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The Relationship between School-Wide Positive Behavior Support Implementation and Office Discipline Referrals at the Secondary Level

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by

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A Dissertation proposal submitted to the Education Faculty of Lindenwood University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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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 at Lindenwood University and that I have not submitted it for any other college or university course or degree.

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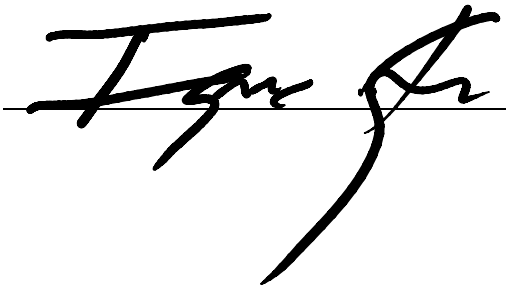
Signature:  Date: 7/11/14

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Abstract

School Wide Positive Behavior Support (SW-PBS) is a current framework for schools to model their discipline strategies. SW-PBS has a framework built on identifying behaviors and predictors of their occurrence, routines to correct and prevent these problems, and implementation of these routines school wide to collect information to evaluate these strategies. Office discipline referrals were reviewed in the secondary school of Rural District 10 in Missouri from 2004-2013 to determine the significance between implementation of SW-PBS and the number of office discipline referrals. School climate was also studied in Rural District 10 as well as other secondary schools around the state of Missouri. A survey was sent to students, teachers and administrators from Rural District 10 and teachers and administrators from other districts around the state that have implemented SW-PBS for at least two years. The data revealed no statistically significance difference between the number of office discipline referrals before and during implementation of SW-PBS in Rural District 10. Based on the perceptions from the questions on the survey, teachers and administrators in Rural District 10 felt as though the climate and culture of the building overall was better compared to the perceptions of students in Rural District 10. Comparing Rural District 10 to other districts, Rural District 10 teachers and administrators felt as though the climate and culture of their secondary school was better, overall, as compared to other districts around the state of Missouri that have implemented SW-PBS for at least two years.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Making schools a safer, more engaging place to be is the goal of most educators. Reducing office discipline referrals, promoting good behavior and increasing academic performance are a good starting point to achieve these goals. (Sprick, 2009) School Wide Positive Behavior Support (SW-PBS) is the playbook that many schools are using to lead them to the place where these goals are possible. Sugai and Horner (2002) explained:

> Schools are important environments in which children, families, educators, and community members have opportunities to learn, teach, and grow. For nearly 180 days each year and 6 hours each day, educators strive to provide students with learning environments that are stable, positive, and predictable. (p. 134)

Safe environments are critical to student success and provide positive role models, a safe place to learn and grow both socially and academically and a place to teach about positive relationships. SW-PBS represents important efforts to achieve the desired environments.

This chapter included a review of the background and history of SW-PBS. The conceptual framework, the statement of the problem, and the purpose of the study were presented. The research questions to guide the study were posed. Additionally, the definition of key terms, limitations, and assumptions were detailed.

Background of the Study

For decades, schools have continually debated and dealt with different approaches to discipline. Skiba and Sprague stated (2008), “disruptive behavior consistently tops the list of teachers’ and parents’ concerns about education and most schools have used a reactionary and punitive approach to undesired behavior” (p. 38).

This approach has sometimes led to an immediate reduction in the undesired behavior, but usually this is only temporary and often reoccurs (Cohen, Kincaid, & Childs, 2007). Disciplinary removal of the student has had negative effects on student achievement and school climate. According to Skiba and Sprague (2008), "students suspended in sixth grade are more likely to receive office referrals or suspensions by eighth grade than students who had not been suspended" (p. 39) during the school year. This clearly shows that early interventions are important to the sustained success of students.

Educators are discovering that different approaches must be employed in order to change behavior. The United States dropout rate emphasizes the inability of educational systems to prepare student to take on responsibilities of adulthood (Sprick, 2009). Punishing students and only providing negative consequences in the hope of making students want to stay in school and strive to excel is not working (Sprick, 2009). In contrast, a more proactive approach that emphasizes teaching expectations and rewarding positive behavior has resulted in more long term behavior change (Cohen et al., 2007).

Research during the last decade has shown SW-PBS to be valid (MU Center for SW-PBS, 2013). SW-PBS requires that staff members within a school understand the actions necessary for change and the framework of the program. Horner and Sugai (2011) explained the framework of SW-PBS:

> Although learning and teaching processes are complex and continuous and some behavior initially is not learned, key messages from this science are that much of human behavior is learned, comes under the control of environmental factors, and can be changed. (p. 8)

Problem behaviors are becoming more understandable and more strategies to deal with these problem behaviors are being explored.

According to Horner and Sugai (2011), "The PBS approach is founded on this science of human behavior. Different procedures and strategies are applied at different levels, but the fundamental principles of behavior are the same" (p. 8). Understanding the fundamental principles is the key for schools to effectively address problem behavior. Scott and Martinek (2006) maintained this framework is built on the following questions:

> (a) What behaviors are of concern to the school and what predicts their occurrence? (b) What is the simplest agreeable combination of rules and routines that will prevent the problems? (c) How can those changes be implemented in a consistent school wide manner? (d) What information can be collected to assess and evaluate the effects of the strategies used? (p. 165)

These questions are at the foundation of implementing SW-PBS. Designing relevant and engaging interventions to address these behaviors is crucial to implementation. Assessing data prior to interventions to make sure the intervention is appropriate is very important to get the right intervention in place. Gresham, Sugai, and Horner (2001) explained:

> PBS procedures emphasize assessment prior to intervention, manipulation of antecedent conditions to reduce or prevent the likelihood that a problem behavior will occur, development of new social and communication skills that make problem behaviors irrelevant, and careful redesign of consequences to eliminate factors that maintain problem behaviors and to encourage more acceptable

> replacement social skills and behaviors. PBS is an approach that emphasizes teaching as a central behavior change tool and focuses on replacing coercion with environmental redesign to achieve durable and meaningful change in the behavior of students. (p. 332)

Conceptual Framework

The most effective behavior intervention plans are based on the function of behavior (Sugai & Horner, 2010). These interventions are designed so teachers can focus on encouraging prevention of the problem as well as the reaction (Scott, McIntyre, Liaupsin, Nelson, Conroy, & Payne, 2005). SW-PBS is considered a conceptual framework that a school can adopt to make a successful impact on student behavior (Sugai & Horner, 2010). Schools that implement SW-PBS often use underpinnings from the Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) as the method of assessing the relationship between the environment and behavior (Scott et al., 2005).

This study utilized the concepts of SW-PBS as a lens to analyze the data in Rural District 10 and other districts throughout Missouri. Dr. Sugai demonstrated the effectiveness of using the FBA in determining the function or purpose of the behavior; therefore, to be effective, school personnel must develop and implement logical and practical strategies that are tied to the function of the behavior (Scott et al., 2005). Research questions for the study were created from the concepts underlying SW-PBS and the FBA.

Problem Statement

According to Osher (2010), “schools face a number of challenges related to disruptive and antisocial students. The behavior of these students interferes with

learning, diverts administrative time, and contributes to teacher burnout" (p. 48). As a consequence, many districts have resorted to zero tolerance and other punitive practices, hoping to control these sometimes insurmountable problems (Lewis-Palmer, Sugai, & Larson, 1999). Suspensions are sometimes used to rid the school of perceived trouble makers, yet this has not seemed to improve school climate (Skiba & Sprague, 2008). Schools with higher rates of school suspension tend to have lower academic quality and school climate. Skiba and Rausch (as cited in Skiba & Sprague, 2008) found schools with higher suspension rates have lower scores on standardized achievement tests, regardless of economic level or student demographics.

SW-PBS is the research based alternative to the reactive and exclusionary methods that schools have used extensively over the last decade (Sugai & Horner, 1999). During the 1980s, a need was identified for improved selection, implementation, and documentation of effective behavioral interventions for students with behavior disorders (Gresham, 1991; Sugai & Horner, 1999; Walker et al., 1996). In response, researchers at the University of Oregon began a series of applied demonstrations, research studies, and evaluation projects. These efforts indicated that greater attention should be directed toward prevention, research-based practices, data based decision-making, school-wide systems, explicit social skills instruction, team-based implementation and professional development, and student outcomes (Biglan, 1995; Colvin, Kame'enui, & Sugai, 1993; Horner, Sugai, & Horner, 2010; Lewis & Sugai, 1999).

Past research related to the implementation of SW-PBS and its relationship between the amount of behavior problems and general climate of the school has been

mostly limited to studies examining elementary schools (Horner & Sugai, 2011). High school implementation and the potential effectiveness of SW-PBS is a relatively limited body of research (Horner & Sugai, 2011).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between the years of implementation of SW-PBS at the secondary level and the number of office discipline referrals. The perception of the overall climate of the building as it related to student behavior was also reviewed. Although SW-PBS is an implementation framework designed to enhance academic and social behavior outcomes for all students, most of the studies have been focused at the elementary level. There have been limited studies at the urban and secondary level due to the low amount of secondary schools that participate in SW-PBS (Bohanon et al., 2006). The relationship between the years of implementation of SW-PBS and the number of office discipline referrals was evaluated in a rural secondary school and the perceptions of the overall climate were reviewed in secondary schools that are both rural and urban.

Research questions and hypothesis. The following research questions guided this study, and a null hypothesis was proposed.

1. What relationship, if any, exists between the years of implementation of SW-PBS in Rural District 10 and the number of office disciplinary referrals at the secondary level before and during implementation?

2. What are student, teacher, and administrator perceptions of the climate of Rural District 10 as it relates to student behavior at the secondary level after implementation of SW-PBS?

3. What are teacher and administrator perceptions of the climate of the building as it relates to student behavior at the secondary level in other districts that have implemented SW-PBS and how does this compare with Rural District 10?

H_o: There is no relationship between the implementation of SW-PBS in Rural District 10 and the number of office disciplinary referrals at the secondary level before and during implementation.

Definition of Key Terms

For the purposes of this study, the following terms are defined:

Benchmark of Quality (BoQ). This is a 53 item rating scale developed in Florida's Positive Behavior Support Project for the purpose of measuring the degree of fidelity with which a school is implementing SW-PBS (Cohen et al., 2007). This instrument was developed as a self-evaluation tool to allow school teams to review their progress toward implementing critical elements of SW-PBS (Cohen et al., 2007).

Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA). The Missouri University (MU) Center for SW-PBS (2013) defines an FBA as "… (a) observable problem behaviors, (b) the contexts or routines…[of] problem behaviors…, (c) the specific antecedent events … that reliably predict occurrence of problem behaviors, and (d) the consequences that appear to maintain the problem behavior" (p. 4).

Office Disciplinary Referral (ODR). An electronic or paper form filled out by a teacher describing unwanted behavior exhibited by a student. This form is sent to the principal's office for a disciplinary action to be taken by the principal or assistant principal (Horner & Todd, 2012).

School climate. The feelings and attitudes that are elicited by a school's environment (Loukas, 2009).

School-wide Evaluation Tool (SET). An instrument designed by the University of Oregon to provide a rigorous measure of primary prevention practices within school-wide behavior support (Horner & Todd, 2012). A SET is conducted by a trained consultant who looks at discipline data, surveys, and interviews to assess the level of implementation (Horner & Todd, 2012).

School-wide Positive Behavior Support (SW-PBS). A framework which includes the application of evidenced-based strategies and systems to help schools increase academic performance, increase safety, decrease problem behavior, and establish positive school culture (Kincaid, Childs, Blase, & Wallace, 2007).

Secondary schools. For the purpose of this study, a secondary school will be considered a school which includes grade levels 9 through 12 (Missouri Department of Elementary & Secondary Education, 2011).

Suspension. The short-term removal of a student from school for a disciplinary infraction (Skiba & Sprague, 2008).

Limitations and Assumptions

The following limitations were identified:

1. Variables could contribute to reducing ODRs other than the implementation of SW-PBS.
2. The level of consistency of which the teachers are submitting ODRs.
3. Student and staff surveys (see Appendices A & B) that were adapted from the Delaware Positive Behavior Support Initiative.

The following assumption was accepted:

1. The responses of the participants were offered honestly and without bias.

Summary

The effectiveness of behavioral interventions has long been debated. School leaders are looking for alternatives that are longer lasting, proactive, and less exclusionary (Scott & Martinek, 2006). SW-PBS have allowed schools to provide a framework to establish clearly defined and explicitly taught behavioral expectations, enforce fair and consistent responses to students who do not follow these expectations, and implement a system for increasing positive interaction and data based decision making for behavior (Sprick, 2009).

The definition of key terms, limitations, and assumptions were presented. This study examined SW-PBS implementation at the secondary level and its significance on the number of discipline referrals submitted to the office. School climate as it relates to behavior problems was also assessed using a survey tool.

In the next chapter, the history of behavioral interventions and the research concerning SW-PBS implementation was examined. Chapter Three included an overview of the research design for this study, the research questions, and hypothesis. Chapter Four included a review of the analysis of the study, the findings of the relationship between SW-PBS and ODRs and the perceptions of school climate in SW-PBS schools. In Chapter Five, conclusions of the study were reviewed, and next steps for possible future research were explored.

Chapter Two: Review of Related Literature

Reacting to the disruptive behavior of students whose behavior distracts the learning environment and compromises their own learning is the prime goal of SW-PBS (Loukas, 2009). Suspending and expelling students does not always lead to progressing a student's behavior in a positive manner. SW-PBS has gained popularity in education due to the positive approach to dealing with disruptive behavior in schools. Proponents of SW-PBS claim that this framework will reduce discipline occurrences which will ultimately lead to more instructional time (Horner & Todd, 2012).

This chapter begins by examining the history of discipline approaches at the secondary level. The development of SW-PBS was examined along with the three tiers of the SW-PBS framework. School climate and how it is understood was reviewed. The chapter also included a review of research in the area of high school approaches to SW-PBS.

History of Discipline Approaches at the Secondary Level

SW-PBS is the research based alternative to the reactive and exclusionary methods that schools have recently adopted to address problem behavior.
Sugai (2000) explained the following about SW-PBS, "SW-PBS is not a new intervention package or a new theory of behavior, but an application of a behaviorally based systems approach to enhance the capacity of schools, families, and communities to design effective environments" (p. 7). These environments help bridge the gap between research practices and the actual environment where education takes place. Sugai (2000) also stated, "attention is focused on creating and sustaining school environments that improve lifestyle results (personal, health, social, family, work, recreation, etc.) for all children

and youth by making problem behavior less effective, efficient, and relevant and making desired behavior more functional" (p. 7).

Public schools have been challenged with school safety and student behavior for many years. Administrators are faced with the ongoing challenge of providing a safe environment for students and staff members while assuring an education for all students. According to Morrissey, Bohanon, and Fenning (2010), "many schools have addressed concerns about handling discipline by creating increasingly punitive reactionary policies" (p. 27). Policies that are labeled as zero-tolerance have created situations where students have been removed from school for "seemingly trivial behaviors such as sharing over-the-counter pain medication or holding up a paper gun resulting in suspension or expulsion of students" (p. 27). Today's educators are asked to meet the diverse needs of all students, including those with emotional and behavioral disorders. P. Baker (2005) explained:

> The movement towards inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom combined with federal mandates that all learners meet or exceed certain curricular guidelines makes it increasingly challenging for educators to meet the moral and ethical responsibilities to provide reasonable accommodation to support all learners and provide a safe environment. (p. 51)

Providing inclusion for all students requires significant training and expertise (P. Baker, 2005).

Principals are constantly faced with the dilemma of removing the troublesome students from school. Removing the student improves the school climate, but also risks taking away the educational opportunity of every student (Carr, 2007). Most school

administrators use these suspensions because they need to do something and do not know what else to do. The most effective and practical alternative to suspension and expulsion has been SW-PBS (Bohanon, Flannery, Malloy, & Fenning, 2009).

A school district's main task is to educate and facilitate the growth of their students. Schools take different approaches to meet this goal, but all schools must have a climate and culture where students feel accepted, safe, and nurtured. Schools also must be a place where order and a moral law is expected and maintained. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (2013), "schools cannot allow unacceptable behavior to interfere with the school district's primary mission. To this end, school districts adopt codes of conduct for expected behaviors and policies to address unacceptable behavior" (p. 2). School boards develop these policies and in this process need to look at each offence differently by weighing the "consequences of the punishment and the balance between individual and institutional rights and responsibilities" (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2013, p. 5).

There are different types of consequences school districts can employ. The most severe consequences school districts administer are out of school suspension and expulsion. These consequences are administered for behavior that usually has to do with alcohol, drugs, assault, weapons, or any act that is considered severe and could also affect other members of the student body. Members of the American Academy for Pediatrics (2013) testified:

> It has been traditionally held that, in removing the offending student from the school environment, the student's influence on others would be limited, the school environment would thereby be improved, and a message would be sent

> that certain behaviors will not be tolerated. Research has demonstrated, however, that schools with higher rates of out-of-school suspension and expulsion are not safer for students or faculty. (p. 4)

Schools must continue to monitor what outcomes occur from placing students on out of school suspension.

Other types of suspension include in-school suspension. In-school suspension is for more minor offenses that could include tardiness, insubordination, disrespect, cell phone violations, or truancy (Furlong, Felix, Sharkey, & Larson, 2005). In-school suspension is employed on a far more regular basis than out-of-school suspension. Research conducted on the effects of suspension shows alarming information.

Losen and Martinez, (2013) explained, "in this first of a kind breakdown of data from over 26,000 U.S. middle and high schools, we estimate that well over two million students were suspended during the 2009-2010 academic year" (p. 3). According to these statistics, one out of every nine secondary school student was suspended at least once during that year. The instructional time that is lost in a school year due to suspensions is alarming. Losen and Martinez (2013) went on to explain, "as other studies demonstrate, the vast majority of suspensions are for minor infractions of school rules, such as disrupting class, tardiness, and dress code violations, rather than for serious violent or criminal behavior" (p. 3). Recent studies have shown that a student who is suspended once in ninth grade is twice as likely to drop out of high school. These statistics should be alarming to everyone involved with K-12 education.

The Losen and Martinez (2013) study did not indicate that school districts want to suspend students, just what the consequences of suspending students are. School districts

continue to review the data and look for ways to improve policy and procedure to make sure more students are graduating and leading productive lives after graduation. Most schools "believe greater awareness will help produce more effective approaches that create safe, healthy, and productive learning environments, which research indicates is best accomplished without resorting to frequent out-of-school suspensions" (Losen & Martinez, 2013, p. 10).

Considering suspensions have such a direct correlation to dropping out of school, schools must reassess if suspension is the best approach to take. School districts cannot afford to have a substantial percentage of student's not complete graduation requirements. A national focus on graduation rates has been raging for the last several years being overseen by the federal governments. Balfanz, Bridgeland, Bruce, and Fox, (2013) explained:

> The What Works Clearinghouse, established in 2002 by the U.S. Department of Education, made key recommendations to reduce dropouts: utilize data systems to obtain an accurate picture of students who drop out and those at risk of doing so; assign adult advocates to students at risk of dropping out; provide academic support and enrichment to improve academic performance; implement programs to improve students' classroom behavior and social skills; personalize the learning environment and instructional process; and provide rigorous and relevant instruction to better engage students in learning and provide them with the skills they need for postsecondary success. (p. 12)

In this detailed report, there are many remarks about "programs to improve behavior and social skills" that schools need to employ. These early warning and

intervention systems are addressed in school districts using SW-PBS. Balfanz et al. (2013) defined these systems, "states, school districts, and schools should collect individualized student data to track early warning indicators of potential dropouts as early as elementary and middle school" (p. 17). Periodic reports to all stakeholders, notifies and identifies high risk students who will need a tiered intervention support system.

School districts also need to monitor students who are getting behind academically and provide supports so that these same students will be college and career ready by the time they graduate from high school. High schools need to collaborate with stakeholders, community organizations, and in some cases national organizations to give the needed interventions both at school and home. Balfanz et al., (2013) stated, "interventions can include mentoring and tutoring, targeted literacy and math curricula support, 9th grade academies, extended school time, and a wide range of community-based supports to address academic, social, medical, and mental health needs" (p. 17).

The Development of SW-PBS

Over the past 10 years more than 11,000 elementary, middle level, and high schools have adopted SW-PBS as a framework for improving their social and academic outcomes (Flannery, Elise, & Horner, 2010). Studying schools that have implemented SW-PBS can be a tough task. Bradshaw et al. (2012) stated, "schools continue to be an important context for preventive interventions targeting a range of behavioral and mental health problems. Demands on teachers and shifting priorities in response to federal legislation poses unique challenges…" (p. 1).

The history of SW-PBS reveals that it "emerged from the science of behavioral technologies or applied behavior analysis as a response to what some practitioners

perceived to be a misuse of power and control" (Michaels, Brown, & Mirabella, 2005, p. 6). Positive behavior support continually strives to get a "balance between ideology and the science of behavior change" (Michaels et al., 2005, p. 8). Knoster, Anderson, Carr, Dunlap, and Horner, (2003) explained, "SW-PBS embraces the idea that while humanistic values should not replace empiricism, these values should inform empiricism... science tells us how to bring about change, but our person-centered values tell us what changes are most worth bringing about" (p. 184).

SW-PBS is a multitier approach for building a school wide social culture that enables students to succeed academically and to build skills for the rest of their lives. High schools implementing this approach have improved attendance, reduced discipline referrals, and improved academic engagement (Flannery et al., 2010). Based on their research, Luiselli, Putnam, Handler, and Feinberg (2005) listed the key features in the SW-PBS model that include:

> (1) setting consensus-driven behavior expectations; (2) teaching critical interpersonal skills; (3) providing systematic positive reinforcement for meeting and exceeding expectations; (4) monitoring intervention efficacy continuously through data collection and analysis; (5) involving all stakeholders in the formulation of discipline practices; and (6) reducing and eliminating reactive, punitive, and exclusionary strategies in favor of a proactive, preventive, and skill building orientation. (p. 184)

As shown in Figure 1, there are four SW-PBS elements that make up the framework of SW-PBS that schools consider when looking at implementation.

