keep working on it and get everyone on board." There were several comments that indicated that the program had some impact initially but the program "had not had a lasting effect." Comments such as, "sagging is as bad as ever, yet it is our primary focus. I believe as with most fads, especially involving fashion, impact cannot be made and we are fooling ourselves if we think that we can", and "Kids are in control, not adults." These comments seem to voice a sense of hopelessness and helplessness.

Table 25

Item16: The PBIS Program has had a Positive Impact at ABC High School (pseudonym)

Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
92% (1)	25% (13)	32.69% (17)	26.92% (14)	13.46% (7)

Item 17 was presented in a different format. The item asked, "If PBIS has had a positive impact in your classroom, list three of the ways. If no impact seen in your classroom, please indicate on line A" (see Table 26). Of the 53 participants in the survey, only 40 responded to the item with 13 skipping the item. I believe it is important to note that this item received the least number of responses when compared to the previously asked items. The researcher can only speculate as to why this occurred. Some

considerations given to this occurrence included the length of the item, the location of the item at the end of the survey or possibly the request that the item called for the respondents to supply an answer verses having a list of responses.

Of the 40 that did respond, 67.50% (27 respondents) provided a comment to line "A" indicating that no impact was seen in their classrooms. In the comments sections, 13 of the 27 responding to Section "A" simply wrote "no impact" or "no." The item asked the staff members to name three ways the program had a positive impacts in the classroom. Forty percent (16 respondents) wrote one comment, 32.50% (13 respondents) wrote two comments, and 27.50% (11 respondents) wrote three comments.

Incentives, clear expectations, and common language are themes running throughout the responses. Multiple responses mentioned the use of Lion Bucks as an incentive. The Lion Bucks are given to the students by staff members and can be exchanged for various items. Comments such as "students enjoy the opportunity to win lion bucks," "It gives me a way to notice positive behaviors without embarrassing the student," and "The reward system gives me an opportunity to focus on students doing the right thing" reflects the impact of the use of incentives.

Expectation is another theme that surfaced in the responses as having a positive impact. Comments such as, "Helped me to teach these expectations in my class," "Gives me tools to use in my class," and "specific behaviors targeted by all teachers" indicate that some teachers feel that identifying expectations that are school wide has had a positive impact on the learning environment.

The third theme that emerged from the prompt was "a common language." The term common language in PBIS refers to terms that are used when teaching the

expectations. Comments that reflect staff member feelings concerning common language are as follows: “I have been given phrases to say that are consistent with other staff,” “manner of approaching student,” and “dignity and respect to all.”

Table 26

Item 17 If PBIS has had a Positive Impact in your Classroom, List Three (3) of the Ways. If no Impact Seen in your Classroom, Please Indicate on Line “A”

A	1	2	3
67.5% (27)	40% (16)	32.5% (13)	27.5% (11)

Item 18 was the final item in the survey. The format of this item also differed from the previous items. As with item 17, only 40 of the 53 respondents completed this item. The item asked that the staff member list four strengths and four weaknesses of the PBIS program at UCHS (see Table 27). Ninety percent (36 respondents) listed one strength, 67% (27 respondents) listed two strengths, 57% (23 respondents) listed three strengths, and 42.5% (17 respondents) listed four strengths. When coding the responses, six responses were identified as repeated themes related to strengths: incentives, common language, expectations, data, leadership team, and buy-in. Forty-six responses fell into the category labeled as “other” due to lack of frequency of response or the responses were unrelated.

In the area of strengths, there were 103 responses. Forty-six of the responses fell into the category of “other.” The most frequent response to the item concerning strengths was incentives/recognitions. Of the 103 reported responses, 24 responses had a focus on incentives/recognitions followed by 11 comments related to buy-in. The comments listed by staff members that support the idea of incentives being a major strength of PBIS included the following: “recognizes good behavior,” “rewarding students with lion

bucks," "Lion Bucks reward aspects for students," and "weekly rewards." Expectations and data were the two areas of strength that were listed the least (five times each).

While incentives/recognitions was a category listed as a strength, buy-in was the second most frequently listed strength (11 times). Examples of buy-in include statements such as: Staff involvement is 100%," "A strong desire of staff to make things better," "That staff is trying to help," "faculty buy-in is still strong," and "belief that a unified building can bring change."

Part two of the item asked that the respondent identify weaknesses of the program. There were 113 comments listed. Ninety-seven point five percent (39) listed one weakness, 82.5% (33) listed two weaknesses, 57.5% (23) listed three weaknesses and 45% (18) listed four weaknesses.

Of the 113 responses listed, 34 of the responses were not related to the nine repeated themes, which included consistency, staff buy-in, team/committee, leadership, time, data, student buy-in, expectations and communication. The most frequent weakness sited was related to staff buy-in (22.12% or 25). The buy-in weaknesses mentioned include such direct statements such as "no staff buy-in," "not enough teacher buy-in, and lack of buy-in from staff."

The second highest reported weakness was consistency (17.7% or 20 respondents). The comments listed "lack of consistency" in several areas. The areas of weakness listed included, "no consistency with rules," "inconsistent enforcement," "monitoring isn't consistent" and "monitoring of data." Other areas of weakness reported by the respondents included, the leadership team/committee (3.53% or four respondents), leadership/administration (7.08% or eight respondents), time (1.76% or two respondents),

data (3.53% or four respondents), student buy-in (6.19% or seven respondents), and communication (3.53% or four respondents) (see Table 27).