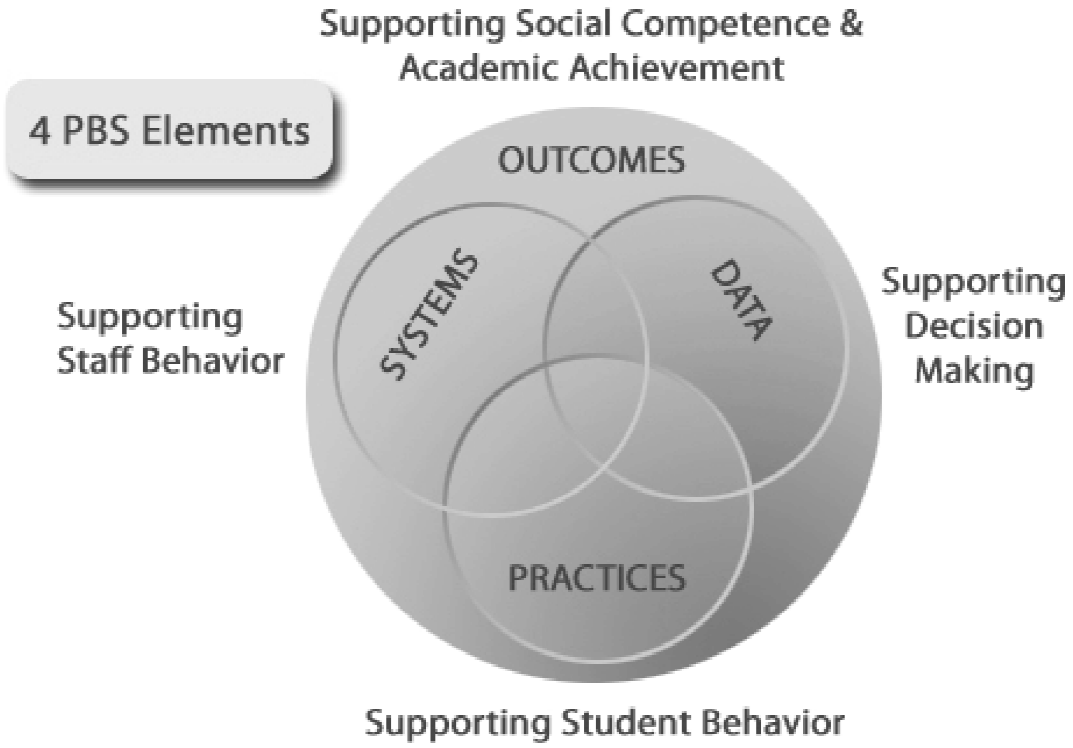


Figure 1. Four elements of SW-PBS. Adapted from "4 PBS Elements," by MU Center for SW-PBS, 2013, Missouri Schoolwide Positive Behavior Support, p. 2. Copyright 2013 by MU Center for SW-PBS.

SW-PBS and the Three Levels of Intervention

SW-PBS is based on systems of behavior support provided by a continuum of interventions for students. According to Sugai and Horner (2002), SW-PBS uses a three-tiered intervention approach to behavioral intervention. C. Baker (2005) explained:

> The first layer presented strategies for teaching all students and staff behavioral expectations throughout the school. It was vital to teach and reinforce to students these universal strategies through mentoring programs, intensive tutoring, classroom management, support groups, peer clubs, and service learning. (p.120)

The second level of the triangle "was labeled Secondary Prevention and was aligned to the at-risk group" (C. Baker, 2005, p. 121). These groups "of students do not respond to the universal interventions, and a more intensive approach would provide support for academics and behavioral skills" (C. Baker, 2005, p. 121). C. Baker (2005) stated:

> The last layer was labeled Tertiary Prevention and was used for the group of students who displayed severe and persistent antisocial behavior. Tertiary strategies would involve team members from the school as well as social agencies to develop individualized comprehensive interventions. As the prevention strategies move toward more intensive supports, the financial cost to the school increases. The ultimate goal then, is to keep more students in the primary and secondary level and reduce the number of students who required tertiary strategies. (p. 121)

A triangle is often used in the description of a three-tiered system of interventions (see Figure 2). C. Baker (2005) explained that the bottom 80 to 90% of the right triangle refers to the universal interventions and represents the percentage of students who did not

have serious behavior problems. The next part of the triangle represents the 5-15% of the students who were at-risk of exhibiting serious problem behavior and need specialized group interventions, and the tip of the triangle represents the 1-7% of the students with chronic/intensive problem behaviors who need individualized interventions. This triangle is recognized as the SW-PBS logo as it represents the continuum of behavior supports for students.

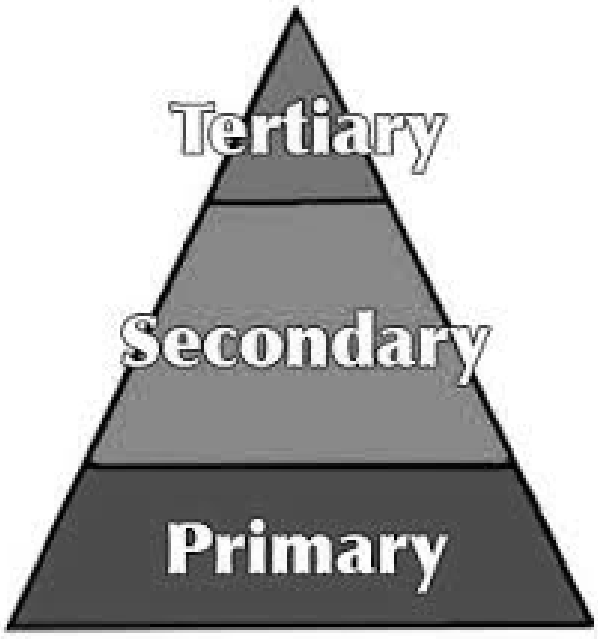


Figure 2. SW-PBS Triangle. Adapted from "Tertiary Level Prevention," by MU Center for SW-PBS, 2013, Missouri Schoolwide Positive Behavior Support, p. 1. Copyright 2013 by MU Center for SW-PBS.

The Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) has become a common way to analyze and assess students to determine what interventions should be utilized (McConnell, 2001). An FBA can be used to examine how the environment plays a role in the behavior of a student (Scott et al., 2005). Through research, the FBA has been helpful in understanding why the student is showing certain problem behaviors. As soon as school personnel can understand the function of negative student behavior, they can design interventions that meet the needs of the individual student.

Effective behavior intervention plans need to include strategies that align to the student's environmental and instructional needs so a desired response is most likely achieved. To be effective at this level, the strategies that are developed must be aligned with the type of behavior the student is exhibiting (Scott et al., 2005).

Tier 1. SW-PBS is a model that uses a proactive approach. When a school is developing the SW-PBS framework, they start by implementing a building leadership team led by a coach. This team and coach are primarily chosen by the staff with assistance from the administration (Safran, 2006). SW-PBS teams must work together to accomplish the goals of increasing academic achievement, preventing inappropriate behavior, and reducing the likelihood of the continuation of problem behavior (MU Center for SW- PBS, 2013). Domitrovich et al. (2010) suggested:

> Universal prevention interventions target the general public or an entire population that has not been identified on the basis of individual risk. Because universal programs are positive, proactive, and are provided independent of individual risk status, their potential for stigmatizing participants is minimized. As a result, they may be more readily accepted and adopted. (p. 73)

When schools begin to steadily model the teaching of appropriate behavior skill into the curriculum, these schools will begin to develop how to assemble school environments so the appropriate behavior will begin to be a more common occurrence (Dunlap, Carr, Horner, Zarcone, & Schwartz, 2008). An important component of SW-PBS is communication between the school and families. This is important so families will begin to comprehend and support what the school is attempting to accomplish with implementation of SW-PBS (Simonsen & Sugai, 2012). The school can also be a resource for families to demonstrate how the SW-PBS concept can be utilized in families' homes that will in turn support SW-PBS implementation in the school (Dunlap et al., 2008).

This implementation provides the foundation for Tier 1 supports through engaging in school-wide structures of teaching and acknowledging proper skill and behaviors (Beaman & Wheldall, 2000). The school then uses consistent structures to discourage inappropriate actions while training the faculty to implement the SW-PBS process (MU Center for SW-PBS, 2013). Another important piece of Tier 1 implementation is training staff to effectively collect, analyze, and utilize data for making decisions that relate to the climate and culture of the building and to gauge and evaluate the effectiveness of the Tier 1 system (MU Center for SW-PBS, 2013).

As shown in Figure 3, 80-90% percent of students are included in Tier 1 interventions. These interventions should target every student in the school.

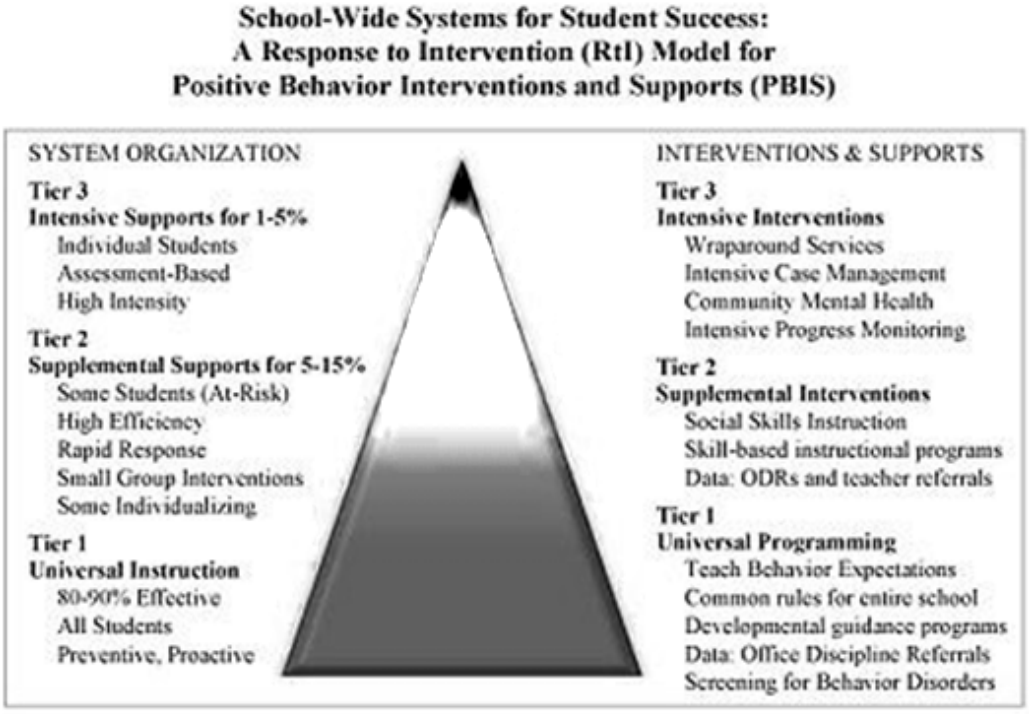


Figure 3. Percentage of students targeted for Tier 1 interventions. Adapted from "What is School-Wide PBS?," by MU Center for SW-PBS, 2013, Missouri Schoolwide Positive Behavior Support, p. 4. Copyright 2013 by MU Center for SW-PBS.

Tier 2. There are students who respond to the support offered by Tier 1 but will still have problem areas that need to be addressed. The problems will be observed in academics, behavior, or both (Killu, Weber, Derby, & Barretto, 2006). This will require more support for the student to be able to progress in a positive way. Tier 2 interventions can address students with one or both of these issues and be effective in getting them back on track (MU Center for SW-PBS, 2013).

Tier 2 interventions rely on the foundation established by Tier 1 systems. There must be school-wide prevention, or students who are in need of these interventions will

not be successfully identified. For SW-PBS to be effective, Tier 1 systems must be in place, and the school staff must be committed to using Tier 1 systems consistently (Dunlap, Sailor, Horner & Sugai, 2009). Data are key pieces in properly identifying students who will need more support and exactly what type of support will be needed.

The leadership team helps the school staff analyze data to place students, the school will decide on a group of rules that help with identification based on the data (MU Center for SW-PBS, 2013). Some schools will set a benchmark number of ODRs before a student is assessed to determine the proper placement of intervention. (C. Baker, 2005). Other sources for data that would determine in which intervention a student is placed could be families, student reports, counselor reports, or other reports from teachers.

Interventions for Tier 2 usually begin with a small group setting where procedures are reviewed and support is given by students with similar needs (MU Center for SW-PBS, 2013). The number of students who need these more intensive supports is usually between 15-20% (MU Center for SW-PBS, 2013). Teachers who instruct these small group interventions should be given the data on the students so they may respond with the appropriate intervention techniques (Beaman & Wheldall, 2000). These small group interventions allow for the student to be able to connect and have positive interactions with another adult. This is an extremely important piece as most of these students do not have positive experiences within their school day (Dunlap, Sailor, Horner & Sugai, 2009).

According to the MU Center for SW-PBS (2013), critical structures that are involved in building operative Tier 2 interventions are:

- Adequate funding and support by staff and administration should be

accessible before the interventions begin.

- Common language should be used that is consistent with school-wide expectations of the rest of the school.
- The teacher should have a say in how the intervention is put in place. The intervention should not require much extra effort on the side of the teacher. The intervention should fit well into the schedule and not require too much time or resources because if too much is required it will most likely not be implemented consistently.
- A system that allows teacher to refer students and procedures for referral and how students will be identified should be clear.
- A system to show and report data and time to monitor the intervention to see if it should be kept, changed or eliminated. (p. 5)

Tier 2 interventions are labeled using a variety of names and types. Whatever it may be called, Tier 2 interventions provide a way for students to practice the skills that are being taught and reinforced in the intervention time (MU Center for SW-PBS, 2013). As shown in Figure 4, Tier 2 interventions may include approximately 15 % of students who display at-risk behavior that seems to be worsening.

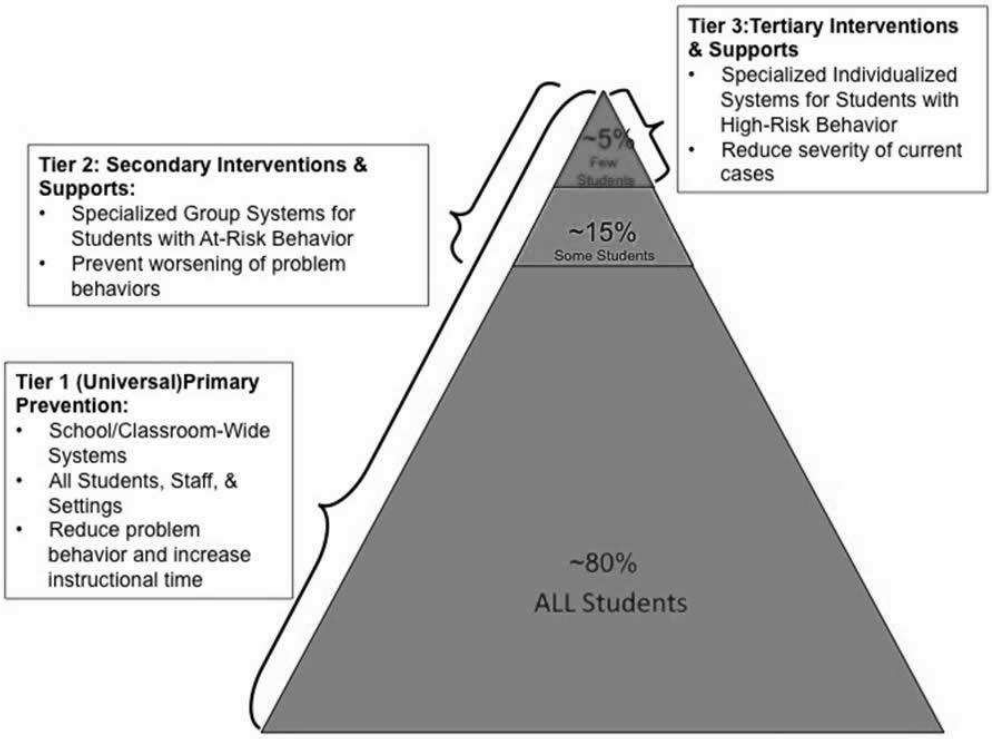


Figure 4. Tier 2 interventions. Adapted from "What are the 3 Tiers of Intervention," by MU Center for SW-PBS, 2013, Missouri Schoolwide Positive Behavior Support, p. 5. Copyright 2013 by MU Center for SW-PBS.

Tier 3. A very small percentage of a school's student population (1-5%) will be supported by Tier 1 and Tier 2 and still be experiencing some trouble in their school day (MU Center for SW-PBS, 2013). Most of these students will have prior school issues. Decisions for these students need to be based on the data and other factors that successfully identify who these students are and what intervention will be most appropriate and meaningful.

The Tier 3 supports are based on the individual student and be very specific to the

needs of the student (Gresham, Sugai & Horner, 2001). The needs and function of behaviors must be examined for students with behavior problems who require the more intensive interventions that Tier 3 provides. To understand these needs, an FBA is usually needed. A staff member with experience in behavioral assessment is needed so that an individualized support plan can be developed and implemented (Dunlap et al., 2008).

According to Missouri SW-PBS (2013), Tier 3 systems within a school must include:

- Staff members who have been trained in functional assessment, principles of behavior and behavior support planning.
- A structure during the school day that allows for flexible time that will allow teachers to meet and plan.
- A way for teachers to easily identify students and refer them. (p. 2)

When forming a building team to implement student plans individualized for Tier 3, staff members who have expertise and who are connected to these students on a daily bases need to be included (MU Center for SW-PBS, 2013). The team will also include the student's family as well as the student. For this system to be successful, the team must be given time to collaborate regularly during the school day (Tillery, Varjas, Meyers & Collins, 2010).

As shown in Figure 5, Tier 3 interventions should be individualized, intense and include durable procedures.

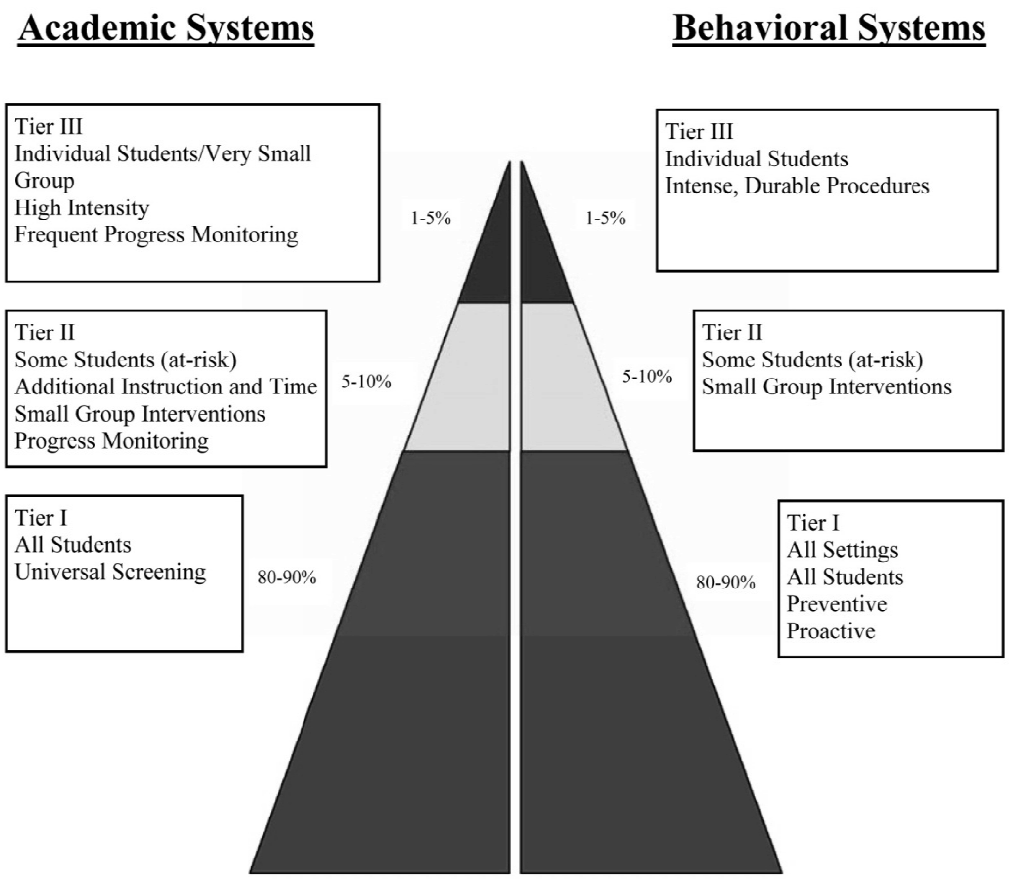


Figure 5. Tier 3 interventions. Adapted from "A Continuum of Support for All," by MU Center for SW-PBS, 2013, Missouri Schoolwide Positive Behavior Support, p. 1. Copyright 2013 by MU Center for SW-PBS.

School Climate

School climate can be defined in many different ways. Sometimes the school climate is a feeling one gets when in a school. Some aspects of school climate can be measured and some cannot. Collins, Thomas, and Parson (2010) explained how researchers view school climate:

Researchers have conceptualized school climate in several different ways and

> have utilized a variety of methodologies to define the construct of school climate as it relates to various student outcomes. It is difficult to generalize findings in the research to recommend change in practice because many scholars have developed various constructs of school climate that include but are not limited to factors such as: school organizational structure, facilities management, stakeholder perceptions of the school, interpersonal relationships, the level of community support and engagement. (pp. 34-35)

Although there are a variety of different ways to attempt to measure school climate, most people can agree on the fact that a good school climate is an integral part of any successful school (Collins et al., 2010). Collins et al. (2010) went on to state, "regardless of the instrument used to assess school climate, research has demonstrated positive relationships between school climate and student achievement. What is necessary, however, is a consistent measure of school climate" (p. 36).

School climate is so crucial to academic success that through research, policymakers have added aspects of measuring school climate to be included in accreditation processes and the accountably of schools (Collins et al., 2010). Collins et al. (2010) noted that this is "in the blueprint of the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act" (p. 36). As shown in Figure 6, there are five stages to improving school climate. Preparation, evaluation, understanding, implementation and re-evaluation are the steps schools need to take when monitoring and assessing school climate.