Table 27

Item #18 List Four Strengths and Four Weaknesses of the PBIS Program at UCHS

1 Strengths	90% (36)
2	67% (27)
3	57% (23)
4	42% (17)
1 Weaknesses	97. 50% (39)
2	82. 50% (33)
3	57. 50% (23)
4	45% (18)

Staff Interview Responses

In the initial staff presentation to recruit participants, the researcher asked for volunteers to participate in a face-to-face interview. Six staff members contacted me by email to indicate that they were willing to participate. The researcher allowed the participants to determine where the interviews would be conducted. Five participants volunteered to meet in the office of the researcher, which is located within the school district but outside of their school setting. One interview was conducted at the school after school hours. The interview items can be viewed in Appendix B. The respondents' responses were recorded and assigned a number to protect their anonymity. The responses were coded, which involved categorizing the information provided by the respondents. The coding identified three primary themes that were repeated throughout the responses: communication, leadership, and staff buy-in. Additionally, there were several subcategories.

According to Kvale (1996), "the main task in interviewing is to understand the meaning of what the interviewees say" (p. 126). The standardized, open-ended interview

method was used. With this approach, the same open-ended items are asked of all the interviewees. The benefit of this method is that is allows the responses to be more easily analyzed and compared. In the following pages, the researcher will address the responses of the six interviewees to the six interview items.

Interview Item 1: How was PBIS introduced to the high school stakeholders? This item was designed to build on survey item four, "A purpose statement was developed and communicated to staff, students, and parts"; and item 13, "Discipline data are gathered, summarized, reported to staff and used to make decisions." Both of these items have an overall theme of communication, keeping the stakeholders informed. The most frequent responses indicated that PBIS was introduced in staff meetings. The presentation was oral and there was never a mention of any written materials being presented for review by the staff. There were several statements that supported the notion that the staff members were not "asked" to participate, however, the word "told" was mentioned several times when communications was mentioned. Statements such as, "The staff was told about PBIS during a staff meeting. I was wondering why we were moving to PBIS because we were doing another program to help with student behavior. " Another statement was, "It was introduced as an initiative that the district decided to adopt to correct and monitor behavior." The third statement, "We were told about the program during a staff meeting. We were told it would help with discipline."

The survey responses to Item 4 indicated that 21respondents Agree (42%) and 11 respondents (22%) Strongly Agree for a combined total of 32 respondents of the 53 respondents (64%) felt that a purpose statement was developed and communicated. Again, a comment to this item stated, "We are pretty much told what we are doing, and

there is little discussion" even though there was 64% positive responses.

The survey responses to Item 13, Discipline data are gathered, summarized, reported to staff, and used to make decisions indicated that a combined 46% (23) Agreed with the statement. However, the combined total of 54% of the respondents responded Don't Know, Disagree and Strongly disagree. The statements reported by the staff really further support the need for better communication. Statements such as "Not aware of this", "Staff not included in decision making," and "We are moving towards that, but we are not there yet" support the need for better communication.

Interview Item 2: How are the school-wide behavior expectations communicated/taught/shared with the high school stakeholders? This item was designed to clarify survey item 5, "School-wide behavior expectations are taught and reinforced regularly", item 9, "The behavior expectations are posted throughout the building" and item 12, "Clearly defined and consistent consequences and procedures for undesirable behaviors are in place and enforced." An analysis of the responses to this item indicated that there were no consistent connections between the responses. Respondents went in their own direction with their interpretation of the question. The lack of a repeated theme led the researcher to question the clarity of the item.

Three respondents to the interview item introduced the concept of the PBIS committee. The committee was reportedly comprised of a team of teachers who created the PBIS materials. The tone of the responses reflected the feeling that the interviewees were being directed and not allowed to have input. The following statements presented by three of the respondents seemed to indicate that staff members felt that they were being directed and not given a voice in the decisions that were made. Respondent 1

indicated,

> A team of teachers developed lessons that were taught to the students so that's how they found out. Also, there were posters placed around the building with the expectations. I don't know if parents and the community even knew we were doing PBIS.

Respondent 2 stated, "The PBIS committee of teachers told us that we would be given lessons to teach the students. They talked about a matrix based on our data. I think they decided what the concerns were."

Respondent 3 reported,

> I was told that the PBIS committee, again in a staff meeting, told the teachers what they would be expected to teach. As support staff, we don't teach but we do interact with students. If this is supposed to be a school-wide program, I think we should be involved.

These statements support the researcher's earlier impression that the staff felt they did not have a voice in the decisions that were being made.

Interview Item 3: How is the PBIS data shared with the staff, students, and the community? This survey item has a focus on the sharing of the data. It was designed to gain clarification on survey Items 8 and 13. Again, five of the six respondents indicated that information is most often shared during staff meetings or professional development. Each of the six respondents had some knowledge of the importance of data as it related to PBIS and decision making. The area of uncertainty that was identified by the interviewees was the question of how the students were made aware of the data. Two of the six respondents indicated that data were posted on bulletin

boards in the hallways. "Data driven," "sharing of data," "data collection," "use data to drive decisions," and "newsletters reporting data to staff" are examples of staff comments indicating that data was a strength of the program. Weaknesses were also identified in survey Item 18. "Data is not being regularly shared," "data updates are not reported," "a lot of stats to interpret," and "data may be skewed" were several of the comments listed. "With the staff, all the data that is collected is shared during our professional learning days and professional development," and "the teachers get some of the data during staff meetings" are examples of similar comments that were listed related to the sharing of data. A concern that was noted in two of the interviewee statements was the need for more data and the sharing of that data more frequently. Respondents stated, "We were told that data was a major part of PBIS, but I don't think we were given enough data" and "I think some of the data was posted but I think we should have had more." Another statement presented the concept of buy-in by stating the following: "There was a board with data but I never really understood the correlation between the PBIS activities we were doing and the data that was presented. I think making sure that the staff could see that the decisions were data driven would have established more staff buy-in."