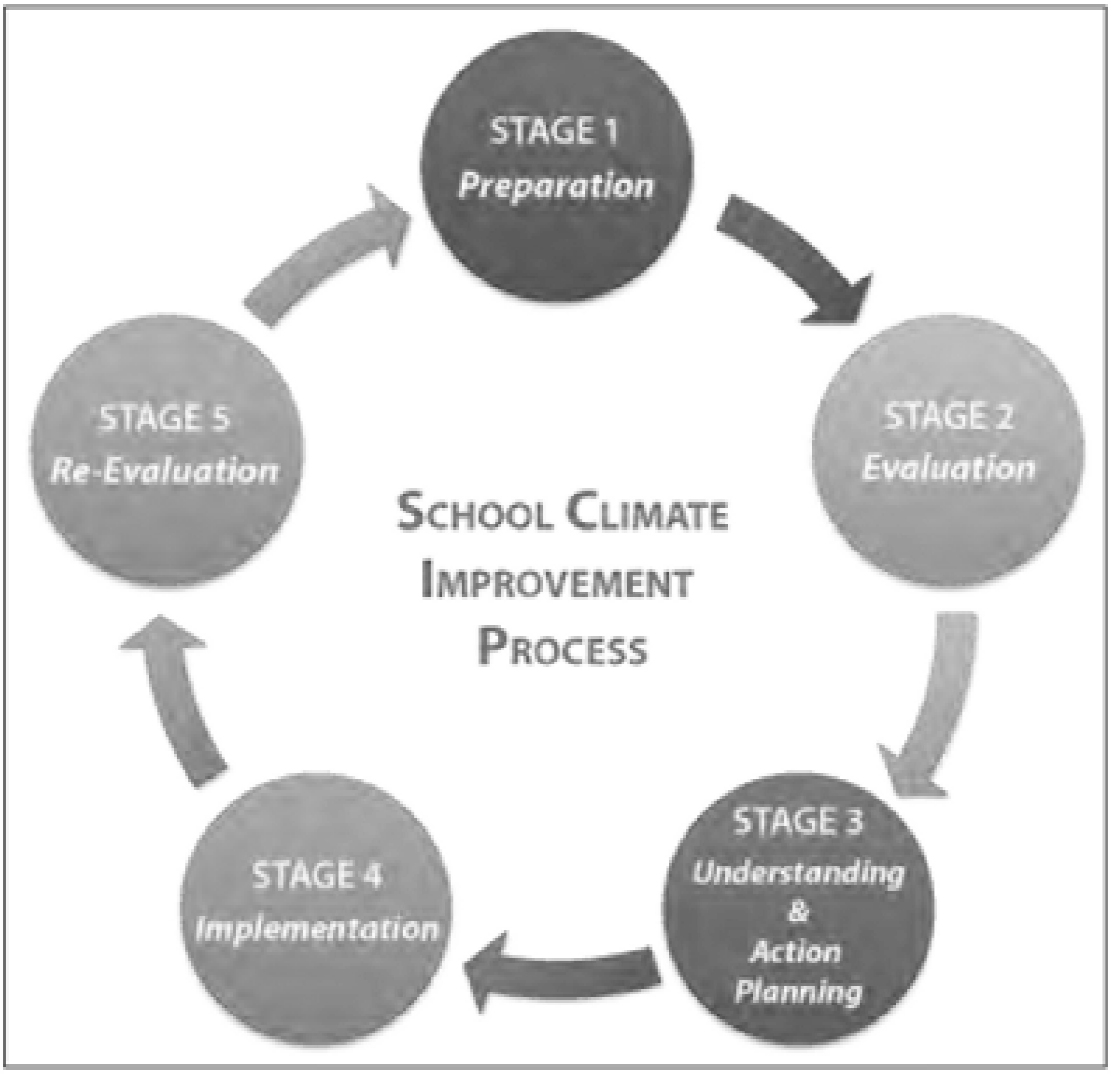


Figure 6. School climate improvement process. Adapted from "Stages of the Improvement Process," by J. Infantino & E. Little, 2005, *Educational Psychology*, p. 502. Copyright 2005 by the Educational Psychology Association.

Research on school climate has led to increased accountability in schools across the United States. With so many issues to deal with and increased pressure from the federal government, a school principal can get overwhelmed and not know exactly what to focus on (Collins, Thomas, & Parson, 2010). School principals must find a way to

simplify the complex school environments of which they operate. MacNeil, Prater, and Busch, (2009) indicated, "it is important to realize that culture is complex because it has very unique and idiosyncratic ways of working. When an organization has a clear understanding of its purpose, the culture will ensure that things work well" (p. 74).

Aligning the purpose with the actions of the organization is the job of the leadership within the organization. MacNeil et al. (2009) explained, "when the complex patterns of beliefs, values, attitudes, expectations, ideas and behaviors in an organization are inappropriate or incongruent the culture will ensure that things work badly" (p. 74). Measuring school climate can be a difficult task. Students and teachers often have varying perspectives on what the climate is like within a school. Mitchell, Bradshaw, and Leaf (2010) suggested:

> Despite the increased interest in research and programming aimed at improving student and teacher perceptions of school climate, there has been limited research examining the congruence between student and teacher perceptions, or the extent to which student and staff perceptions vary as a function of individual and school characteristics. Social-cognitive theory suggests that although students and their teachers share a common objective experience, their differing roles within the school will likely lead to discrepant perceptions of the environment. (p. 272)

Looking at a school through the eyes of a student can be very beneficial for a staff (Infantino & Little, 2005). Sometimes staff members forget the student perspective and continue with business as usual even though the students might have a completely different opinion of the real issue (Infantino & Little, 2005).

SW-PBS and Missouri

Missouri is a very active state in SW-PBS. The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has partnered with several state universities to provide ongoing support for the SW-PBS framework. According to the MU Center for SW-PBS (2013), "the Missouri Schoolwide Positive Behavior Support (MO SW-PBS) initiative is committed to serving all stakeholders in achieving improved educational outcomes for our schools and districts." (p. 2). Missouri is also striving to be in the top 10 states in educational performance by 2020. Leaders at The MU Center for SW-PBS (2013) stated:

> The four strategic goals of the Top 10 by 20 are:
>
> 1. All Missouri students will graduate college and career ready.
> 2. All Missouri children will enter kindergarten prepared to be successful in school.
> 3. Missouri will prepare, develop, and support effective educators.
> 4. The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will improve departmental efficiency and operational effectiveness. (p. 2)

The MO SW-PBS has certain goals that have been established that are assessed on a yearly basis. The 2012-2015 MO SW-PBS three-year Action Plan includes 10 primary goals that are reviewed annually. The goals and supporting objectives are regularly revised and updated based upon review of data and include:

1. Continue collaboration and integration with other state initiatives
2. Develop and upgrade standardized training for MO SW-PBS personnel

3. Develop infrastructure for district and school coaches training and technical support

4. Conduct evaluation and data collection to assess progress toward school/district and state-level goals

5. Maintain the state leadership team

6. Continue standardization of training content for district and school teams across all tiers

7. Revise incentives for schools to implement effective data collection systems and report results in a timely manner

8. Upgrade state website and dissemination activities to provide more training materials and technical support via various technological alternatives

9. Continue development of systematic and innovative training for tiers 2 and 3

10. Build systems for replication, sustainability and improvement to support long-term results. (p. 4)

As shown in Figure 7, the number of schools and districts working with MO SW-PBS has steadily increased. During the 2012-2013 school year, 758 schools in 213 districts were active participants, accounting for 32% and 38%, respectively of Missouri public and charter schools. (MU Center for SW-PBS, 2013).

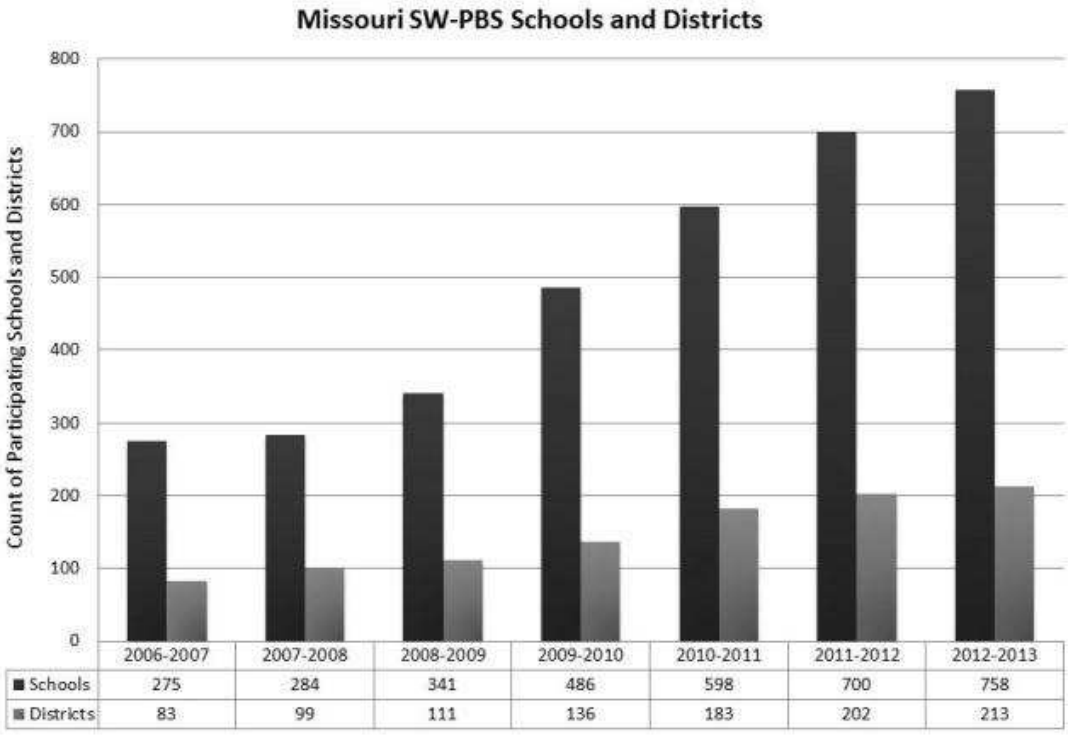
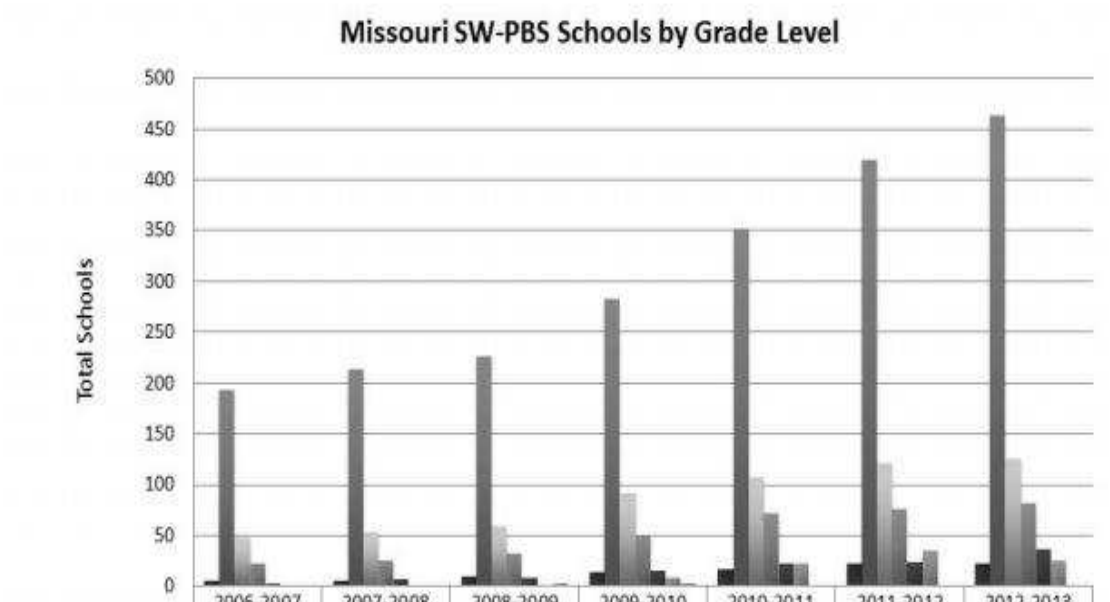


Figure 7. Missouri SW-PBS Schools and Districts. Adapted from "MO SW-PBS Schools and Districts," by MU Center for SW-PBS, 2013, Missouri Schoolwide Positive Behavior Support, p. 6. Copyright 2013 by MU Center for SW-PBS.

High schools that make up the MO SW-PBS network are fewer compared to middle and elementary school participation. As shown in Figure 8, high schools are beginning to participate more often as the participation has increased from 23 high schools in 2006 to 82 in 2012. MO SW-PBS training and support have expanded beyond K-12 schools to include early childhood, alternative school programs, and career/technical schools (MU Center for SW-PBS, 2013).



	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Early Child	5	6	10	14	17	23	23
Elementary	193	215	227	284	353	420	464
Middle / Jr. High	48	53	59	92	107	121	125
High School	23	25	33	51	72	76	82
Alternative	3	7	9	15	22	24	37
K-8 / K-12				8	22	35	26
Career / Technical	0	1	3	3	1	1	1

Figure 8. Missouri SW-PBS Schools by Grade Level. Adapted from "MO SW-PBS Schools by Grade Level," by MU Center for SW-PBS, 2013, Missouri Schoolwide Positive Behavior Support, p. 7. Copyright 2013 by MU Center for SW-PBS.

As shown in Figure 9, student populations in MO SW-PBS schools are more diverse ethnically/racially, economically (using free/reduced price meals status as a proxy for economic status), and in percentage of students with individualized education plans (IEPs) when compared to all Missouri students or students in non-SW-PBS schools (MU Center for SW-PBS, 2013).

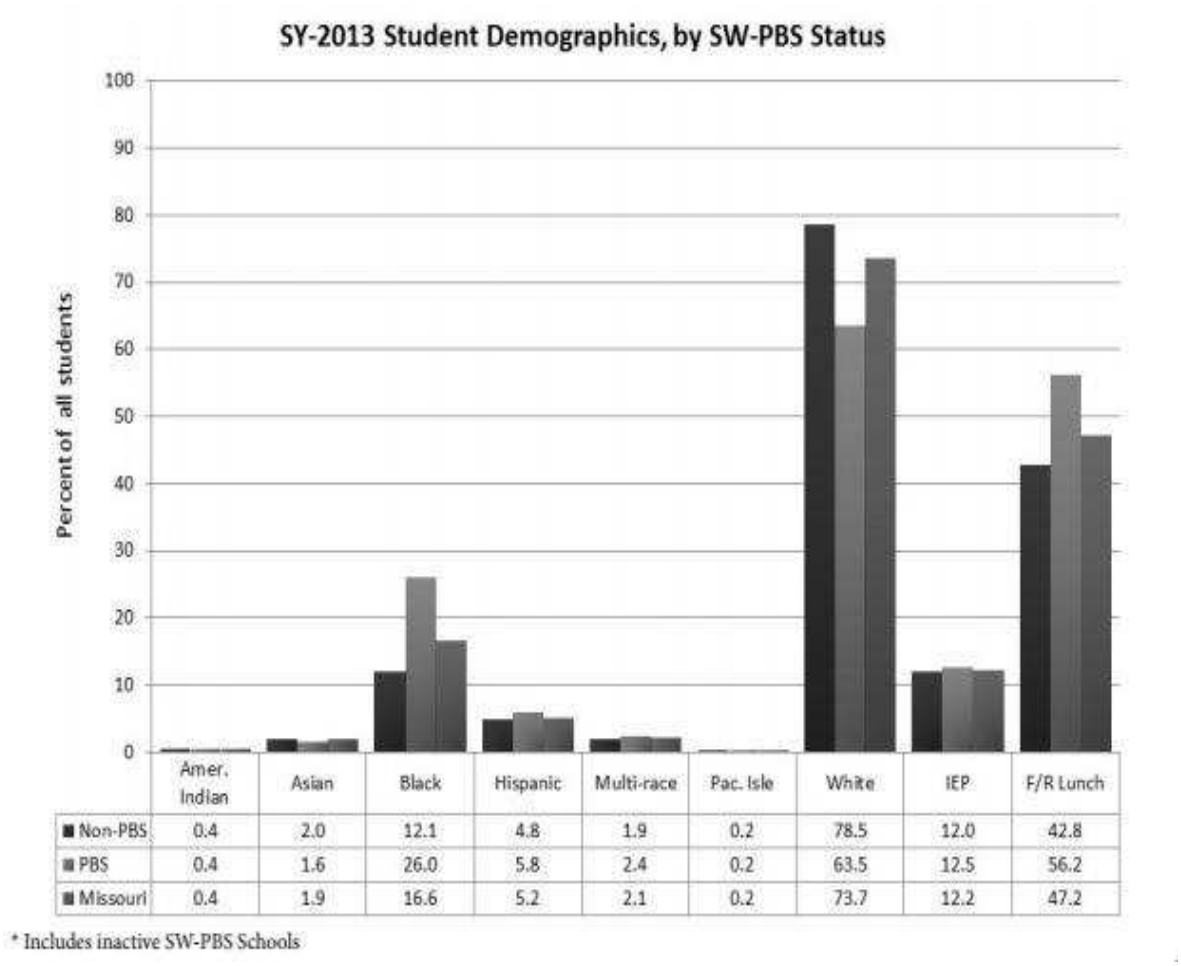


Figure 9. 2013 Student Demographics. Adapted from "Student Demographics, SW-PBS Status," by MU Center for SW-PBS, 2013, Missouri Schoolwide Positive Behavior Support, p. 7. Copyright 2013 by MU Center for SW-PBS.

Missouri continues to support K-12 districts that are implementing SW-PBS and provide ongoing support. As evidence grows that shows positive effects of SW-PBS, the amount of school districts involved should only increase. As explained by the MU Center for SW-PBS (2013):

> The implementation of SW-PBS in Missouri as a statewide initiative began in 2005. As such, the bulk of our evaluation data to date reflect process evaluation, with a growing ability to provide impact evaluation. From process evaluation data we can answer "yes" to the question, "Can and have schools in Missouri implemented the essential features of SW-PBS and sustained that implementation over time?" (p. 34)

SW-PBS is continuing to show positive effects in Missouri school systems. Implementation with fidelity and sustainability of SW-PBS is what upcoming research will begin to focus on (MU Center for SW-PBS, 2013).

SW-PBS and High Schools

High schools are unique organizations. SW-PBS has been implemented in many elementary and middle schools across the country, but high schools are more tentative to implement the framework. Flannery, Sugai, and Anderson (2009) explained:

> High schools are complex organizations with multiple administrators, large numbers of staff and students, and varied expectations related to academic achievement and successful diploma completion. Although key features of SWPBS are similar across schools, specific implementation strategies often are different in high schools. (p. 177)

ODRs are typically higher at the high school level and can have an immense impact on

the success of high school students. There are many variables that come into play when determining the success of a high school student but “results indicate significant interactions between academic scores and office discipline referrals, both within and across grades" (McIntosh, Flannery, Sugai, Braun, & Cochrane, 2008). Completing high school has never been more important and “PBS may be related to improvement in student behavior, school climate, and subsequently improved rates of school completion. A successful completion of school enhances the likelihood that students will have improved post-secondary outcomes” (Bohanon, Flannery, Malloy, & Fenning, 2009, p. 139).

High school students also respond differently to incentives than middle and elementary school students. High schools must implement incentives that are relevant and meaningful for the students. Lane, Wehby, Robertson, and Rogers (2007) suggested, “results indicated that despite receiving equal access to reinforcement, there were subtle differences regarding how different types of high school students responded to the SW-PBS” (p. 3). Schools that do not utilize SW-PBS do not typically understand why certain students respond to incentives and some do not. Lane (2007) said, “it appears that students with internalizing behavior problems were the most responsive, whereas students with comorbid concerns were the least responsive” (p. 3).

It can be very difficult to come up with reinforcements and incentives that all students respond to. Difficulty also exists to diagnose why students respond better to certain incentives (Little, 2005). In a high school setting that includes changing classes seven times a day, the job of recognizing students with external reinforcements becomes very difficult.

Summary

Through a review of the history of discipline, the problems schools have had and the dilemmas they have faced when dealing with student discipline are a continued concern. As the education system progressed and the development of SW-PBS came about, schools have looked for proactive ways to handle discipline and reduce incidences overall. Through the development of SW-PBS and the three levels of intervention, schools have found that through a three-tiered intervention process, they could identify students who needed extra support and develop those supports for students (MU Center for SW-PBS, 2013). School climate research began to show the strong correlation between student academic achievement and a strong school culture (Collins et al., 2010). SW-PBS in Missouri has shown great strides in the implementation of three tiers of intervention. SW-PBS in high schools is growing and the early results are showing positive signs in schools across the state (MU Center for SW-PBS, 2013).

In Chapter Three, an overview of the purpose was presented. Research questions and the hypothesis were provided. Also included were the research design, research and sample, instrumentation, and data collection and analysis procedures. Chapter Four included a review of the purpose of the study, the analysis of the relationship between SW-PBS and ODRs and the perceptions of school climate in SW-PBS schools. The findings, conclusions of the study, implications for practice, and possible research topics were discussed in Chapter Five.

Chapter Three: Methodology

School-Wide Positive Behavior Support (SW-PBS) is built upon applied behavior analysis, and shifts away from the coercive and exclusionary consequences that many schools have used for a long time (Michaels et al., 2005). SW-PBS provides the framework for schools to establish defined and taught expectations with consistent consequences. In addition, it also establishes a systems approach for positive interactions and recognitions for students, as well as data based decision making in dealing with problem behaviors.

In this chapter, the effects of SW-PBS on the amount of ODRs and the overall climate of the building were examined. High schools from around the state of Missouri were surveyed to determine what SW-PBS had accomplished and to also gather the perceptions of school staff regarding SW-PBS in their respective buildings. This quantitative design guided the procedures for collection and analysis of the data.

Problem and Purpose Overview

School communities have the challenging task of maintaining a safe environment and providing a productive climate where all students are academically successful. Disruptive and dangerous behavior in schools has reached alarming proportion (Reynolds, Skiba, & Graham, (2008). As a consequence, many districts have resorted to zero tolerance and other punitive practices, hoping to control these sometimes insurmountable problems (Reynolds et al., 2008). Suspensions are sometimes used to rid the school of perceived trouble makers, yet this has not seemed to improve school climate. Schools with higher rates of school suspension tend to have lower academic quality and school climate (Collins et al., 2010). Schools with higher suspension rates

have lower scores on standardized achievement tests, regardless of economic level or student demographics (Davis & Jordan, 1994; Skiba & Rausch, as cited in Skiba & Sprague, 2008).

SW-PBS is the research based alternative to the reactive and exclusionary methods that schools have used for a long time. During the 1980s, a need was identified for improved selection, implementation, and documentation of effective behavioral interventions for students with behavior disorders (Gresham, 1991; Sugai & Horner, 1999; Walker et al.,1996). In response, researchers at the University of Oregon began a series of applied demonstrations, research studies, and evaluation projects (Sugai & Horner, 2002). These efforts indicated that greater attention should be directed toward prevention, research-based practices, data based decision-making, school-wide systems, explicit social skills instruction, team-based implementation and professional development, and student outcomes (Biglan, 1995; Colvin, Kame'enui, & Sugai, 1993; Horner, Sugai, & Anderson, 2010; Lewis & Sugai, 1999; Mayer, 1995; Sugai & Horner 2002).

Public schools have been challenged with school safety and student behavior for many years. Administrators are faced with the ongoing challenge of providing a safe environment for students and staff members while assuring an education for all students. According to Morrissey, Bohanon, and Fenning (2010):

> Many schools have addressed concerns about handling discipline by creating increasingly punitive reactionary policies. These policies have led to numerous incidents involving seemingly trivial behaviors such as sharing over-the-counter

> pain medication or holding up a paper gun resulting in suspension or expulsion of students. (p.27)

Today's educators are asked to meet the diverse needs of all students, including those with emotional and behavioral disorders. P. Baker (2005) explained this by stating:

> The movement towards inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom combined with federal mandates that all learners meet or exceed certain curricular guidelines makes it increasingly challenging for educators to meet the moral and ethical responsibilities to provide reasonable accommodation to support all learners and provide a safe environment. (p. 51)

Principals are constantly faced with the dilemma of removing the troublesome students from school. Removing the student improves the school climate, but also risks taking away the educational opportunity of every student (Lane, Wehby, Robertson, & Rogers, 2007). Most school administrators use these suspensions because they need to do something and do not know what else to do. One alternative to suspension and expulsion has been a proactive approach to discipline commonly known as SW-PBS.

A school district's main task is to educate and facilitate the growth of their students. Schools take different approaches to meet this goal, but all schools must have a climate and culture where students feel accepted, safe, and nurtured. Schools also must be a place where order and a moral law is expected and maintained. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (2013), "schools cannot allow unacceptable behavior to interfere with the school district's primary mission. To this end, school districts adopt codes of conduct for expected behaviors and policies to address unacceptable behavior" (p. 2).

Past research related to the implementation of SW-PBS and its relationship between the amount of behavior problems and general climate of the school have been mostly limited to studies examining elementary schools (Little, 2005). High school implementation and the potential effectiveness of SW-PBS is a relatively limited body of research (Horner & Sugai, 2011). Given that implementation of SW-PBS in Rural District 10 began at the high school level rather than in the elementary schools, this was a very unique study. The longevity of time (nine years) in which discipline data were collected also gave great insight into the effectiveness of SW-PBS. This research served to examine a unique process in which Rural District 10 implemented SW-PBS at the high school level.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between the years of implementation of SW-PBS at the secondary level and the number of ODRs. The perception of the overall climate of the building, as related to student behavior, was also reviewed. Although SW-PBS is an implementation framework that is designed to enhance academic and social behavior outcomes for all students, most of the studies have been focused at the elementary level (Little, 2005). There have been limited studies at the urban and secondary level due to the low amount of secondary schools that participate in SW-PBS (Bohanon et al., 2006). The relationship between the years of implementation of SW-PBS and the number of ODRs were evaluated in a rural secondary school, and the perceptions of the overall climate were reviewed in secondary schools that were both rural and urban throughout Missouri.

Research questions and hypothesis. The following research questions guided this study:

1. What relationship, if any, exists between the years of implementation of SW-PBS in Rural District 10 and the number of office disciplinary referrals at the secondary level before and during implementation?

2. What are student, teacher, and administrator perceptions of the climate of Rural District 10 as it relates to student behavior at the secondary level after implementation of SW-PBS?

3. What are teacher and administrator perceptions of the climate of the building as it relates to student behavior at the secondary level in other districts that have implemented SW-PBS and how does this compare with Rural District 10?

H_o: There is no relationship between the implementation of SW-PBS in Rural District 10 and the number of office disciplinary referrals at the secondary level before and during implementation.

Research Design

This study involved collecting and analyzing qualitative data. ODRs for Rural District 10 were collected for the period prior to SW-PBS implementation (2004-2008) and during implementation (2008-2013) and were compared using a dependent *t*-test to determine if an increase or decrease occurred within the time span. The discipline data were collected and reviewed. Then, a survey was given to students in Rural District 10 and, surveys were distributed to administrators and teachers in Rural District 10 and secondary schools in Missouri from the nine regions.

Permission was received from the administrators to survey their respective

teachers and the administrators were asked to forward the teacher survey to their staff. A survey was sent to teachers and administrators in Rural District 10 and to administrators and teachers in secondary schools in Missouri from the nine regions that have implemented SW-PBS. Two different surveys (teacher and administrator) were sent to each district involved. After receiving the survey responses, the results were compared and contrasted were graphed between Rural District 10 and the other participating districts to compare perceptions of the effectiveness of SW-PBS.

Population

The population of the study was secondary schools from one Midwestern state. The Midwestern state has 2,439 schools with 569 secondary schools.

Sample

The sample for this study consisted of secondary schools that have implemented SW-PBS for at least two years. Schools were identified by their cooperation in the SW-PBS Missouri Initiative. The demographics ranged from rural schools to urban schools and the size of the school was not factored in to the study. As shown in Figure 10, schools surveyed were from one of the nine Regional Professional Development Centers (RPDC) regions. The participants in the survey were selected using a purposive sample (Trochim, 2003) from school districts that implemented SW-PBS and a random sample of students from Rural District 10.

A certified employee at the secondary school in Rural District 10 was given a randomized roster with student identification numbers only. The employee then used the student information system to identify each student who had been randomly selected, gathered contact information for each student and contacted parents for those students

under 18 years of age by mail/email to certify each parent's permission for the student to participate in the study. For students 18 years of age and older, the certified employee gave the consent form to the students and secured the permission. This same employee maintained a list of students for which consent has been obtained and only those students were included in the survey.

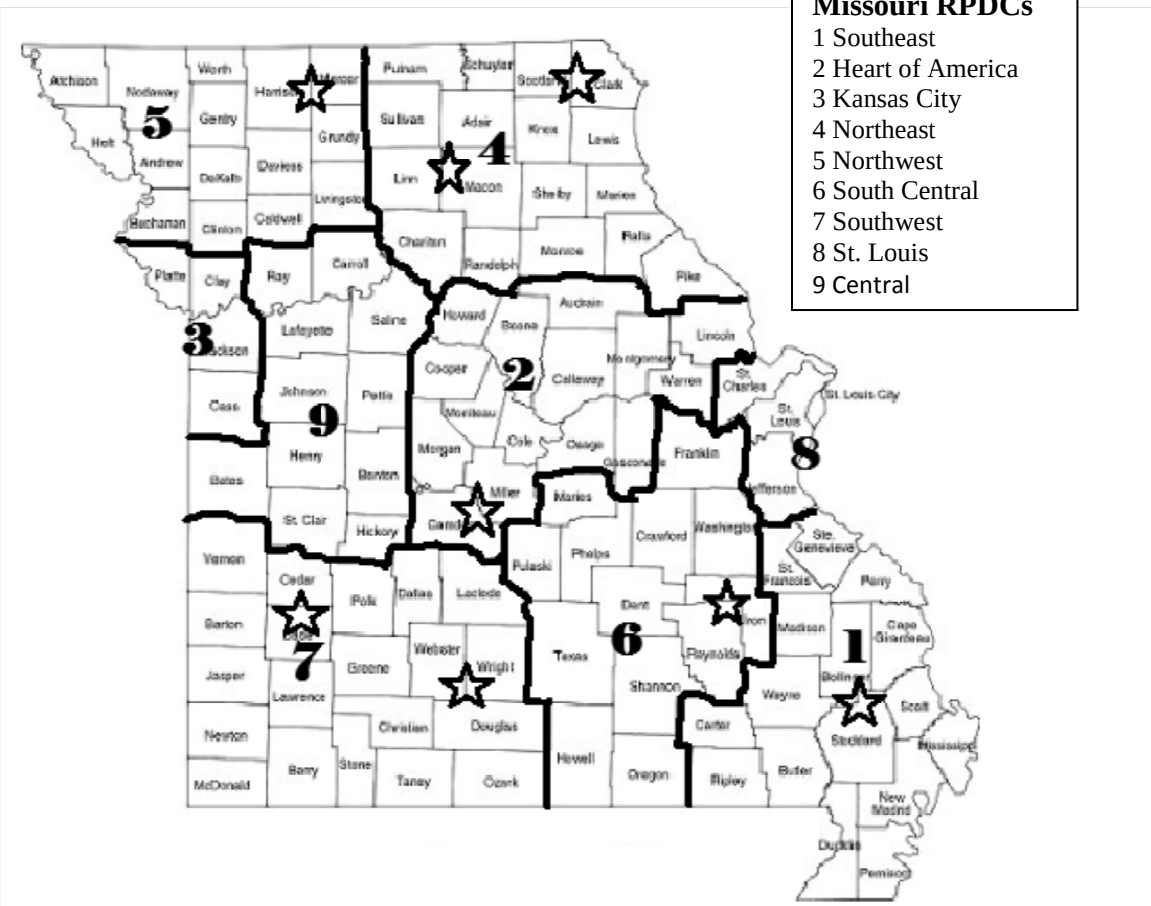


Figure 10. Map of Missouri RPDC regions by MU Center for SW-PBS, 2013, Missouri Schoolwide Positive Behavior Support. Copyright 2013 by MU Center for SW-PBS.

Instrumentation

Secondary data were collected by using Rural District 10's student information system to gather ODRs over the nine years studied. Surveys were also conducted within Rural District 10 as well as other districts that contain high schools participating in SW-PBS. With permission (see Appendix C), the surveys used were adapted from the Delaware Positive Behavior Support Project (DE-PBS Project, 2011).

As with most programs, "an important aspect of SW-PBS is the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of implementation fidelity" (Bradshaw, Debnam, Koth, & Leaf, 2009, p. 1). The School-wide Evaluation Tool (SET) is an instrument to measure treatment integrity of SW-PBS implementation efforts. The SET is conducted in each school by a trained consultant for the State Board of Education (Todd et al., 2012) This consultant follows a protocol that involves student interviews, teacher interviews, and putting documents in place that satisfy the requirement for implementation of SW-PBS. Horner, Todd, Lewis- Palmer, Sugai, and Boland (2004) suggested that the SET is an effective tool with high levels of reliability (97.3% average agreement on items, inter-observer agreement (99 %), construct validity (Pearson r = .75), and sensitive to change (t =7.63, df =12) (Bohanon et al., 2006, p. 133).

The SET helps determine if the implementation of SW-PBS is completed with integrity. Schools that were included on the MO SW-PBS list are schools that have demonstrated that they have successfully implemented SW-PBS by scoring satisfactorily on the SET. The SET was not evaluated on the schools studied, but the schools studied had gone through a SET successfully. This validated the study and confirmed that the implementation of SW-PBS is implemented with fidelity in Rural District 10.

Data Collection

Upon approval from the Lindenwood University IRB Board (see Appendix D), a recruitment letter (see Appendix E) was sent electronically (e-mail) to the Missouri districts that have implemented SW-PBS at the secondary level for at least two years. Then a letter of informed consent (see Appendix F) was sent to each administrator who was interested in participating in the study. For the sample of students in Rural District 10, letters of informed consent (see Appendix G) were sent to the parents. Only students with parent permission were allowed access to the survey. Surveys were accessed using Survey Monkey. A four-week period was given for participants to complete the surveys. Then the data were collected and analyzed.

Data Analysis

ODRs for Rural District 10 for the period prior to SW-PBS implementation (2004-2008) and during implementation (2008-2013) were compared using a dependent *t*-test analysis to determine if an increase or decrease occurred within the time span during SW-PBS implementation. After receiving all survey results, comparisons and contrasts were graphed between Rural District 10 and the other participating districts to compare perceptions of the school climate.

Summary

Past research related to the implementation of SW-PBS and its relationship between the amount of behavior problems and general climate of the school have been mostly limited to studies examining elementary schools. High school implementation and the potential effectiveness of SW-PBS is a relatively limited body of research (Horner & Sugai, 2011). Given that implementation of SW-PBS in Rural District 10

began at the high school level rather than in the elementary schools, this was a very unique study.

The longevity of time (nine years) in which discipline data were collected also gave great insight into the effectiveness of SW-PBS. This research sought to look at a unique process in which Rural District 10 implemented the SW-PBS process and what kind of impact SW-PBS had at the high school level. Chapter Four included a review of the purpose of the study, the findings of the relationship between SW-PBS and ODRs and the perceptions of school climate in SW-PBS schools. In Chapter Five conclusions of the study were reviewed and conclusions of the study as well as discussed next steps for possible future research.

Chapter Four: Presentation of Data

SW-PBS is a multitier approach for building a school wide social culture that enables students to succeed academically and to build skills for the rest of their lives. High schools implementing this approach have improved attendance, reduced discipline referrals, and improved academic engagement (Flannery et al., 2010).

In this chapter, the findings of the number of office discipline referrals were charted from 2004-2013 with a focus on overall referrals per year. Office discipline referrals for Rural District 10 for the period prior to SW-PBS implementation (2004-2008) and during implementation (2008-2013) were compared. Next, the responses of current administrators in Rural District 10, teachers in Rural District 10, and teachers and administrators in "other" districts around the state of Missouri that have successfully implemented SW-PBS for at least two years were then disaggregated by responses. After disaggregating the responses, the data were organized by each question asked in the survey regarding the perception of the overall climate of the building.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between the implementation of SW-PBS at the secondary level and the number of discipline referrals sent to the office. The perception of the overall climate of the schools surveyed as it relates to student behavior was also reviewed. Although SW-PBS is an implementation framework designed to enhance academic and social behavior outcomes for all students, most of the studies have been focused at the elementary level.

There have been limited studies at the urban and secondary level due to the low amount of secondary schools that participate in SW-PBS (Bohanon et al., 2006). The relationship between the years of implementation of SW-PBS and the number of office

discipline referrals was evaluated in a rural secondary school and the perception of the overall climate was reviewed in secondary schools that are both rural and urban.

Research Questions and Hypothesis

This study specifically sought to answer:

1. What relationship, if any, exists between the years of implementation of SW-PBS in Rural District 10 and the number of office disciplinary referrals at the secondary level before and during implementation?

2. What are student, teacher and administrator perceptions of the climate of Rural District 10 as it relates to student behavior at the secondary level after implementation of SW-PBS?

3. What are teacher and administrator perceptions of the climate of the building as it relates to student behavior at the secondary level in other districts that have implemented SW-PBS and how does this compare with Rural District 10?

H_o: There is no relationship between the implementation of SW-PBS in Rural District 10 and the number of office disciplinary referrals at the secondary level before and during implementation.

Population

The population of the study was secondary schools from one Midwestern state. This Midwestern state has 2,439 schools with 569 secondary schools. The demographics ranged from rural schools, to urban schools and the size of the school was not factored in during the study. As shown in Figure 11, school districts involved in SW-PBS are located in most counties in the state of Missouri.

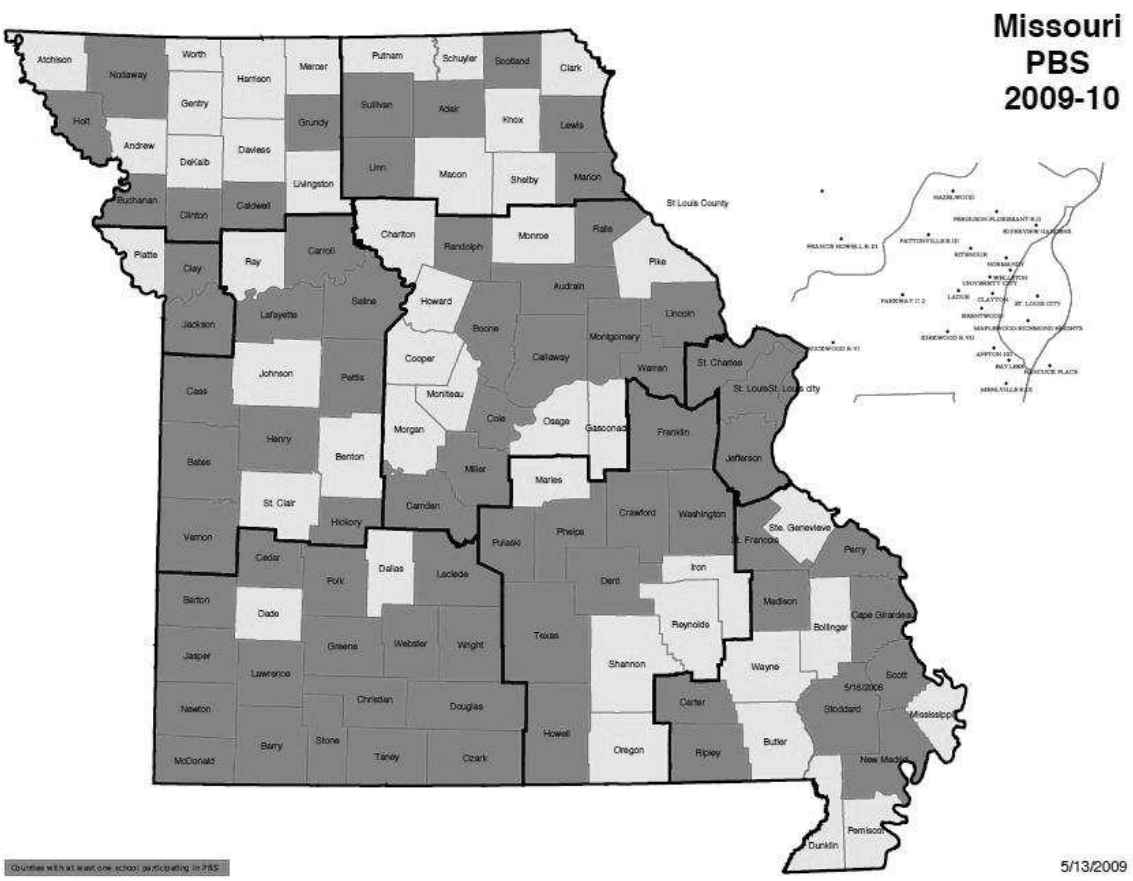


Figure 11. SW-PBS school by county. Adapted from "Missouri PBS," by MU Center for SW-PBS, 2013, Missouri Schoolwide Positive Behavior Support, p. 4. Copyright 2013 by MU Center for SW-PBS.

Sample

Rural District 10 has a secondary school with approximately 650 students and 45 teachers and administrators. This is a rural district that has been implementing SW-PBS at the secondary level for six years. This secondary school was awarded *Silver* level status by MO SW-PBS in 2013, which means they have a thorough Tier 1 and Tier 2 framework within the building and have gone through a successful SET evaluation.

Surveys were sent to 19 secondary schools in Missouri that have implemented SW-PBS for at least two years. These schools included rural and urban districts where the secondary school populations range from 100 students to 1600 students. All schools surveyed were awarded *Bronze, Silver,* or *Gold* level status by MO SW-PBS in 2013, which means they have a thorough Tier 1, Tier 2 or Tier 3 framework within the building and have gone through a successful SET evaluation (MU Center for SW-PBS, 2013).

Data Analysis

The following data were collected from a survey that was issued to students, teachers, and administrators about their personal perceptions of the climate and culture at their high school. A survey was sent to every group in December, 2013. A total of 31 students in grades 9-12 from Rural District 10 completed the survey. A total of 22 teachers and 2 administrators completed the survey from Rural District 10. A total of 53 teachers and 12 administrators from 19 districts in Missouri that have implemented SW-PBS for at least two years completed the survey.

Research Question One

As shown in Figure 12, discipline data from Rural District 10 was charted over a period of nine years from 2004-2012/13.

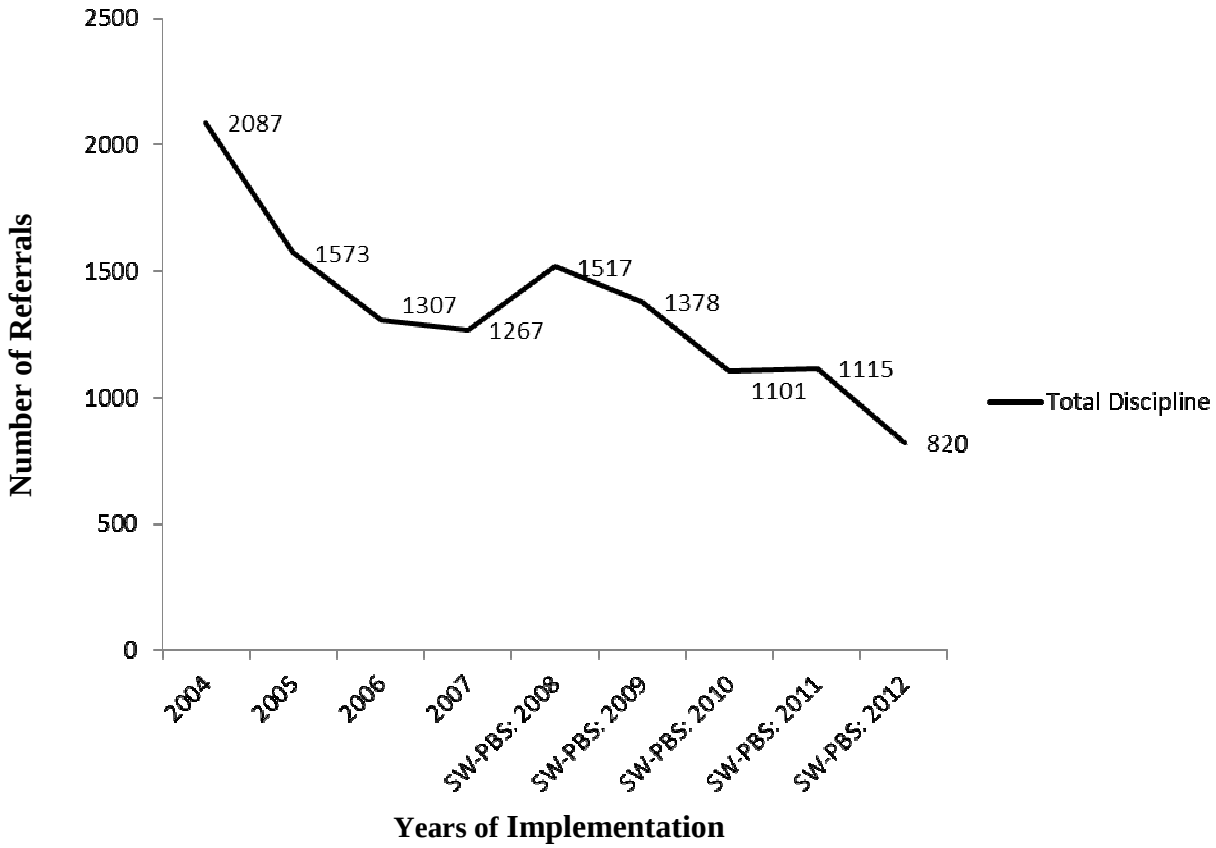


Figure 12. Rural District 10 ODRs.