Interview Item 4: What are your feelings about the effectiveness of this model for high school students? This interview item was developed to clarify the perception of the staff as it related to the program. The item was also included to give additional insight into survey Item 16. The PBIS program has had a positive impact at ABC High School (pseudonym). Reponses to this item introduce the concept of buy-in. One of the respondents stated, "Any model can be effective if the buy-in by staff and the administrative team are supported by central office administration." Another respondent

provided a strong statement supporting the concept of buy-in with the statement. "When you have 100% of your teachers buying into the PBIS idea, it will work."

Communication was a theme that was repeated in the responses to this item and to earlier items. The responses to this item repeated the theme of lack of communication with the statement "we were never told why this program was selected," "We had been doing another program so I don't know why we stopped that one to do PBIS, so I don't know if this was the best program." This response echoed earlier statements that staff were not involved in the decision making process to identify an appropriate program for the school.

Two responses to this item introduce the concept of student feelings from the perspective of the teachers. The statement by a teacher respondent indicated, "I don't think the students ever understood how or why we were doing what we were doing", "They just saw it was another program." A second teacher reported, "Since the students coming from the middle school do PBIS and know about it I think it can work but I think we should start with the freshmen and add a grade each year as the students move up." These responses support the importance of providing information about any new initiative to students, staff and the community. Buy-in can be jeopardized when there is uncertainty about why a program is being initiated.

Fidelity was a term introduced by a respondent when responding to this item. The statement was "The fidelity piece is 100% of the success rate of PBIS. In places were the fidelity is very high, PBIS is effective" ties in to the statements that address consistency as reported in the surveys. The term fidelity ties in to several of the statements in the survey concerning consistency. "No consistency with rules," "Inconsistent enforcement"

and "not all teachers being consistent in enforcing rules" are examples of the statements that support the importance of fidelity in implementation.

Interview Item 5: What changes would you suggest to make PBIS more effective? This item was developed to gather additional information that was not addressed in the survey items. Adherence to teacher recommendations for change can have a positive or negative impact on the climate of a school and the implementation process. The group phenomenon that describes the experiences of a group of people in a particular environment is referred to as climate (Cohen, 2001). As with PBIS, school climate refers to spheres of school life (e.g., safety, relationships, teaching, and learning environment).

The responses to the item "What changes would you suggest to make PBIS more effective" were varied. There were no consistent overall themes surfacing from the item. There were instances where two of the six respondents had similar responses. For example, two of the respondents indicated they had no suggestions or "could not tell if it was effective or not" and in so doing actually did provide suggestions. One support staff response indicated the need for greater inclusivity.

> Sorry but I don't have any suggestions. Being support staff, I didn't really get involved with PBIS. The only thing I can say is if we are going to do a program, we need to make sure all staff members are involved.

This response gives a clear indication that a staff member felt left out of the process. The researcher determined from the survey items that much the PBIS information was shared during staff meetings, which support staff members are not required to attend.

Therefore, there seems to be a gap in communication that can have a negative impact on staff buy-in.

Another response that indicated no suggestions stated the following. "I can't really tell if it was effective or not. I didn't see any real changes. I'm not really sure what would work with high school kids," "I think it is hard to start with kids who are about to leave the school like the seniors," and "If the elementary and middle schools are doing PBIS, then maybe they should start with the ninth graders and move up." Again, the respondents indicated no suggestion, but in fact provided a recommendation to what was similar to that of another respondent. The researcher noted that this recommendation, was not repeated in any of the survey comments, but it seems to be worthy of further consideration.

A change in the incentives/rewards that were offered to the students was another suggestion that was noted by two of the six respondents to this interview item. Statements such as "finding a way to make the reward system more on the level of the student. The kids don't want the things that are being given. We need to ask the students what they want to work for." Another interviewee stated, "The incentives are not good for the high school level. I think we need to look at that." This suggestion was also repeated in the comments to survey Item 18. In survey Item 1, the interviewees were asked to list four strengths and four weaknesses of the PBIS program at ABC High School (pseudonym). Twenty-four of the 96 responses indicated that the incentives were a strength of the program. The respondents said Lion Bucks were given to students in recognition of positive behavior. The bucks could then be traded for various prizes. The

respondents indicated that the recognition aspect of being given the Lion Buck seemed to carry more weight with the students than the trading of the bucks for the prizes.

The second part of survey Item 18 addressed weaknesses of PBIS. To this item, there were 118 responses; however, there were only five responses that even closely referenced incentives as weakness. Incentives were referenced in several of the responses to other items, the reference was usually tied to an inconsistency or staff buy-in.

It was noted in the survey items as well as in the interviews, that there is a concern with the time required to collect data. One respondent to this question stated the following, "Finding a way to make data collection easier, less work added to the teacher's plate." The concern for data collection surfaces in items related to communication. Several respondents noted that the data were not shared with the staff or the stakeholders. This sentiment was also voiced in survey Item 8 "The PBIS leadership team share discipline data with staff regularly". The response to this item generated the following: Disagree (37.25% or 28 respondents) and Strongly Disagree (7.84%) which combined for a total of 45.09% or 23 respondents giving negative responses indicating that the data were not shared regularly.