This study defined discipline referrals as an electronic or paper form filled out by a teacher describing unwanted behavior exhibited by a student. This form is sent to the principal's office for a disciplinary action to be taken by the principal or assistant principal (Horner & Todd, 2012). Four years of discipline data were collected prior to implementation of SW-PBS and five years during implementation of SW-PBS.

A two-tailed *t*-test was chosen to analyze the data because the data came from different individuals (Sprinthall & Fisk, 1990) and was conducted due to the variance being the same pre- and post- SW-PBS. A *t*-test is used to determine whether two groups are statistically different from each other (Sprinthall & Fisk, 1990).

There was a difference between the number of discipline referrals of Group one Rural District 10 prior to implementation of SW-PBS during the years 2004-2007 (M = 1585.5; SD = 377.60; SE = 188.38) and Group two in Rural District 10 during implementation of SW-PBS during the years 2008-2012 (M = 1186.2; SD = 270.48; SE = 120.96). During implementation discipline referral numbers decreased with the *p value* (0 .127247) > (0.05). However, as shown in Figure 2, if discipline were maintained at the current level of 820 referrals for two more years and a *t*-test conducted at the end of that time, the test would show a *p value* (0.04053) < (0 .05).

Table 1

Projected t-Test

ODRs		
Group 1	Group 2	*p* values
2087	1517	Actual *p* value: *p*= .127247
1573	1378	*Projected *p* value: *p*= .04053
1307	1101	
1267	820	Group 1: Pre-SW-PBS Referrals
	820*	Group 2: SW-PBS Implementation Referrals
	820*	*: Projected 2014/2015 Referral Numbers

Note. ODRs from 2004-2013.

Research Question Two

The second research question of this study was: What are student, teacher and administrator perceptions of the climate of Rural District 10 as it relates to student behavior at the secondary level after implementation of SW-PBS? Surveys were sent to teachers, administrators and students in Rural District 10 to garner their perceptions of climate in the building.

As shown in Figure 13, Rural District 10 teachers and administrators had similar responses to the question. A total 45.45% of teachers and 50% of administration answered *agree a lot*, and 54.55% of teachers and 50% of administration responded *agree* that the school rules are fair. A total of 19.35% of students answered *disagree* that the rules are fair compared to 0% of teachers and administrators.

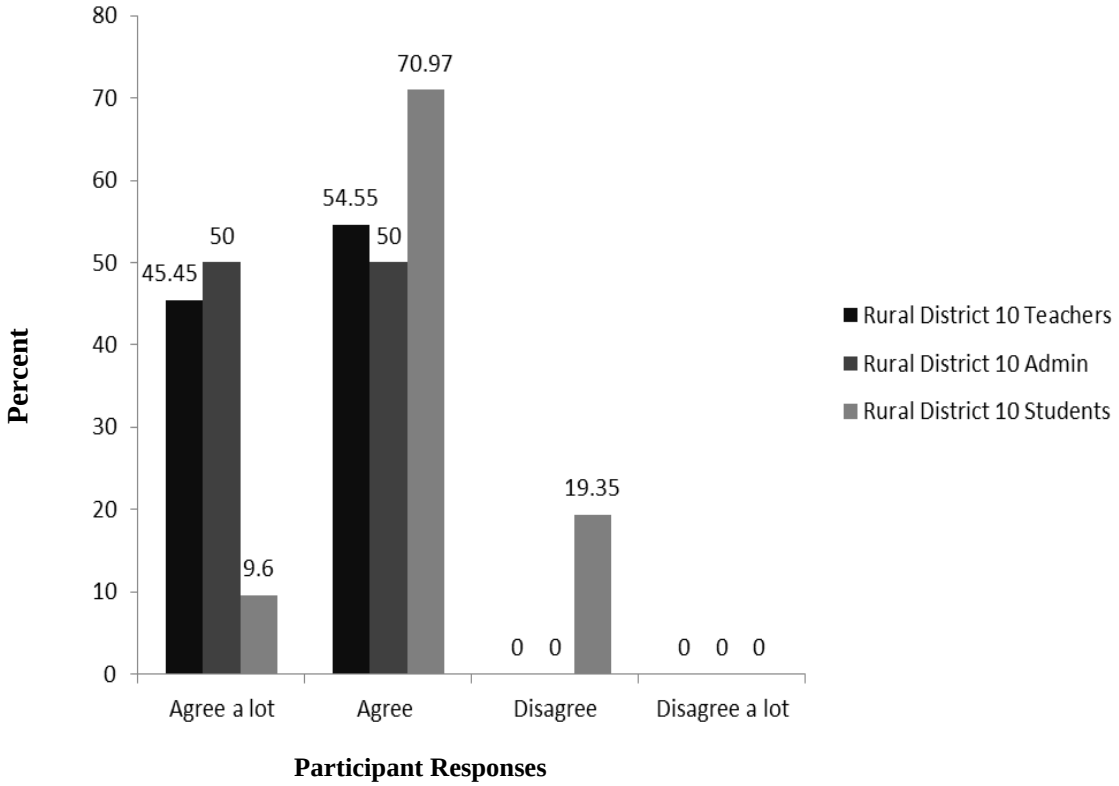


Figure 13. Survey Statement 1: The school rules are fair.

As shown in Figure 14, 63.64% of teachers and 50% of administrators in Rural District 10 *agree a lot* that the school is safe. A total of 29.03% of students *agree a lot* that the school is safe. A total of 54.84% of students *agree* the school is safe with a total of 83.87% of students believing the school is safe. No respondents from the teacher or administration group disagreed with the statement as compared to 16.13% of students in Rural District 10.

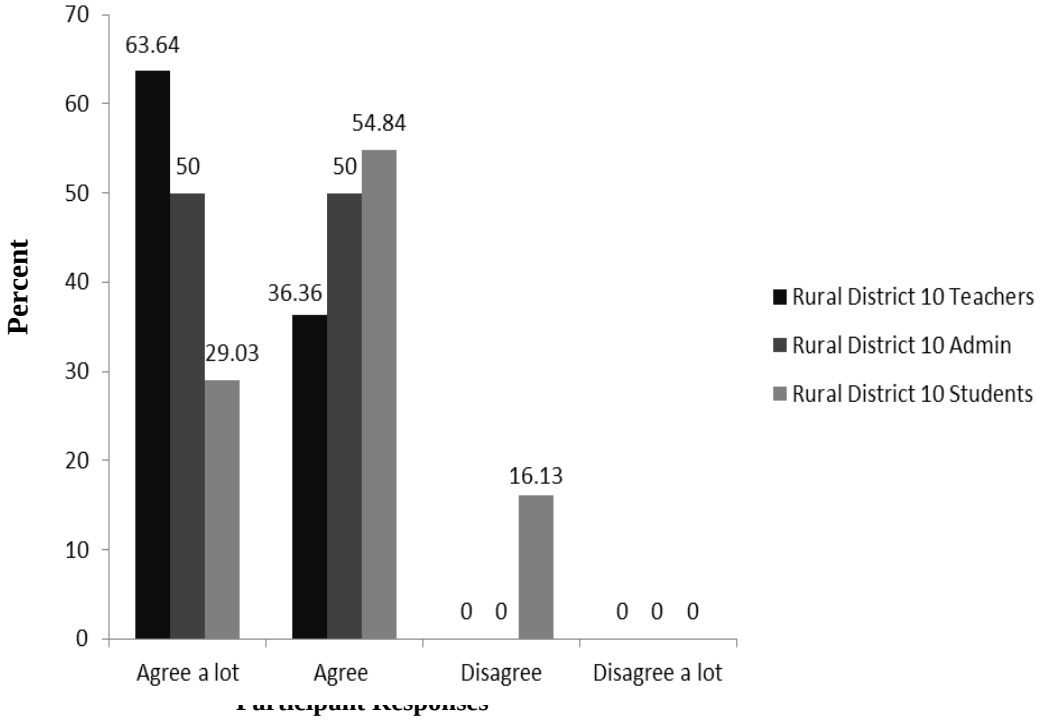


Figure 14. Survey Statement 2: This school is safe.

As shown in Figure 15, teachers and administrators had very similar responses in their perceptions of the school rules being made clear to students. A total of 90.9% of teachers and 100% of administrators either *agree a lot* or *agree* that the rules in the school are made clear to students. A total of 87.09% of students either *agree a lot* or *agree* with the statement. A total of 9.1% of teachers and 12.9% of students *disagree* or *disagree a lot* that the rules in the school are made clear to students.

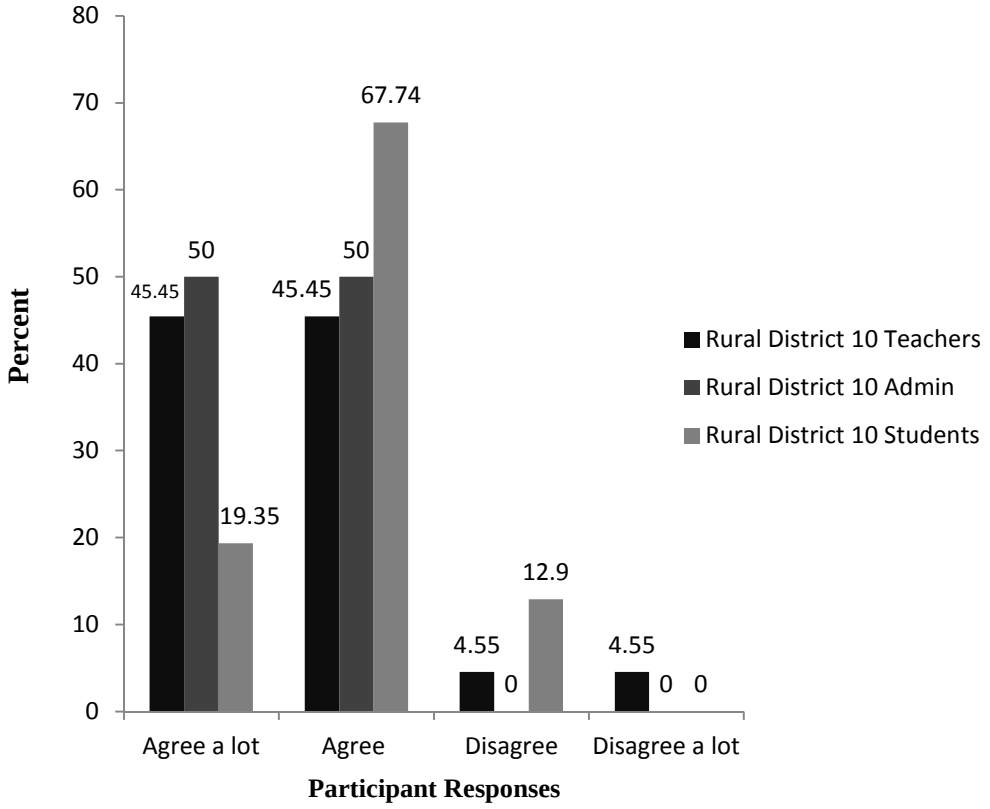


Figure 15. Survey Statement 3: Rules in this school are made clear to students.

As shown in Figure 16, 100% of teacher and administrators either *agree a lot* or *agree* that students in the school are friendly with each other. A total of 48.38% of students in Rural District 10 *disagree* or *disagree a lot* that students in the school are friendly with each other.

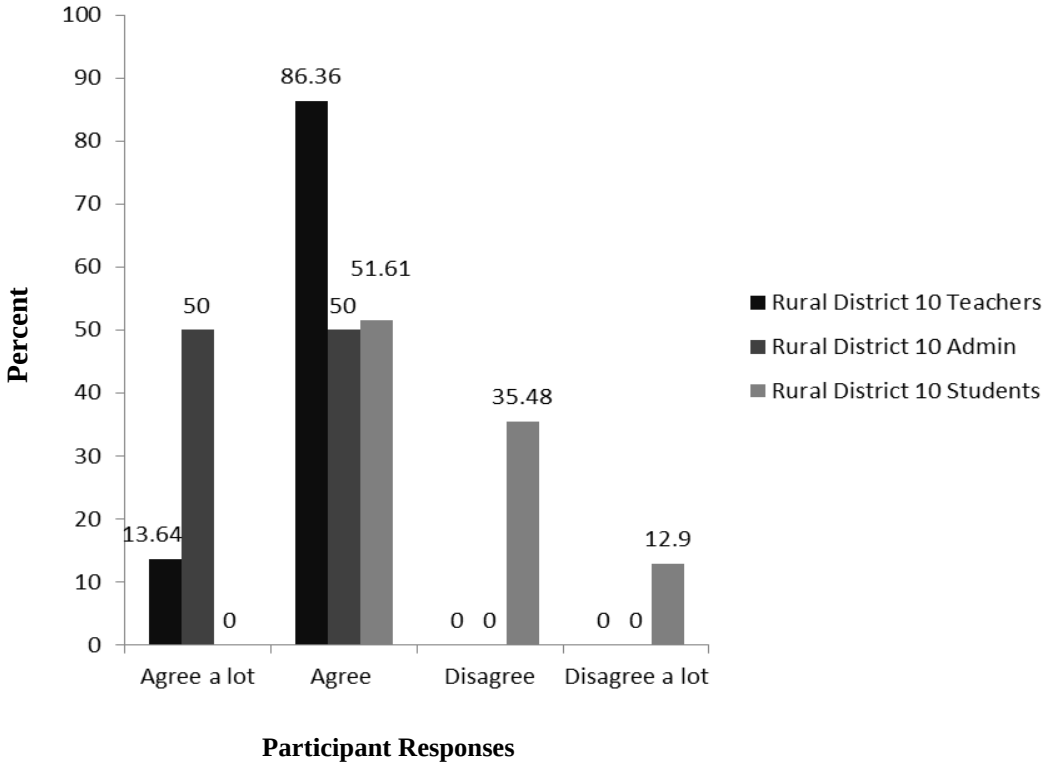


Figure 16. Survey Statement 4: Students in this school are friendly with each other.

As shown in Figure 17, 50% of teachers and 50% of administrators in Rural District 10 *agree* that students threaten and bully others in the school. A total of 58.06% of students either *agree a lot* or *agree* that students threaten and bully others in this school where only 41.94% *disagree*.

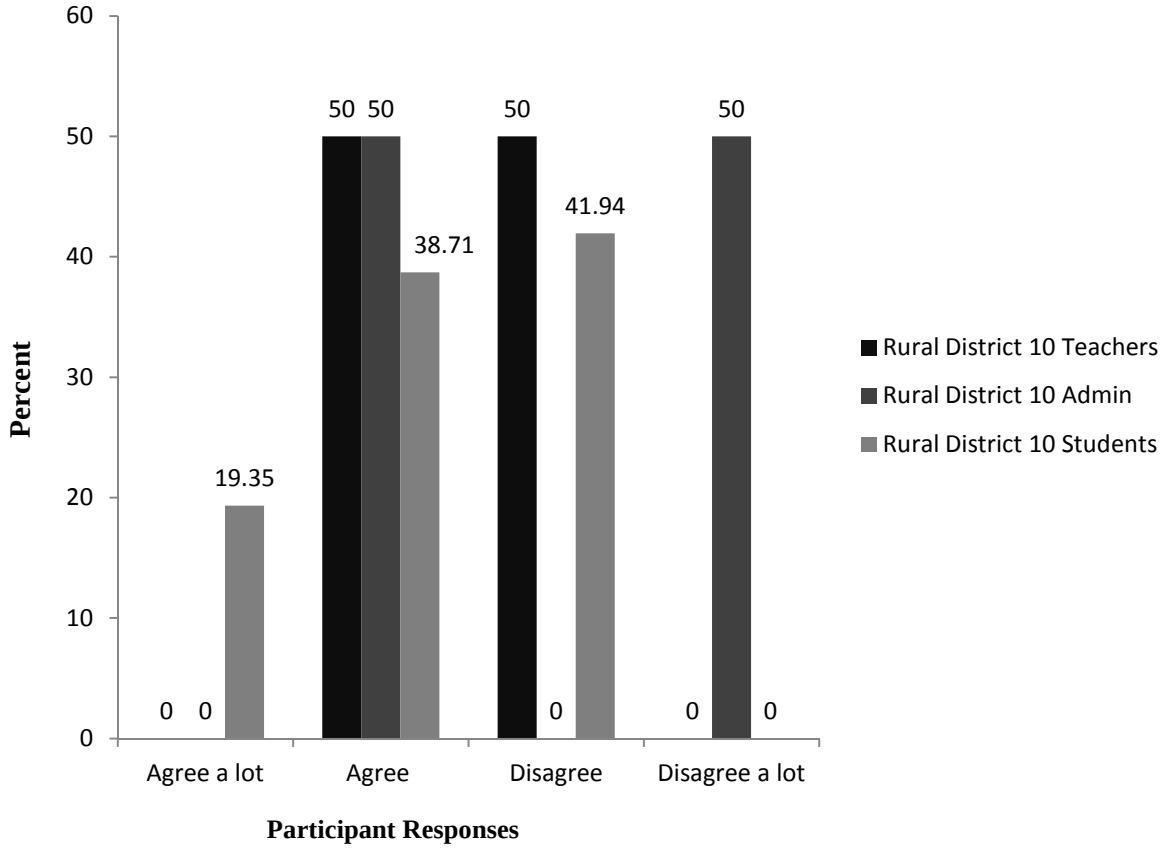


Figure 17. Survey Statement 5: Students threaten and bully others in this school.

As shown in Figure 18, 100% of administrators and 95.45% of teachers in Rural District 10 *agree a lot* or *agree* that teachers care about their students. A total of 25.81% of students and 4.55% of teachers in Rural District 10 *disagree* that teachers care about their students.

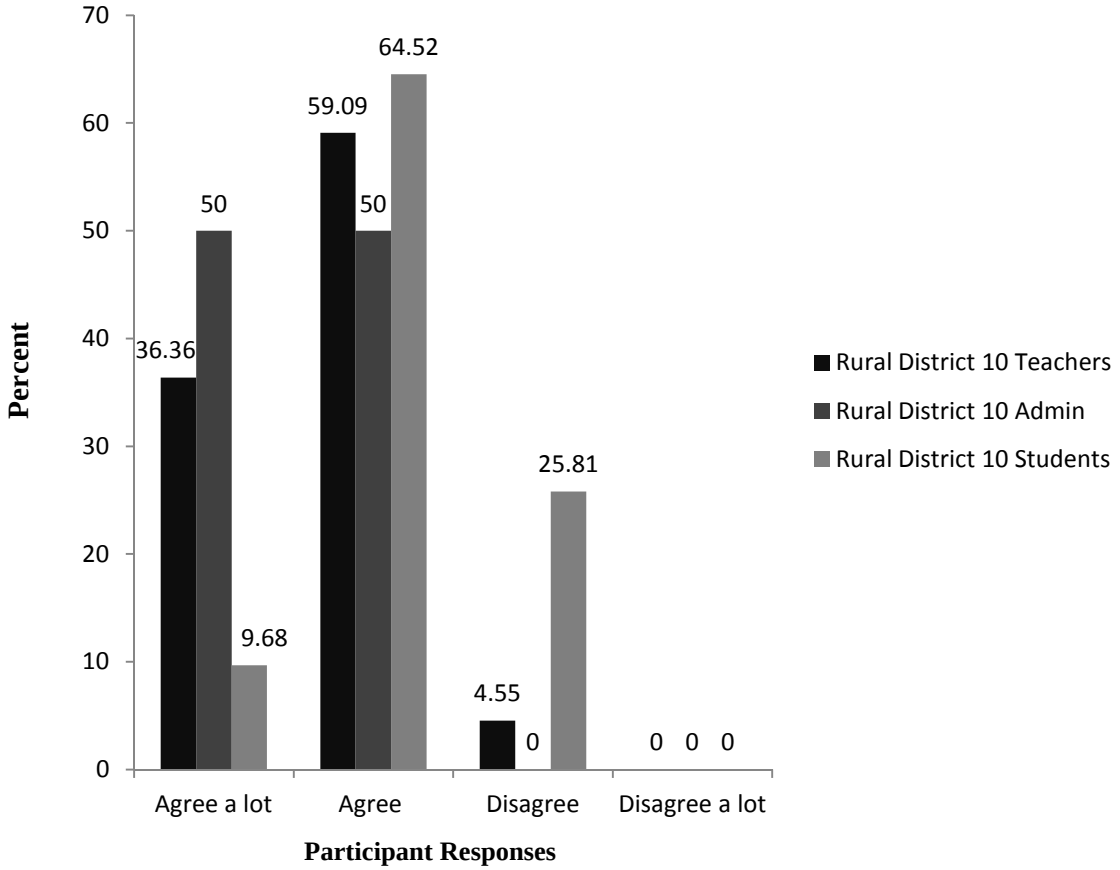


Figure 18. Survey Statement 6: Teachers care about their students.

As shown in Figure 19, 100% of administrators *agree a lot* that the school makes it clear how students are expected to act. A total of 90.32% of students and 95.46% of teachers *agree a lot* or *agree* with the statement. A total of 9.68% of students and 4.55 % of teachers in Rural District 10 *disagree* or *disagree a lot* with the statement.

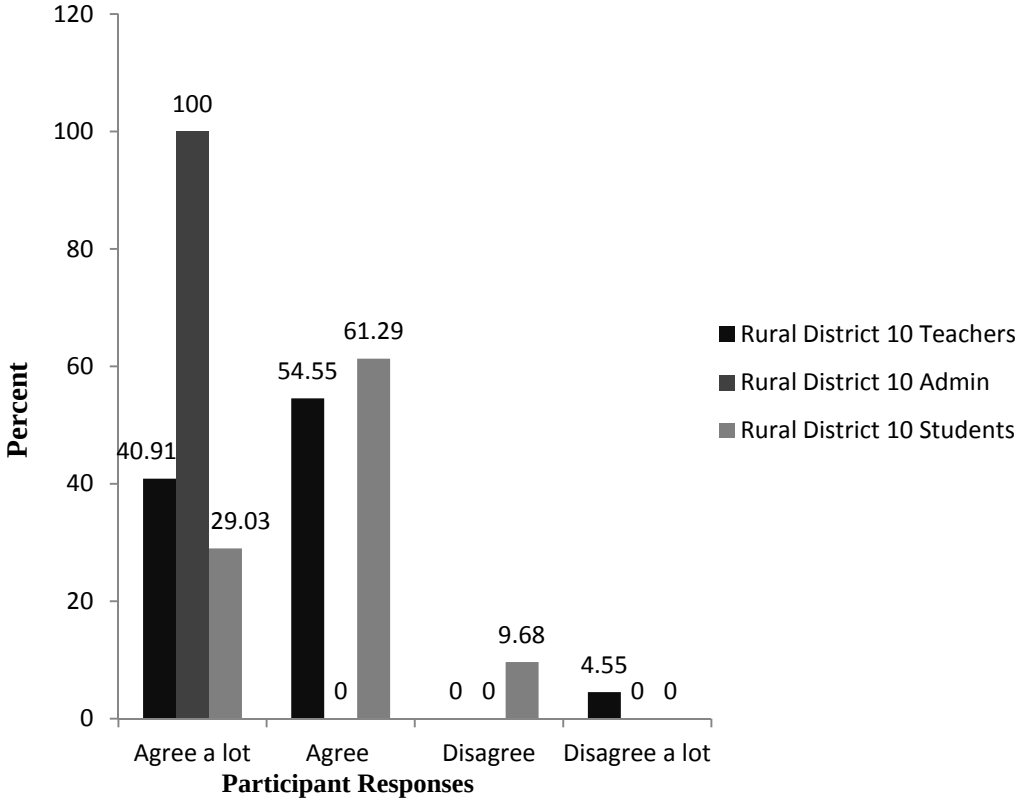


Figure 19. Survey Statement 7: This school makes it clear how students are expected to act.

As shown in Figure 20, 100% of administrators, 95.46% of teachers and 58.07% of students *agree a lot* or *agree* that most students follow the school rules. A total of 41.93% of students and 4.55% of teachers *disagree* or *disagree a lot* with the statement.

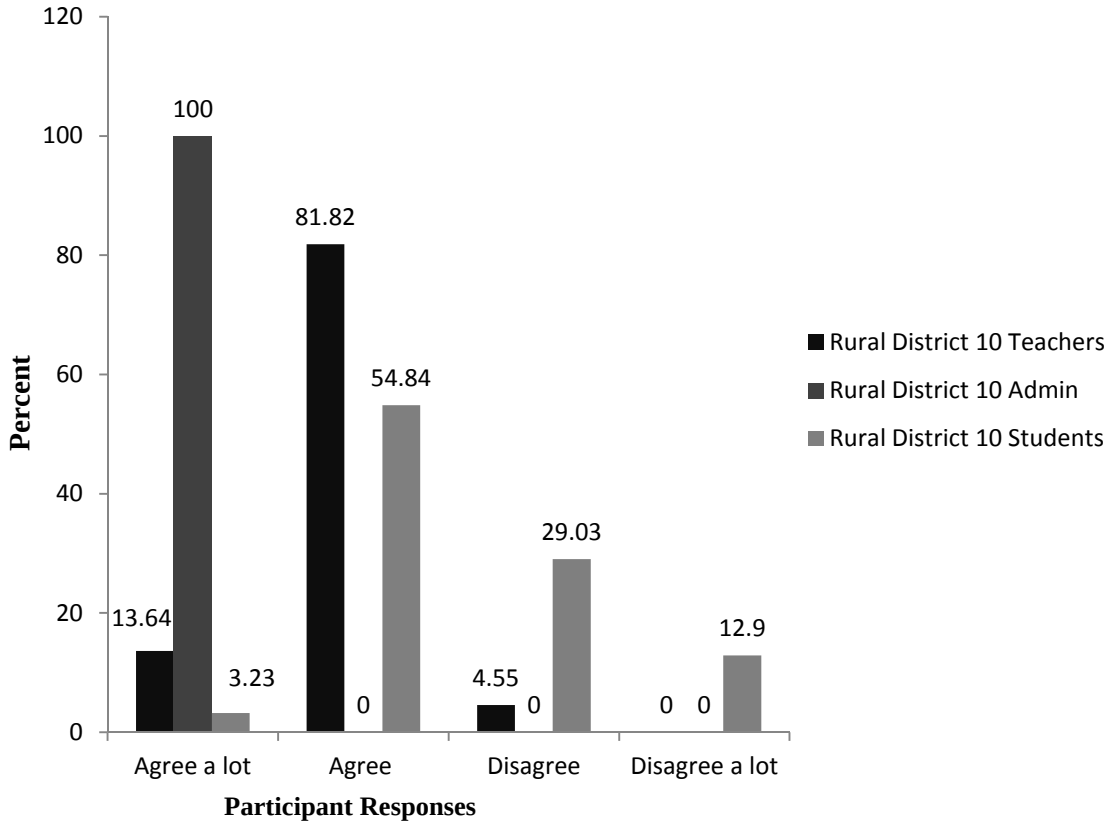


Figure 20. Survey Statement 8: Most students follow the school rules.

As shown in Figure 21, 50% of administrators *agree a lot* and 50% *disagree* that students are punished a lot. A total of 18.18 % of teachers *agree* that students are punished a lot and 81.82% either *disagree* or *disagree a lot* with the statement. A total of 32.26% of students *agree a lot* or *agree* with the statement and 67.74% *disagree* or *disagree a lot* with the statement.

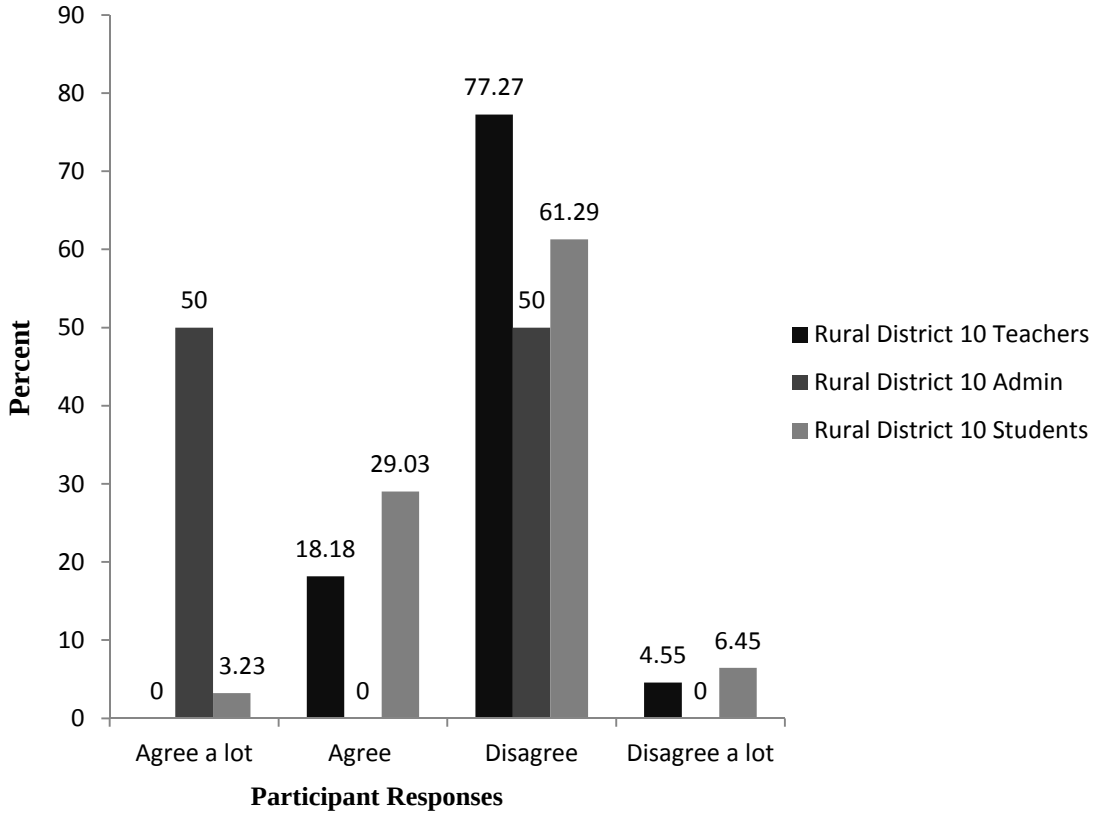


Figure 21. Survey Statement 9: Students are punished a lot.

As shown in Figure 22, 100% of administrators either *agree* or *agree a lot* that students are praised often. A total of 95.46% of teachers and 29.04% of students *agree* or *agree a lot* with the statement. A total of 70.96% of students *disagree* or *disagree a lot* that students are praised often as compared to only 4.55% of teachers.

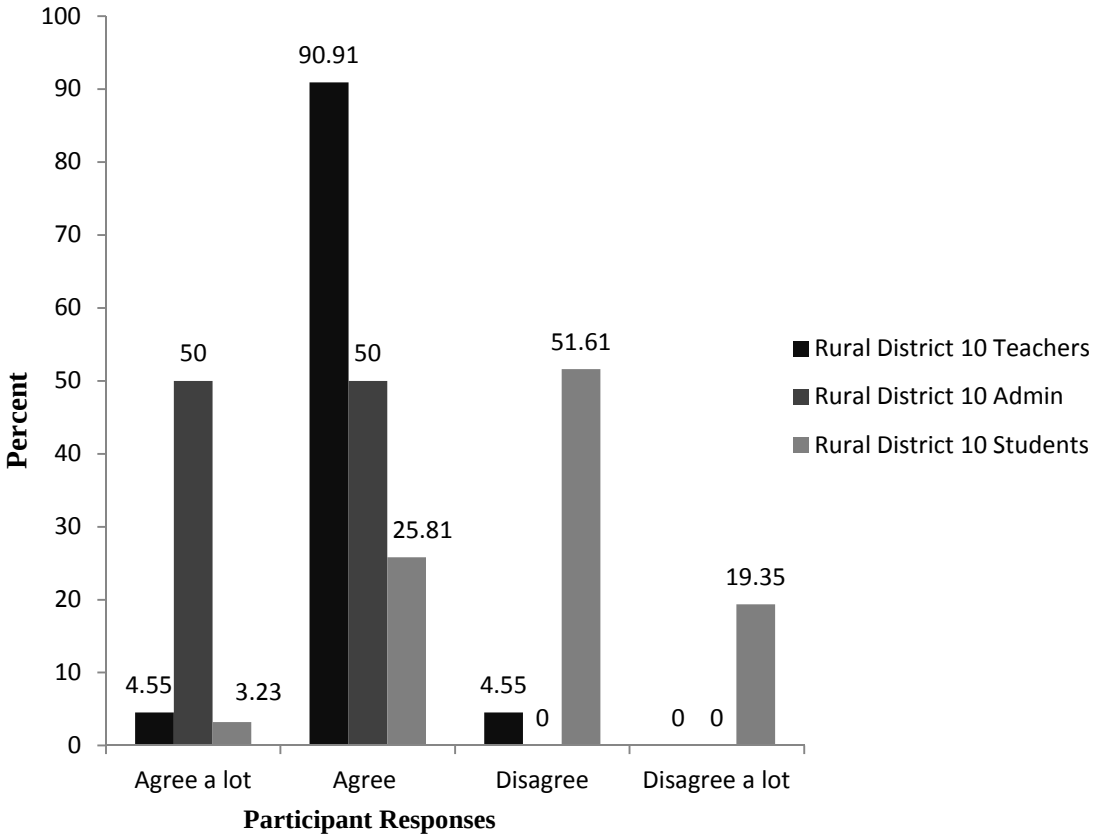


Figure 22. Survey Statement 10: Students are praised often.

As shown in Figure 23, 100% of administrators *agree* or *agree a lot* that students are taught to feel responsible for how they act. A total of 74.19% of students and 81.82% of teachers *agree* or *agree a lot* with the statement. A total of 25.81% of students and 16.87% of teachers *disagree* or *disagree a lot* with the statement.

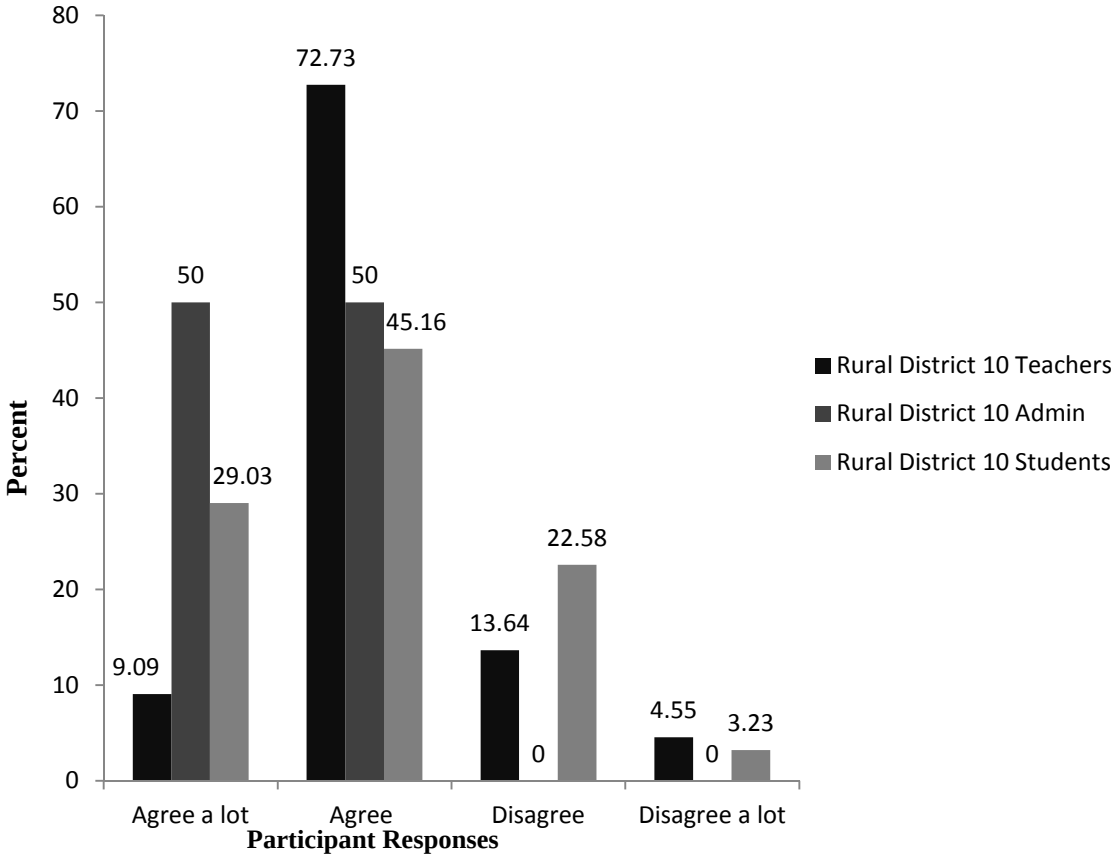


Figure 23. Survey Statement 11: Students are taught to feel responsible for how they act.

As shown in Figure 24, 100 % of administrators, 95.46% of teachers and 77.42% of students *agree a lot* or *agree* that they feel happy in the school. A total of 22.58% of students and 4.55% of teachers *disagree* with the statement.

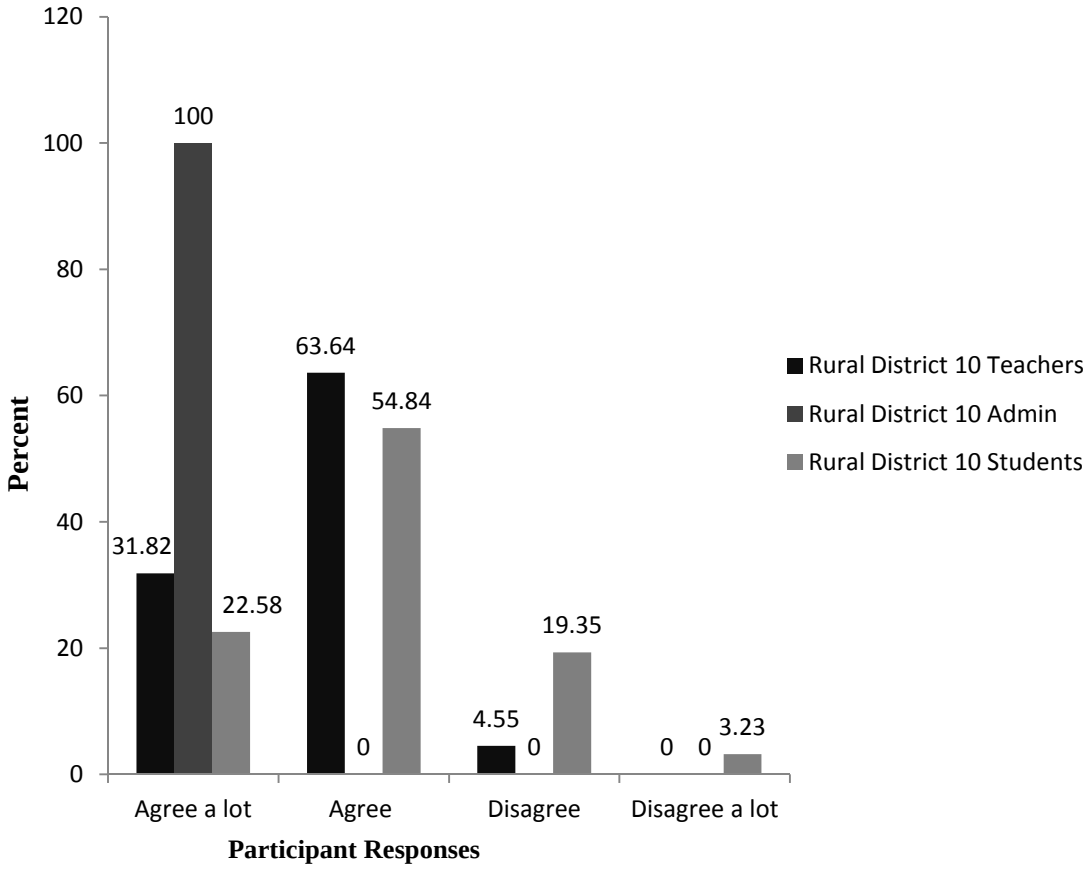


Figure 24. Survey Statement 12: I feel happy in this school.

As shown in Figure 25, 100% of students either *agree a lot* or *agree* that they do their best to follow the rules at the school. A total of 9.09% of teachers in Rural District 10 *disagree* that teachers and students respect one another. A total of 100% of administrators *agree a lot* that teachers and students respect one another in the school.

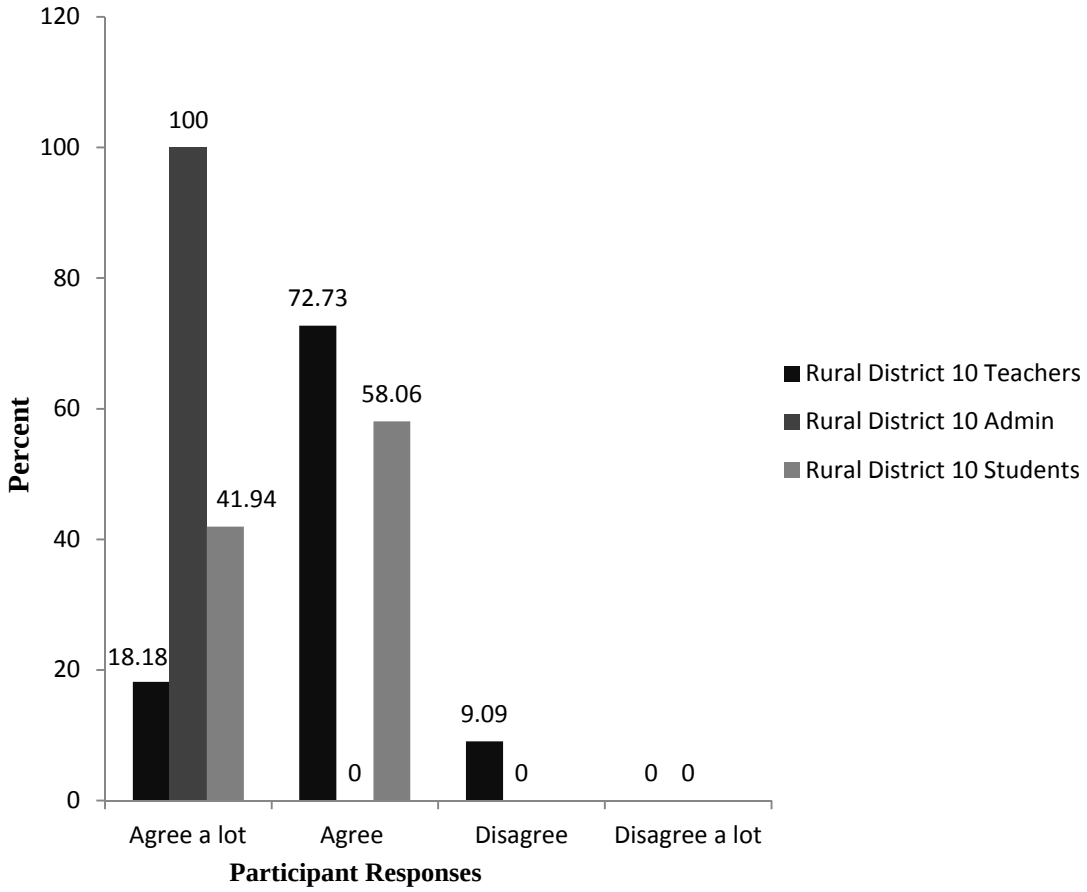


Figure 25. Survey Statement 13: Teachers and students respect one another in this school. Student Question: I try my best to follow the rules at this school.