The concern for professional development was noted by only one of the six staff members interviewed. The statement, "I think the teachers need more [PD] professional development. I think we started trying to implement the program without really understanding what it was" seems to reflect a certain lack of understanding, which may have been resolved by providing more training for staff members. Professional development was addressed in survey item 6, "PBIS professional development has been

ongoing." Fifty staff members responded to the item. Of the respondents, 64% or 32 respondents Agreed with the statement. Four percent (two respondents) Strongly Agreed, 4% (two respondents) responded Don't Know. Eighteen percent (nine respondents) marked Disagree and 10% (five respondents) marked Strongly Disagree, which combined for a 28% (14) negative response to this statement. While more than half of the respondents indicated that professional development was on going, 14 staff members disagreed with the statement. With such a small survey and interview sampling, the concern for more professional development should be considered significant.

Two respondents indicated the importance of involving stakeholders such as students and parents during the early planning stages of any program. One respondent reported, "I think the students should be involved in the program. High school students like to be involved." The appropriateness of PBIS for students at the high school level must be considered. The substantial use of incentives is a noted concern voiced by members of the staff. The overall feeling that students should have been asked if they wanted to be involved with this program or at least have been involved in the planning is a sentiment that was apparent in the survey responses as well as in the interviews. A statement that exemplifies the feeling of stakeholder involvement is as follows:

> Yes, have a component in which parents are directly involved especially as it related to their child and make them apart of the strategies as well as the expectations, because they are probably the single most important stakeholder to the students.

Overall, the researcher did not find a significant amount of consistency in the responses to this item. The differences in perspective may have been related to varied

positions represented by the respondents. While not statistically significant, this is a point that should be noted. Depending on the position a staff member holds, their perspectives and needs concerning program implementation may be very different.

Interview Item 6: What are some of the challenges of PBIS implementation at ABC High School (pseudonym specifically and the high school level in general?

Six staff members responded to this item during the interviews. This item was included to determine if the staff member responses would be similar to the responses gathered from the survey items. The researcher noted four themes that were repeated in the responses: buy-in, incentives, communication and data.

Buy-in is a theme that has been repeated throughout this research project but more specifically buy-in referred to students and staff. Four of the six respondents cited student and staff buy-in as a challenge. One respondent stated, "it is hard to get the teachers on the same page. I know I said it earlier but buy-in is important. We have had several programs to address discipline but we never stick to it." Another staff member responded similarly by stating, "it's important for staff to buy-in because if they don't buy-in, it's just another thing for staff to do." Comments such as these support the comments listed in the survey item concerning buy-in. Buy-in was listed as a weakness with 25 of the 113 responses indicating either directly or indirectly that staff buy-in was a weakness.

In addition to staff buy-in, student buy-in was also cited by two of the six interview respondents. The respondents indicated the following, "so often we don't consider student buy-in because in many schools what programs are going to be implemented is determined by the staff members with little to no student input." The

questionnaire comment that demonstrates the staff concerns with student buy-in was, "Juniors and seniors are hard to bring onboard when they Don't Know anything about the program." Student buy-in is also cited as a weakness in survey Item 18 which asks the respondents to list four strengths and four weaknesses of the PBIS program at ABC High School (pseudonym). While only five (4.42%) of the 93 staff members who responded to this item cited student buy-in as a weakness, while not statistically significant, the researcher believes it is significant because it has been cited as a weakness in both the survey and the interview responses.

The third theme to result from the interview responses was communication/involvement. Three of the respondents reported the following challenges, "communicating expectations to the students," "I know it can be hard to make sure everyone is involved but if any program is going to be successful, you have to involve everyone." The third interviewee stated,

> Making sure everyone is involved and understands what we are supposed to be doing. Things were just put in my box and I really didn't know what to do with them. I really don't like finding out about stuff at the last minute.

Each of these statements document different areas of communication weakness.

The reference to communication of expectations is also repeated in survey Item 18, which asks the respondents to list four strengths and four weakness of the PBIS program. Of the 113 responses, there were seven (6%) responses, which referred to expectations. Examples of comments that referenced expectations included "students not involved in PBIS process," "Many are not aware of what is being done," and "lack of student involvement."

When asked to list weaknesses on survey Item 18, there were 113 responses to the item. Four (3.5%) responses referred to communication. Examples of statements that supported the interviewee reference to communication include "communication is lacking because of chaos in the building" and "lack of posting information." While the number of survey items noting communication as a weakness was not high, the reference is significant due to it being referenced both in the survey item responses and during the face-to-face interview.

Current Reality Interview

In order to gain more insight into the current status of PBIS, a face-to-face interview was conducted with the administrator who facilitated the program during the 2012-2013 school years. The open-ended interview method used with this interviewee was consistent with the interviews that were conducted earlier in the study. As with the previous face-to-face interviews, the interviewee was permitted to select the location for the interview. The interviewee selected an off campus location for the interview.

Interview Item 1: What did you do to prepare to take on the leadership of PBIS?

> I was not familiar with the program before coming to the high school. I represented the high school at the District Leadership Team (DLT) meetings. During those meetings, I was able to learn what was being done in the other schools in the district. I was also able to learn what the data looked like in the other buildings. After attending several leadership team meetings, I decided it would be helpful to visit another high school that was implementing PBIS. I learned that schools that have achieved a level of expertise are called

demonstration schools and provide support for other schools. Meeting and talking with the team members from the demonstration school was a great experience. I learned how that high school had introduced PBIS and how they were able to sustain the program over the years. Importantly, I learned how they had achieved staff buy-in. I really learned a lot.

Interview Item 2: How was the school leadership team selected?

During a staff meeting, volunteers were requested to serve on the PBIS leadership team. The team was composed of twelve members. Eight of the team members had served on the original team and four of the members were first time participants. As with the original 2008-2009 team, the team members were volunteers. Also, during the team member recruitment period, I shared with staff members information concerning the responsibilities of team membership. There were questions concerning the time requirements and meeting schedule. There were also questions concerning training.