As seen in Figure 26, 100% of administrators and 92.45% of teachers and 83.87% of students *agree* or *agree a lot* that students and teachers like one another in the school. A total of 16.13% of students and 4.55% of teachers *disagree* with the statement.

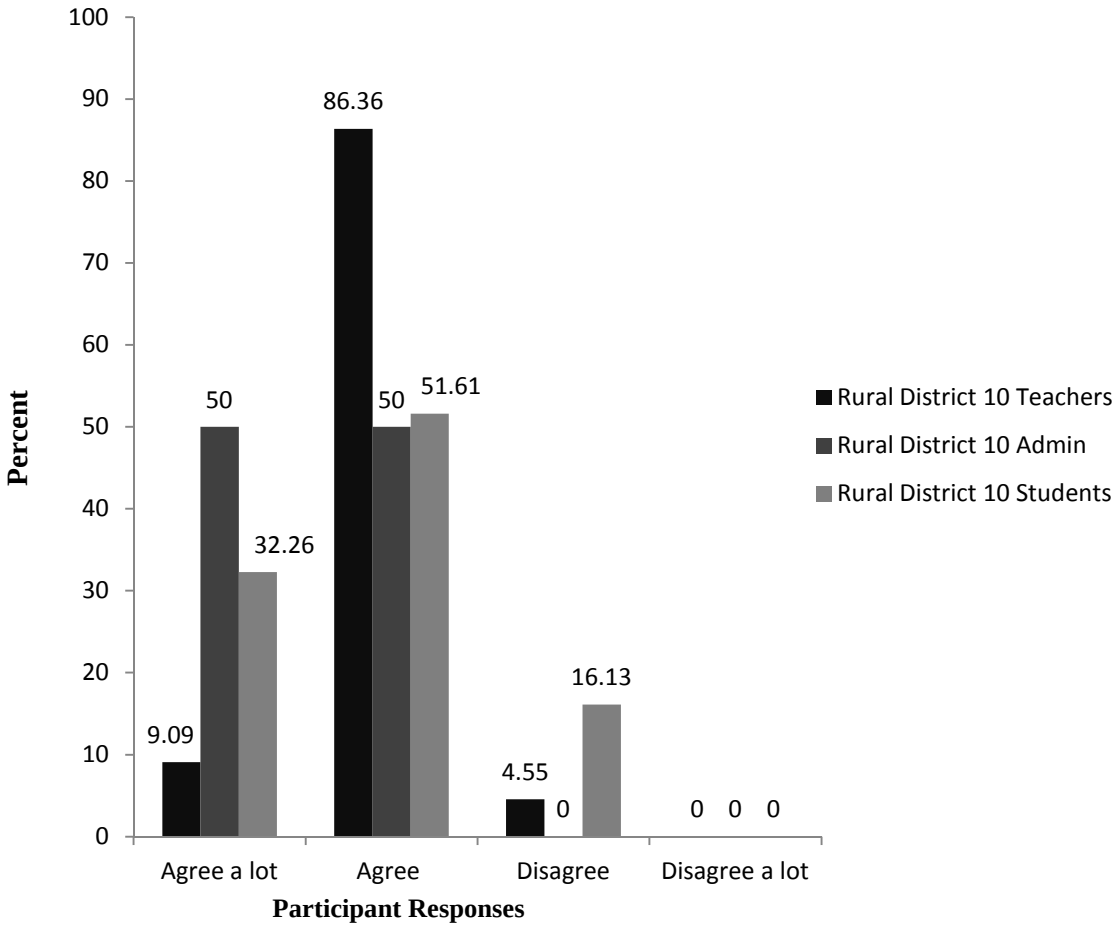


Figure 26. Survey Statement 14: Teachers and students like one another in this school. Student Question: I like most of my teachers and administrators.

As shown in Figure 27, 100 % of administrators, 92.45% of teachers and 80.64% of students *agree a lot* or *agree* that they like the school. A total of 19.35% of students and 4.55% of teachers *disagree* with the statement.

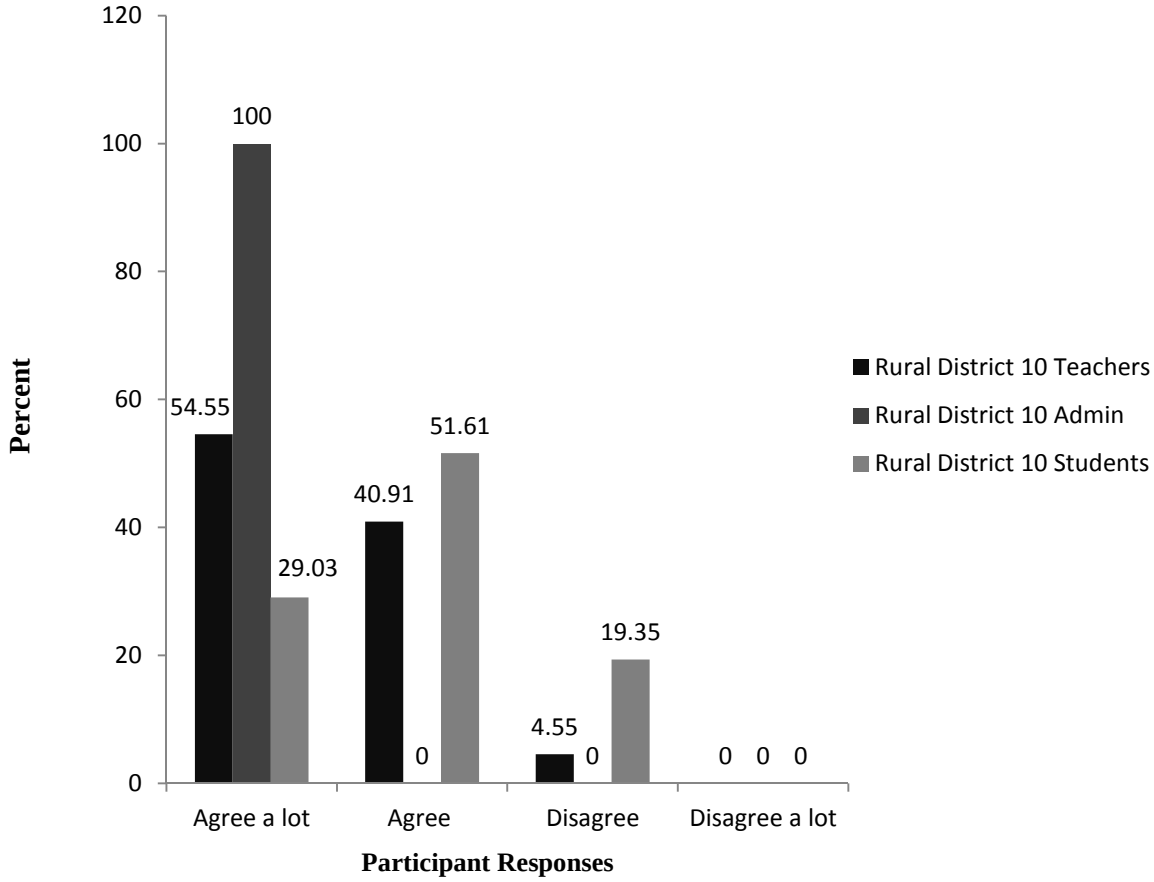


Figure 27. Survey Statement 15: I like this school.

Research Question 3

The third research question of this study was: What are teacher and administrator perceptions of the climate of the building as it relates to student behavior at the secondary level in other districts that have implemented SW-PBS and how does this compare with Rural District 10? Surveys were sent to teachers and administrators in other districts in Missouri that have implemented SW-PBS for at least two years to gather perceptions on the climate of their buildings. Surveys were sent to 19 secondary schools around the state of Missouri that have implemented SW-PBS for at least two years. These schools range from rural to urban districts where the secondary school populations ranged from 100 students, to 1600 students.

SW-PBS places a large emphasis on how school rules are worded and demonstrated to students (Morrissey, Bohanon, & Fenning, 2010). As shown in Figure 25, more teachers (4.88%) and administrators (8.33%) in "other" districts that have implemented SW-PBS for at least two years answered *disagree* to the statement as compared to no responses that disagreed in the two Rural District 10 groups.

As shown in Figure 28, more teachers (4.88%) and administrators (8.33%) in "other" districts who have implemented SW-PBS for at least two years answered *disagree* to the statement as compared to no responses that disagreed in the two Rural District 10 groups.

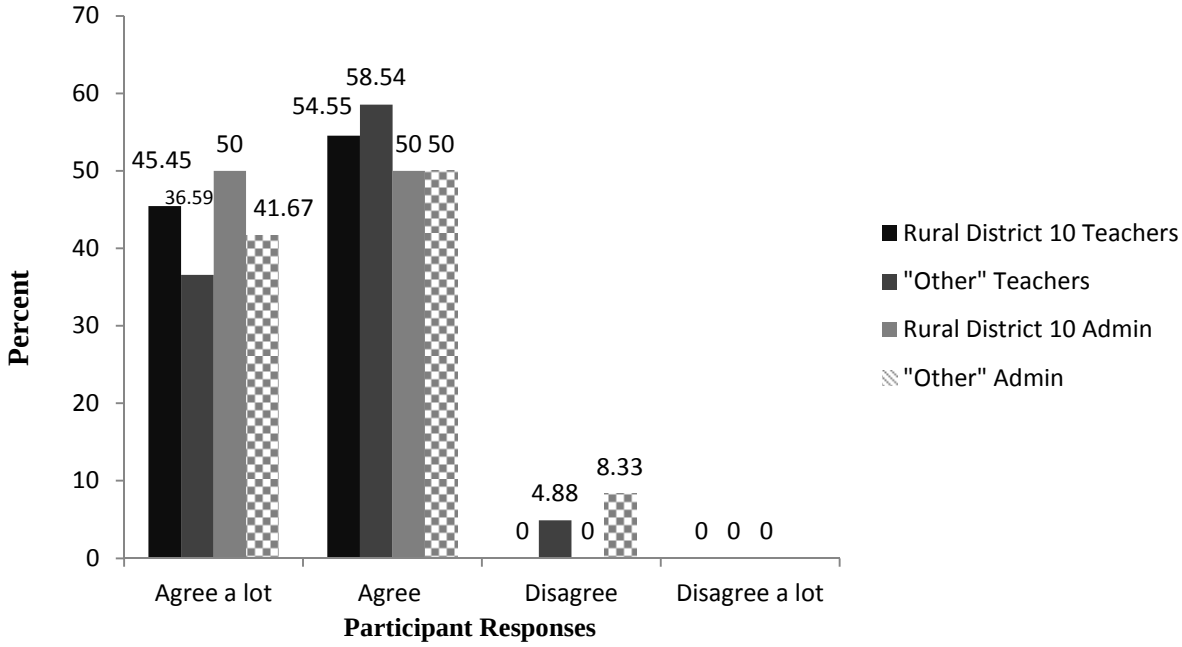


Figure 28. Survey Statement 1: The school rules are fair.

As shown in Figure 29, Rural District 10 Teachers had the highest percentage (63.64%) of responses saying they *agree a lot* that the school is safe. "Other" administrators had the lowest percentage of *agree a lot* (25%) with the next lowest being students in Rural District 10 at 29.03%. Rural District 10 teachers and administrators were the only groups to not have any respondents disagree with the question.

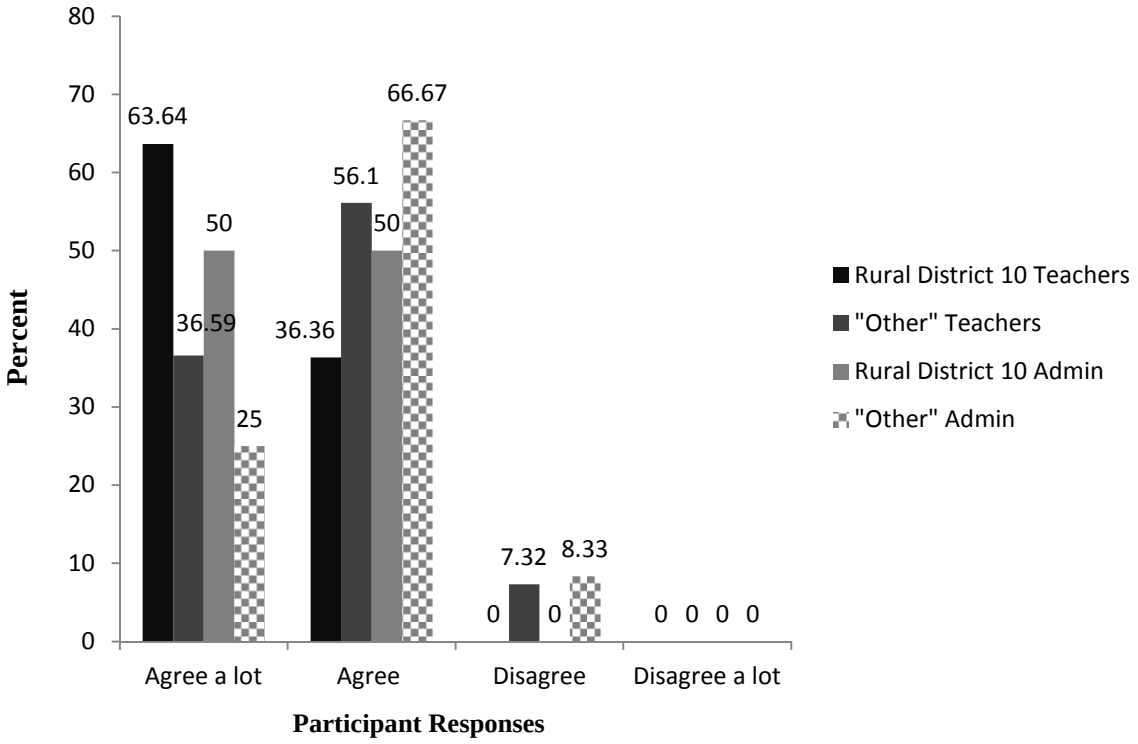


Figure 29. Survey Statement 2: This school is safe.

As shown in Figure 30, Rural District 10 teachers and administrators had the highest percentage of *agree a lot* when asked if rules in the school are made clear to students. A total of 50% of administrators and 45.45% of teachers in Rural District 10 answered with *agree a lot*. The lowest percentage of respondents who answered *agree* or *agree a lot* was "other" administrators with 83.34%. The group with the highest percentage of respondents who answered *disagree* was also "other" administration. "Other" administrators from schools in Missouri who have implemented SW-PBS for at least two years had the lowest confidence that rules in their school were made clear to students.

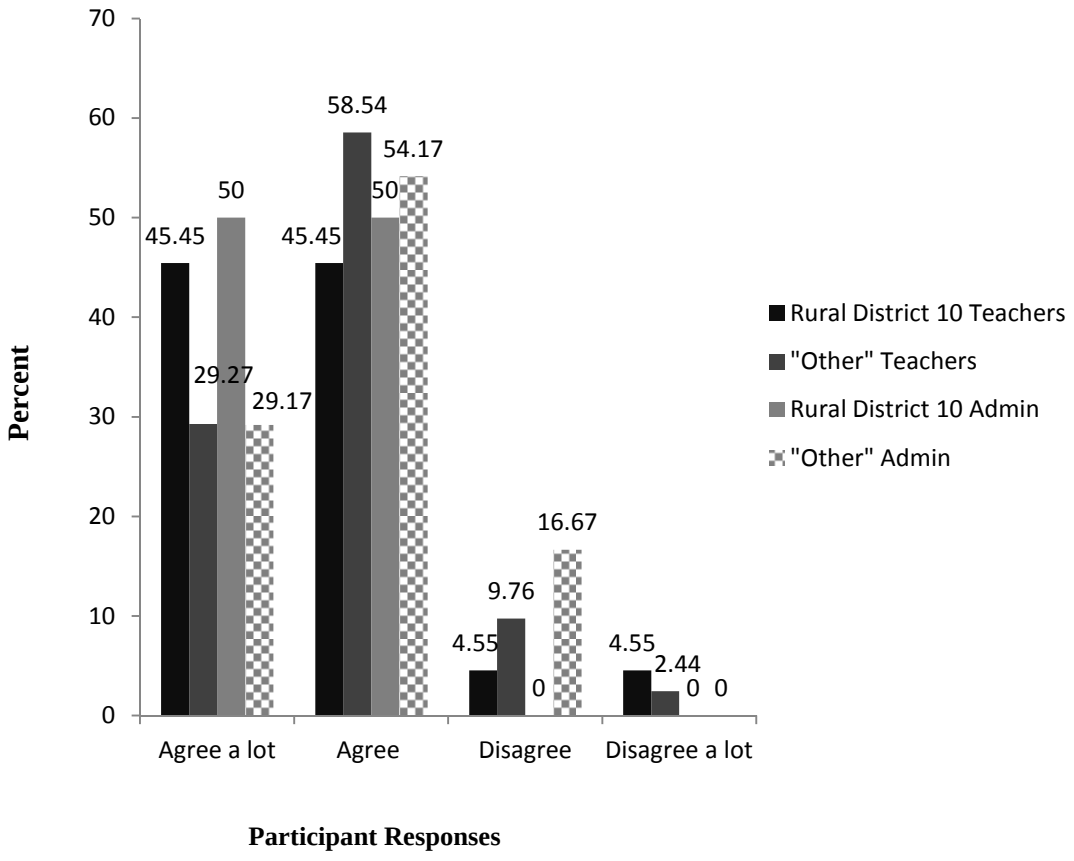


Figure 30. Survey Statement 3: Rules in this school are made clear to students.

As shown in Figure 31, Rural District 10 administrators and "other" administrators had the highest percentage of respondents *agree a lot* with the question. Rural District 10 administrators had 50% and "other" administrators had 41.67% answer with the response *agree a lot*. Rural District 10 teachers had the highest percentage of respondents answering *agree* with 86.36%. A total of 100% of Rural District 10 teachers believe that students in the school are friendly with each other.

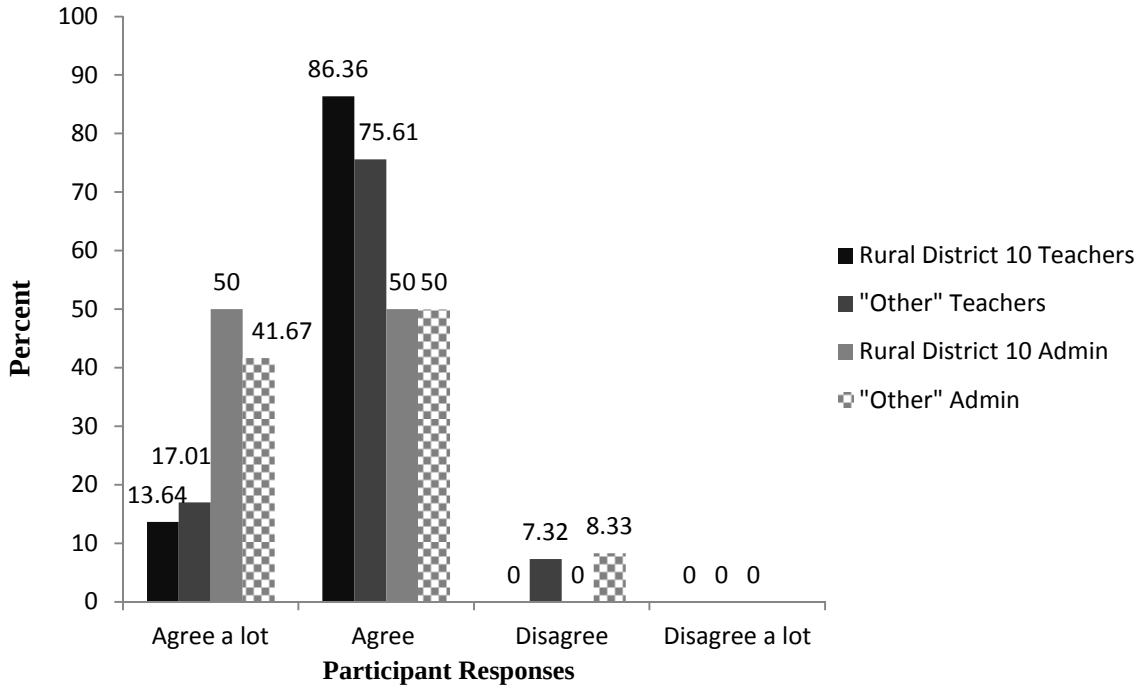


Figure 31. Survey Statement 4: Students in this school are friendly with each other.

As shown in Figure 32, “other” teachers and students from Rural District 10 are the only respondents who *agree a lot* when asked if students threaten and bully others in their school. A total of 4.88% of “other” teachers *agree a lot* with this question. Rural District 10 administrators and “other” administrators are the only groups who *disagree a lot* with the question. A total of 50% of Rural District 10 administrators and 4.17% of “other” administrators *disagree a lot* with the question. Teachers in Rural District 10 have 50% agreeing that students threaten and bully others in school and 50% disagreeing. This trend continues with “other” teachers from Missouri who are also split on this question with 51.22% agreeing and 43.9% disagreeing that students threaten and bully others in this school.

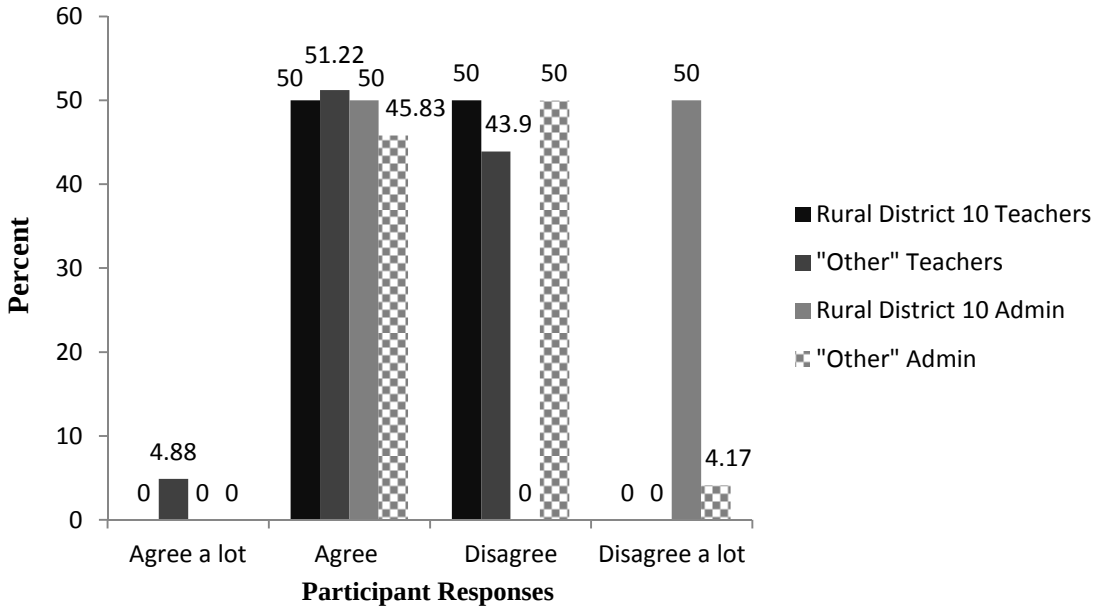


Figure 32. Survey Statement 5: Students threaten and bully others in this school.