Interview Item 3: How is the PBIS data shared with the staff, students and the stakeholders?

A data board is posted in the main hallway. The data is updated weekly. The data that is posted reflects the discipline data in the building; the number of referrals, and suspensions. The data is not shared with the stakeholders at large. The practice of not sharing the data with stakeholders is consistent with that documented from the study survey questions.

Interview Item 4: Do you think the PBIS model is effective for a high school?

I believe the model can be effective but there are several barriers to program

success; staff buy-in, time for professional development, and time for teachers to introduce and reinforce the lessons. The need for staff buy-in was a theme that was repeated through the surveys and face-to-face interviews. During my observation time at the demonstration high school, I learned that they had introduced the program to one grade level at a time. I think introducing the program to the ninth grades first is a great suggestion because the program has been very effective at the middle school level and those students at just leaving the middle school.

Interview Item 5: What changes would you suggest? The administrator responded as follows to this question:

> That is a tough question. I have several thoughts. First, I believe professional development must be frequent and ongoing. Student participation on the leadership team is essential. High school students are involved in many leadership aspects of the high school, so I think they should be a part of this team also. They participate on many committees so why not PBIS. At the demonstration high school, students were very effective on the team.

Professional development is a theme that was also repeated in the study survey questions and the face-to-face interviews.

Interview Item 6: What are some of the challenges of PBIS implementation?

> PBIS is a data driven framework. Gathering the data and communicating the data to staff, students and stakeholders is a challenge. The time for professional development is another challenge. Professional development is needed for all staff members in the school: teachers, secretaries, security staff, bus drivers and

cafeteria workers. Finally, providing incentives that high school students are interested in is very difficult. Incentives are tied to funding and funding is not unlimited. The incentives that are of interest to high school students can be expensive, so providing the incentives was an ongoing challenge.

Incentives, professional development, and data gathering were themes that surfaced from the surveys and face-to-face interviews.

At the conclusion of the interview session, the administrator indicated that he felt PBIS can have a positive impact on school climate. While school climate was not the focus of this interview, the reporting administrator felt that the impact of PBIS on school climate and culture are factors that should be considered.

Summary

The qualitative data resulting from the online surveys and face-to-face interviews presented in this chapter tell the story of PBIS implementation in the suburban high school in the study. The qualitative analysis of the face-to-face interviews and the computer-based survey exposed common strengths and weaknesses as well as areas of agreement and areas of contradiction. The outcome of the interview on current realities provided insightful information that was very similar to that found in the survey and face-to-face interviews.

Chapter Five: Discussion

PBIS framework includes proactive strategies for defining and supporting appropriate student behavior to create positive school environments. The use of data driven decision making and the development of systems to improve implementation fidelity is a primary aspect of the framework (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012). While the research related to PBIS has been studied at the elementary and middle school levels (Safran & Oswald, 2003), research with a focus on PBIS at the high school level has been limited (Sugai et al., 2010). Additionally, program implementation research has also been very limited. The purposes of this study were to (a) document how PBIS was implemented in a suburban high school compared to "best practices" in the literature; (b) explore unique challenges at the high school level and how these challenges were met; (c) document the impact on discipline, school culture, and teacher perceptions; and (d) determine if staff members feel PBIS is having an impact on discipline.

This study was conducted with the staff members of a suburban high school with approximately 3,200 students. Fifty-four staff members initially logged into the survey, but only 53 completed the online Survey Monkey survey and six staff members participated in face-to-face interviews.

Summary of Findings

The information gathered from the surveys and interviews was very insightful. Fifty-three staff members participated in the survey. An average of 50.68 staff members responded to the first 16 questions; however, only 40 staff members responded to the last two questions, which required a written response. The major themes (buy-in, incentives, common language, expectations, data, and leadership team) from the Items 17 and 18 on

the survey were reinforced by the interviews. The major themes from the interviews documented concerns with staff buy-in, data, and leadership. Buy-in was a reoccurring theme both on the survey and the interview responses. The interview questions were tied to several of the survey questions and in each instance the interview responses supported the responses from questionnaires.

Research Questions and the Data

In this study, there were four research questions: (a) What was the process used to implement PBIS at a suburban high school? (b) Were the seven components for PBIS program development identified by Colvin (2007) addressed? (c) What are the adaptations that need to be made to make PBIS appropriate for high school students? and (d) Do staff members feel PBIS is having an impact on discipline at the high school?

The 18 survey items addressed the implementation process with the exception of Item 1, which gathered participant information. Items 2-16 addressed various aspects of implementation. Items 17 and 18 were not related to implementation, but rather examined staff members' assessment of program impact, strengths, and weaknesses. In addition to the online surveys, interview questions were also presented. The responses to the survey items and the interview items that directly related to research Question 1 were congruent. The data supported that the implementation process was followed. The responses that implied "Strongly Agree" and "Agree" to procedural items were consistent. However, it was noted that the items that referred to student behavior received low ratings. To those questions, the responses documented a level of disagreement (Strongly Disagree or Disagree). The processes were in place but the students were not responding. Items 12 and 16 are items that referred to student

behavior. Item 12 had a combined score of 82% indicating disagreement. The second example, Item 16 had a combined score of 40% of disagreement. As indicated earlier, the students were not responding, thus having little impact on discipline in the school as reported by the staff members.

Recall from Chapter Two, Colvin's (2007) seven components of a proactive school-wide discipline plan; include (a) purpose statement, (b) school-wide behavior expectations, (c) teaching the behavior expectations, (d) maintaining the behavior expectations, (e) correcting problem behavior, (f) using the data, and (g) sustaining the plan for the long haul. Survey Questions 4, 5, 8, 10, 12, 13, and 15 were developed to examine research Question 2, which focused on the seven components. When the survey items and the interview items were reviewed, they were in agreement thus supporting that the components were addressed during the implementation of PBIS at the high school in the study.

The third research question focused on the changes that would need to be made to make PBIS more effective at the high school level. Survey Item 18 asked for strengths and weaknesses of PBIS at the high school level, but the question did not clearly ask for the information the researcher was seeking. While there were 103 identified strengths and 107 weaknesses, the item did not really ask for changes. However, Item 5 on the face-to-face interview specifically asked the question, What changes would you suggest to make PBIS more effective? in order to gain the information the researcher was seeking related to increasing effectiveness. As indicated in Chapter Four, there were no overall consistent themes surfacing from the item. There were six face-to-face interviews. The six interview items were developed to provide additional information for clarification of

the survey items. This lack of an overall theme emerging from the items opened the door for supposition as to why this had occurred. A closer examination of the comments led to the researcher's supposition of needed changes related to the communication of information, improvement in the incentives for students, need for professional development, time required for data collection, and staff buy-in.

The fourth and final research question, Do staff members feel PBIS is having an impact on discipline at the high school? is one of the most important questions of the study. This question really gets to the basis of the study, improving implementation. While the implementation process discussed in the study was related to PBIS, the refinement of implementation practices can be transferred to the implementation of other initiatives in the high school setting. In qualitative research, how the respondent feels can be taken into consideration unlike in quantitative research where the emphasis is on quantifiable information (McRoy, 2009). The highest response to this survey item was "Don't Know." The responses to the face-to-face interview items that were included for clarification of this item did not provide the clarification. The responses were vague and inconsistent and supported the "Don't Know" survey response. The researcher is not certain as to why the respondents did not clearly answer the questions, but my supposition reflects back to the fact that the respondents did not clearly understand the expected outcomes of PBIS to the degree that they were able to clearly articulate the impact that the program had on the school environment.

Research Understandings

Taken together, the interview results and the survey results paint very similar pictures. The PBIS program was implemented at the suburban high school in the study.

The staff members were able to identify strengths and weakness in the implementation process. The study documented that the implementation steps outlined by Colvin (2007) were followed, however, there is no indication as to the level of implementation fidelity because the researcher did not develop the questions in such a manner that that information would be measured. There were three themes that surfaced throughout the study: lack of staff buy-in, communication, and incentives. The responses indicated that there was limited staff buy-in, which was evidenced by the staff not participating in the teaching of the lessons or using the established common language with the students. Communication was another area of concern. Staff members did not receive information consistently so there was often confusion as to the expectations. Lack of incentives was the third theme to surface. It was very difficult to find incentives that high school students wanted. The small tokens that were used at the elementary and middle school levels were not appropriate for students at the high school level. Incentives for high school students were thought to be very costly. While the response to survey Item 3 indicated that the administrators were supportive and actively involved, there were no frequent references to how the administrators were involved with PBIS throughout the survey comments sections or in the face-to-face interviews suggesting that the administrator role was not well defined at this school. The study successfully documented multiple challenges to the implementation process at the high school level.

Research outcomes. The survey items and the face-to-face interview were adapted from the implementation Colvin's 2007 checklist. The results of the survey highlighted some of the same challenges as reported in the *Positive Behavior Support in High Schools: Monograph from the 2004 Illinois High School Forum of Positive*

Behavioral Interventions and Supports. Sugai et al. (2004) outlined five factors that needed to be present before any interventions could be initiated: (a) social skill fluency and generalized use should not be assumed, (b) peer social culture must be considered in any implementation effort, (c) not all students enter high school with the capacity to take responsibility for their learning success of failure, (d) not all adolescents "know better" and natural consequences are not sufficient to change behavior, and (e) students are not always self-motivated by academic and social success. The five factors were reflected in the survey questions.

Based on the alignment of the research literature reviewed in Chapter Two with the findings of this study, PBIS implementation was effective at the high school level. Further, based on the study findings, the following factors should be considered for PBIS implementation: (a) students need to be involved on the leadership team, (b) professional development must be continuous, (c) communication with all staff members is critical and should not be overlooked, (d) data must be shared regularly and staff need to know when that is going to happen, and (e) the leadership team should be reflective of all staff members in the building. When I examined the evaluation tools that are critical parts of the evaluation process (SET, BOQ, BAQ), the items assessed by the tool are again reflective of my survey and interviews.

Answers to the research questions. Overall, the research found that implementation of PBIS at the high school level is difficult. The study highlighted some of the same challenges that were identified in the literature in implementing PBIS in elementary schools: need for teacher and staff buy-in, need for good professional

development in the techniques underlying PBIS, and a need for good communication among the many stakeholders in the district.

Based on the survey results, PBIS had a limited amount of success at the high school. However, from the time of the programs initial implementation, sustainability was not achieved. The leadership team was not able to establish strong staff buy-in. As noted in the research, it is recommended that 80% of the staff support the implementation of the program. The goal of 80% was never achieved at the study site. The administrative team could not develop the momentum needed to achieve sustainability. The data seems reliable based on the lack of consistency between the survey and the face-to-face interviews. Several of the themes such as buy-in and professional development were repeated in multiple questions and in both of the questioning modalities that were used in the study.

The Current Realities of PBIS Implementation

PBIS has been implemented in this suburban school district at the elementary level since the year 2000. The program started at two elementary schools and over the next few years was implemented in the then four additional elementary schools, and the middle school. The high school came on board during the 2008-2009 school years. Since the initial attempt at implementation, the high school has fluctuated between full, partial, and no activity. Table 28 illustrates the years of active implementation and the assessments that were given each year.

Table 28

Years of Implementation/Assessment Administered at the High School

Year Active	Evaluation	Overall Score
2008-2009	SET	80% (did not make 80% on the Behavioral Expectations Taught subscale)
2009-20010	SET	82% (did not make 80% on the Behavioral Expectations Taught subscale)
2010-2011	BOQ	64%
2011-2012	No evaluation	N/A
2012-2013	No evaluation	N/A
2013-2014	SET	82% (did not make 80% on the Behavioral Expectations Taught Subscale)

While this study was not designed to be longitudinal, the longitudinal information has given the researcher a different insight into the results of the study. When looking at the information reported in the surveys administered to the staff and the staff interviews, it would seem that PBIS should be unfolding in the high school with very few problems. The overall responses indicated that the major areas of the program were being addressed. The following survey items were identified as areas of concern: the teaching and reinforcing of behavior expectations, the sharing of discipline data regularly, the posting of behavior expectations throughout the building, staff and administrator agreement as to which problems are office managed and which problems are staff managed, and clearly defining consequences and procedures for undesirable behaviors.

The School-Wide Evaluation Tool (SET) is used to evaluate the degree to which schools are implementing the key components of PBIS. Horner et al. (2004) have identified two scores that are most indicative of program implementation, the overall SET

score (ranging from 0 – 100) and the Behavioral Expectations Taught subscale. The data from this study, as well as the data from the School-wide Evaluation Tool (SET) documents that the high school in the study was implementing PBIS at the universal level. The goal would be to maintain 80% overall score on the SET on each of the areas over the years to demonstrate that they are sustaining their PBIS efforts. As illustrated by Table 28, the high school did achieve the 80% overall score however they did not achieve a score 80% or higher on the Behavioral Expectations Taught subscale as required for an area to be considered implemented during the 2008-009, the 2009-2010 nor the 2012 – 2013 school years. The contradiction is as follows: during the 2010-2011 school year the Benchmark of Quality (BOQ) was administered and the high school scored a 64%. During the 2011-2012 school years the program went dormant. In other words, the staff perspective was the contradiction—they did not participate in the assessments, did not submit the required recommitment forms, and did not participate in professional development opportunities. As for the students, there were no incentives tied to the PBIS criteria and no PBIS celebrations. The data from the SET and BOQ that were completed by the staff, support the survey results that suggested that the program was not being implemented with fidelity (see Table 28).

Threats to Validity of the Implementation

As mentioned earlier, this study was not designed to be longitudinal; however, looking at implementation over a span of time has given the researcher unforeseen insight into implementation factors. Two factors surfaced that had not been accounted for in the original plan that the researcher believed may have been threats to the validity of implementation: changes in leadership and changes in the leadership team.

In the course of this study, there were three changes in the building principal. None the principals who were in head leadership positions had any experience with PBIS. Due to their lack of experience with PBIS, none of the head building principals facilitated the leadership team. While the study survey reported that the administration was supportive, the survey did not ask "how" and "in what ways" administration was supportive. During the 2011-2012 school years, the leadership team was facilitated by an assistant principal that received PBIS professional development. These challenges may be responsible for the failure of PBIS to become an effective part of the school culture, as the leadership part was missing.

The second challenge to the validity of the implementation was the change in the leadership team. Due to natural transitions such as retirements, reassignments and other circumstances, the leadership team membership changed by 50% over a five-year period. A change of this magnitude can affect a teams' ability to function and may require many hours of professional development for new team members.

Leadership Implications of the Study

As a result of this study, there are several leadership implications for district level and building level PBIS program implementation. This study was not designed to specifically examine the impact of leadership on the implementation process; however, the findings were clear that leadership plays a significant role in the implementation process. While the focus of the literature reviewed for the study was on the implementation of PBIS, the role of leadership in the implementation process can be superimposed on the general implementation process. As documented in the literature, the role of the administrator is to provide enthusiasm for the project. Administrators play

an important role in communicating to the staff the work of the leadership team. It is that communication that helps develop staff buy-in (Kasper, 2005). According to the survey results, this did not occur. Administration was noted as being supportive, but no specific indications as to the type of support they provided was in any of the comments. The same lack of specificity concerning the role of administration was also noted during the face-to-face interviews. While general references were made concerning administration, there was no evidence that administration played a significant role during the implementation process.

District level administration has the responsibility of providing the funding for the project. Just as school level teams are responsible for communicating the data to staff and students, district level administration is responsible for keeping the Board of Education and the community informed of the progress of the project. Reports reviewed by this researcher showed evidence that district level administration did provide funding for the project. Board of Education agendas documented that reports and data were shared with the Board and members of the community. However, survey results did not indicate that staff members were aware of the funding source. The survey items did not clearly inquire as to the involvement of the Board of Education; therefore, this factor cannot be addressed.

If the researcher were to conduct this study again, it would be extended to include an investigation of the impact of implementation practices on school climate and culture. There would also be focus on the level of staff buy-in and the barriers to buy-in.

Study and School Recommendations

One of the primary purposes for conducting this study was to develop recommendations that could be shared not only with the high school in the study, but for the high school community in general. Fidelity, professional development, administrative support, and funding are several factors that apply to PBIS implementation across grade levels. However, the researcher recommends four implementation factors specific to the high school community: student involvement, the use of incentives, and the inclusion of one grade level at a time during the initial implementation process. Another recommendation that was discovered by the researcher from personal experience gained from monitoring implementation at the middle school level was the use of the advisory period as a time to teach and reinforce expectations.

As noted in the research, identifying incentives is particularly difficult at the high school level. This researcher would recommend that the students be surveyed to see what incentives they are interested in. The decisions concerning incentives cannot be administrator or teacher-driven. Student participation on the leadership team is a way to gain student input. Students are able to provide insight into the thinking of students. Student involvement on the leadership team may also determine the level of student acceptance. Students may be more receptive to program ideas presented by their classmates.

At the elementary level, school-wide implementation is typical. However, focusing on one grade level at a time may be advisable at the high school level. While the students in the district in this study were introduced to PBIS at the middle school level, reintroducing the program to ninth graders can be built-in as a part of the high

school transition process. As that ninth grade class moves up to the 10th grade, they are able to support in incoming ninth graders. Each year the project can transition to the next grade level until all levels are involved in the project. It would also allow more focus on the needs of each level. Lessons could be developed to reflect the needs and ages of each level.

The final recommendation involves how to present the recommended PBIS lessons. High schools usually have an advisory period to which students are assigned by grade level. The advisory period would provide the optimal time to present the lessons/discussion topics without interference with instructional time. The teaching of the lessons is essential to the establishment of and communication of expectations. If time is not allowed early on in the school year, it can be almost impossible to communicate expectations after the school year has started.

Recommendations for Future Research

Two areas of interest that surfaced for this researcher while conducting the study was the impact of PBIS on the culture and climate of a school. In the review of the literature, there were references to the relationship between discipline, teacher turnover and academic achievement, and the impact it may have on the culture and climate of a school. The high school in this study implemented PBIS in the hopes of reducing the number of out-of-school suspensions, increasing the attendance rate and increasing academic achievement. Expanding the research on the impact of PBIS on culture and climate will add support to the argument of PBIS at the high school level.

Conclusion

This study was designed to look at PBIS implementation practices at a suburban high school. The study qualitatively examined the implementation process that was used to implement PBIS. The study confirmed that the program was being implemented; however, the staff feeling about the program was lukewarm. The highlights of the study were the recommendations that were generated following an analysis of the data that was gathered from the surveys and the face-to-face interviews.

For this researcher, the most important aspect of the study was the gaining of an understanding of the implementation factors that most influence successful PBIS implementation at the high school level such as student participation and PBIS professional development for all staff members. Staff follow up was a major component of this study. The researcher committed to sharing the results of the study with the leadership team at the high school. Therefore, the development of recommendations was very important.

The most important findings of the study were found in survey Item 17, 'If PBIS has had a positive impact in your classroom, list three of the ways.' If no impact seen in your classroom, please indicate on line A, and survey Item 18, 'List four strengths and four weaknesses of the PBIS program at the high school.' These two items required that the staff provide written comments. The comments that were provided clearly illuminated the staff perceptions of PBIS at the high school. These comments provided a foundation for the stated recommendations.

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Appendix A

Staff Survey

Survey Scale
(1) strongly disagree (2) disagree (3) neither agree or disagree (4) agree (5) strongly agree

1. **Please mark the appropriate box**					
Male					
Female					
Teachers					
Administrator					
Support Staff					
Other					
In building less than 1 year					
In building 1-3 years					
In building 4-6 years					
In building 7-10 years					
In building more than 10 years					
2. Staff members were involved in the selection of the building level leadership team. If strongly disagree please explain.					
3. Administrators are supportive and actively involved. If strongly disagree please explain.					
4. A purpose statement was developed and communicated to staff, students and parents. If strongly disagree please explain.					
5. School wide behavior expectations are taught and reinforced regularly. If strongly disagree please explain.					
6. PBIS professional development has been ongoing. If strongly disagree please explain.					
7. The PBIS building level leadership team is representative of the building staff (administrators, general education teachers, special education teachers, support staff etc). If strongly disagree please explain.					
8. The PBIS leadership team shares discipline data with staff regularly. If strongly disagree please explain.					

9. The behavior expectations are posted throughout the building. If strongly disagree please explain.					
10. Staff and administration agree on what problems are office managed and what problems are staff managed. If strongly disagree please explain.					
11. System for rewarding student behavior is established If strongly disagree please explain.					
12. Clearly defined and consistent consequences and procedures for undesirable behaviors are in place and enforced. If strongly disagree please explain.					
13. Discipline data are gathered, summarized, reported to staff, and used to make decisions. If strongly disagree please explain.					
14. Funding has been allocated for the PBIS program. If strongly disagree please explain.					
15. A monitoring plan has been developed to ensure that staff members are implementing the program with fidelity. If strongly disagree please explain.					
16. The PBIS program has had a positive impact at the high school. If strongly disagree please explain.					
17. .If PBIS has had a positive impact in your indicate on line classroom, list three (3) of the ways. If no impact seen in your classroom, please indicate on line "A". If strongly disagree please explain.					
18. List four (4) strengths and four (4) weaknesses of the PBIS program at the high school.. If strongly disagree please explain.					

Appendix B

Face-to-Face Interview Items

Interview Item 1: How was PBIS introduced to the high school stakeholders?

Interview Item 2: How are the school-wide behavior expectations communicated/taught /shared with the high school stakeholders?

Interview Item 3: How is the PBIS data shared with the staff, students, and the community?

Interview Item 4: What are your feelings about the effectiveness of this model for high school students?

Interview Item 5: What changes would you suggest to make PBIS more effective?