As shown in Figure 33, the group that had the strongest agreement when asked about how much teachers care about their students was “other” teachers (65.85%) and “other” administrators (66.67%). One group responded with *disagree* when asked if teachers care about their students. 4.55% of Rural District 10 teachers responded with *disagree* in response to the statement.

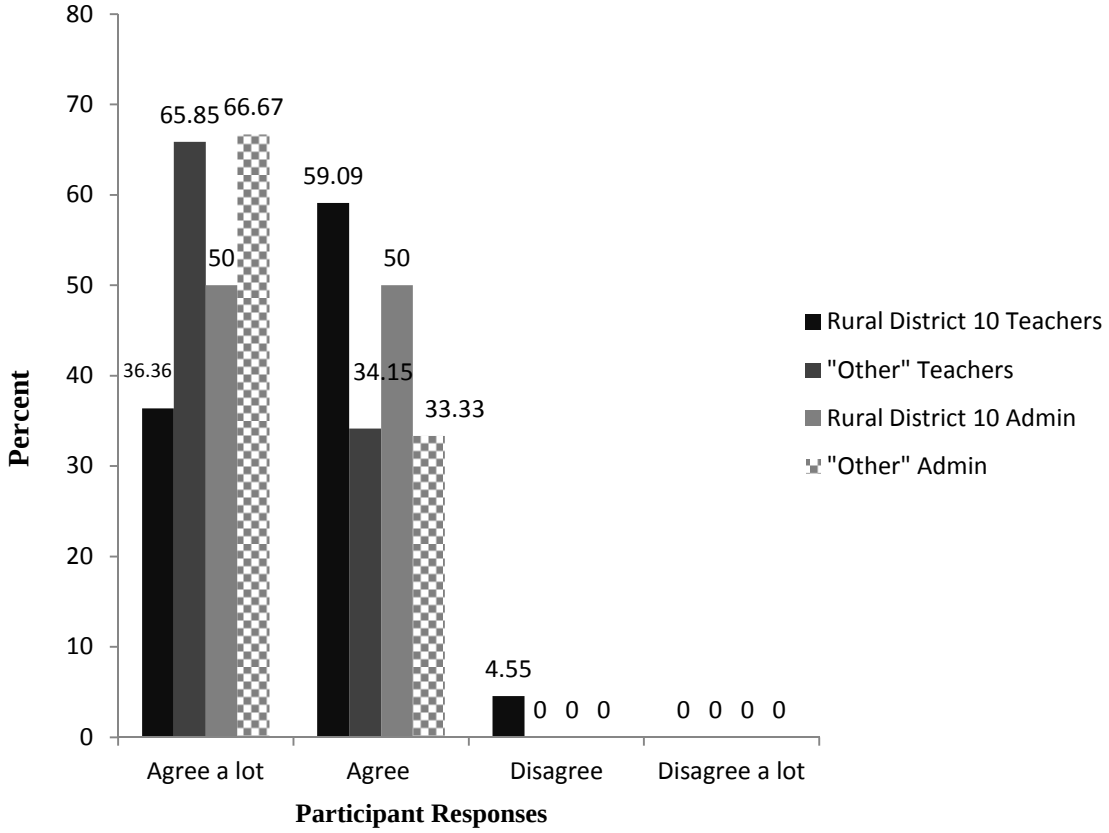


Figure 33. Survey Statement 6: Teachers care about their students.

As shown in Figure 34, 100% of Rural District 10 administrators answered *agree a lot* with the statement “this school makes it clear how students are expected to act”. The other three groups of respondents were very similar in percentages of answering *agree a lot* ranging from 40.91% to 31.71%. Rural District 10 teachers had the second highest combined percentages when responding with either *agree a lot* or *agree* at 95.46%. “Other” administrators had the lowest number of respondents answering *agree a lot* or *agree* at 75%. A total of 25% of “other” administrators disagree that the school they work in makes it clear how students are expected to act. The strongest disagreements with this statement were answered by respondents in the Rural District 10 teacher group and the“other” teacher group.

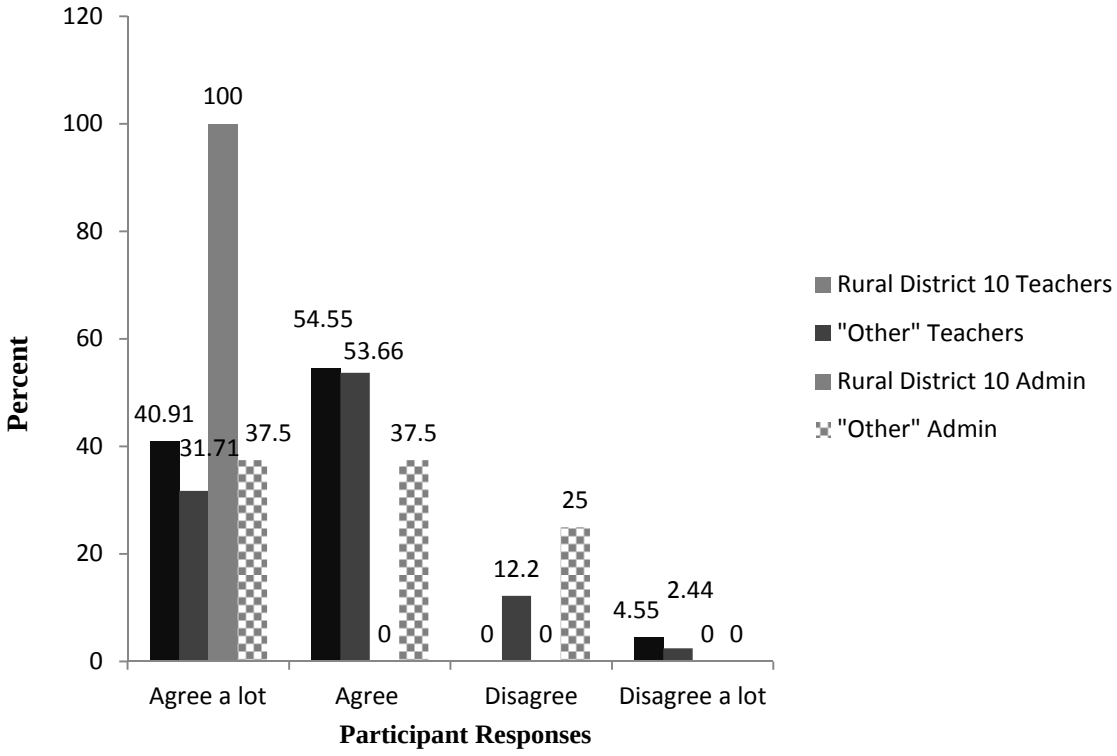


Figure 34. Survey Statement 7: This school makes it clear how students are expected to act.

As shown in Figure 35, 100% of Rural District 10 administrators answered *agree a lot* to the statement “most students follow the school rules”. “Other” administrators had the second highest response of *agree a lot* with 20.83%. A total of 81.82% of Rural District 10 teachers answered *agree* with the statement. All groups disagreed with the statements except administration in Rural District 10. “Other” administrators were the only groups to answer *disagree a lot* with 4.17% of respondents.

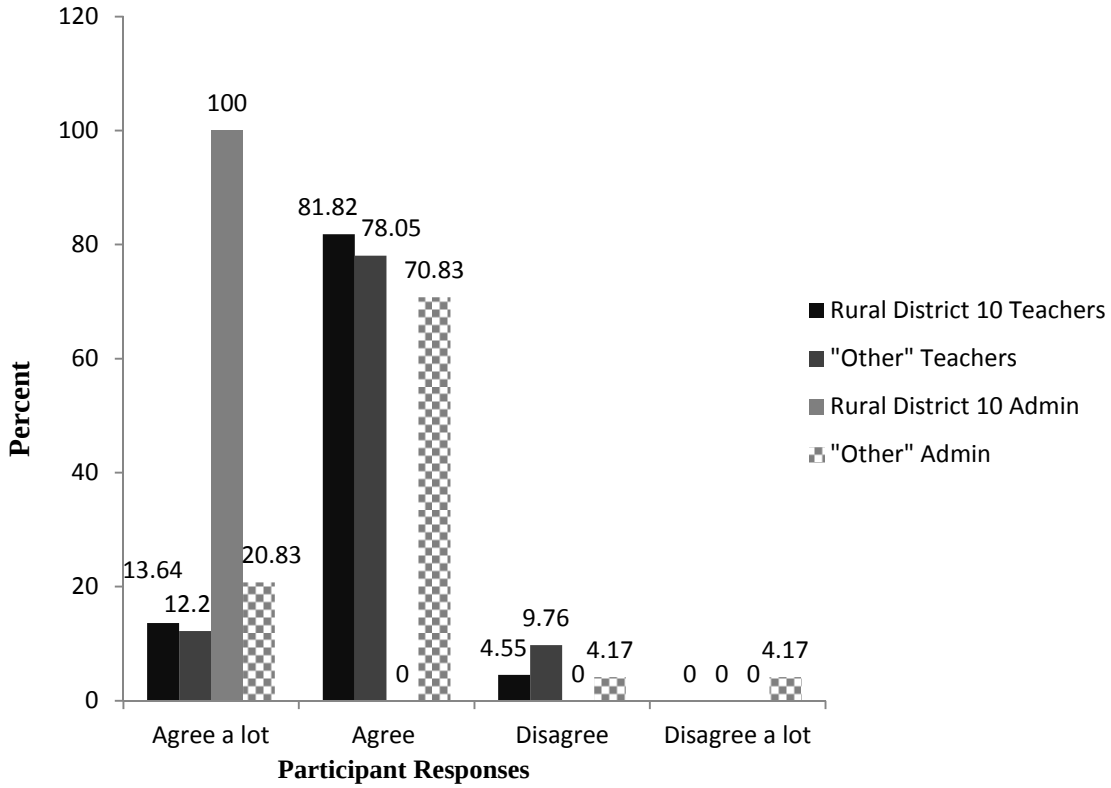


Figure 35. Survey Statement 8: Most students follow the school rules.

As shown in Figure 36, 50% of Rural District 10 administrators *agree a lot* that students are punished a lot. The other three groups represented did not register any answers under this category. A total of 18.18% of teachers in Rural District 10 and 16.67% of "other" administrators *agree* that students are punished a lot. All groups had a majority of respondents answer *disagree* with "other" teachers at 80.49%, Rural District 10 teachers at 77.27%, "other" administrators at 75%. "Other" teachers had the highest percentage answering *disagree a lot* with 12.2%.

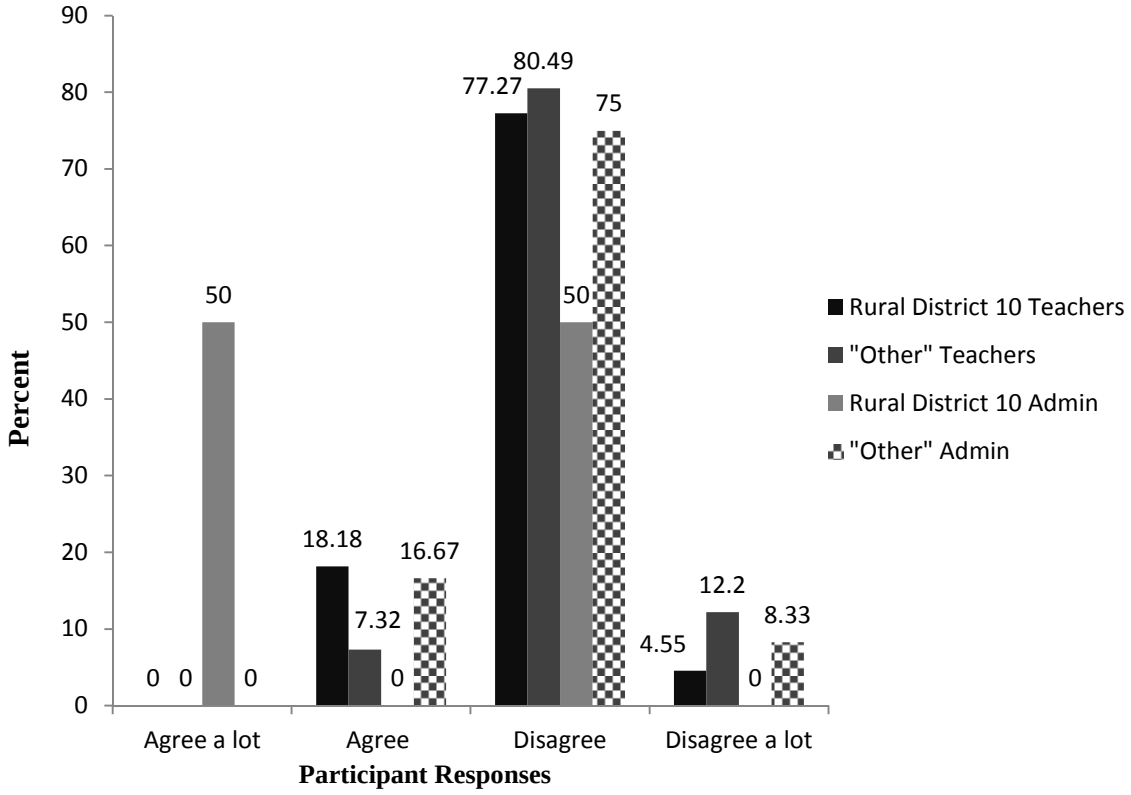


Figure 36. Survey Statement 9: Students are punished a lot.

As shown in Figure 37, all four groups *agree a lot* that students are praised often in their school with the highest percentages in Rural District 10 administrators at 50% and "other" teachers at 41.46%. The highest percentage of respondents answered in the *agree* category with the highest being 90.91% of teachers in Rural District 10 and 70.83% of "other" administrators. "Other" teachers accounted for 14.63% and teachers from Rural District 10 at 4.55% *disagree* that students are praised often.

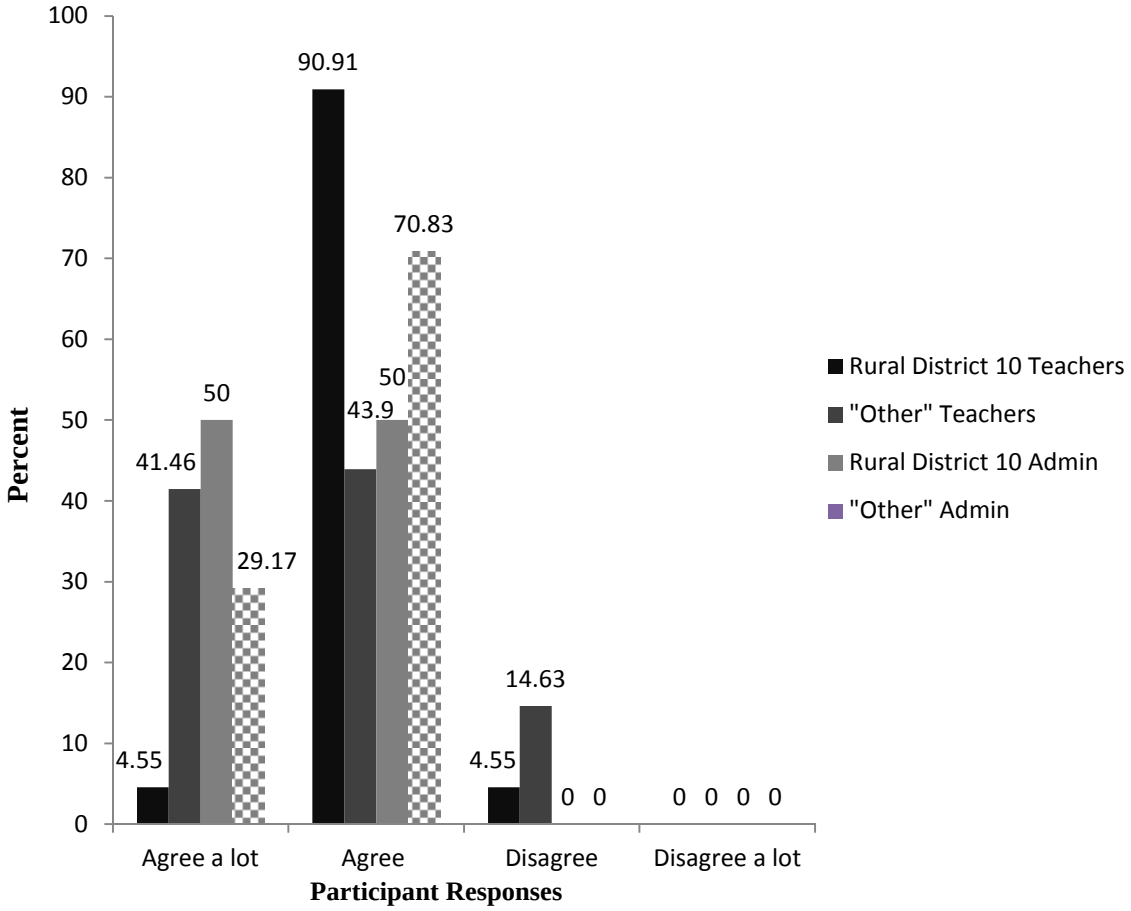


Figure 37. Survey Statement 10: Students are praised often.

As shown in Figure 38, the majority of all respondents *agree* that students are taught to feel responsible for how they act. 72.73% of teachers from Rural District 10 and 70.83% of "other" administrators had the most respondents answer in the *agree* category. The responses from every group were very similar when answering this question. The only group that did not disagree in any way to this question was administrators from Rural District 10.

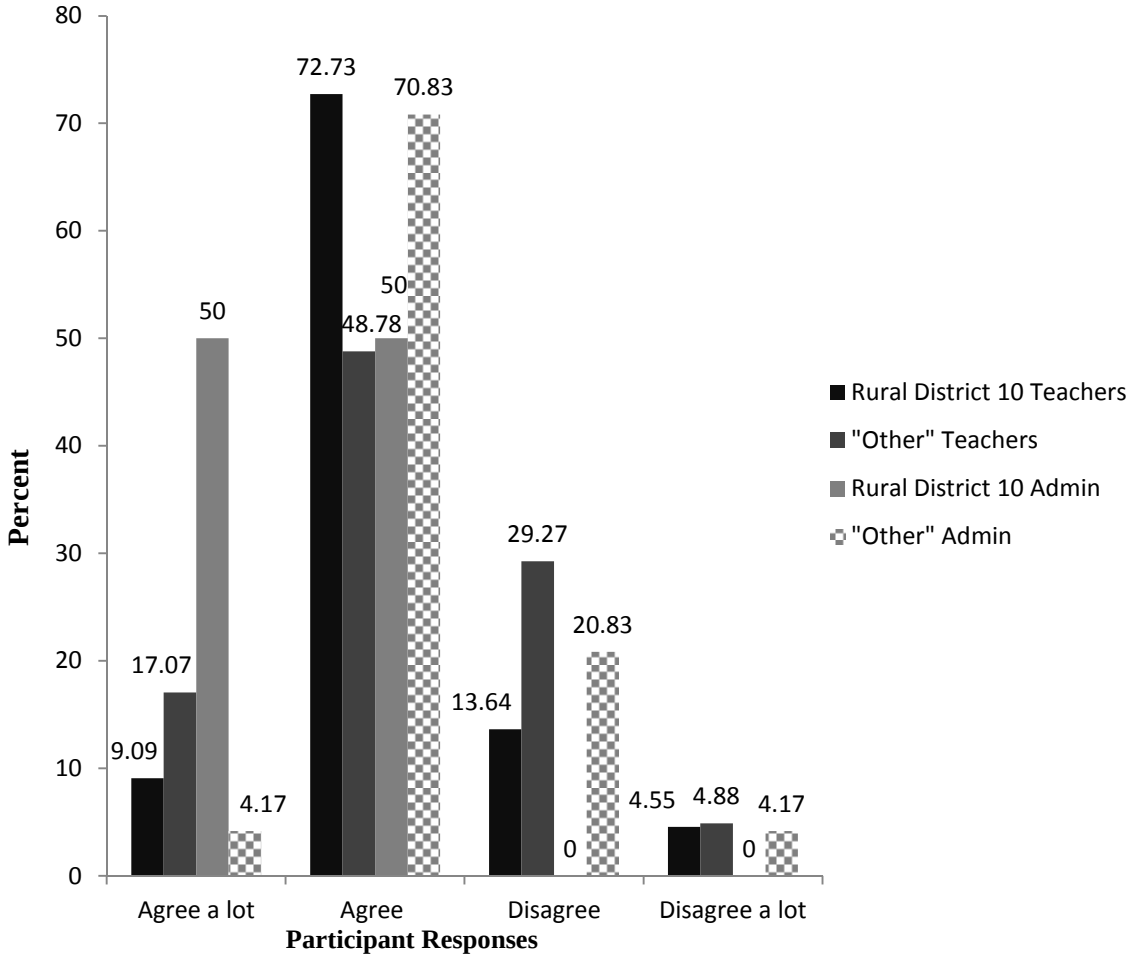


Figure 38. Survey Statement 11: Students are taught to feel responsible for how they act.

As shown in Figure 39, the majority of responses from all groups came in the *agree a lot* or *agree* category. A total of 100% of administrators in Rural District 10, 46.34% of "other" teachers and 41.67% of "other" administrators *agree a lot* that they feel happy in the school. A total of 7.32% of "other" teachers and 4.55% of Rural District 10 teachers *disagree* or *disagree a lot* that they feel happy in the school.

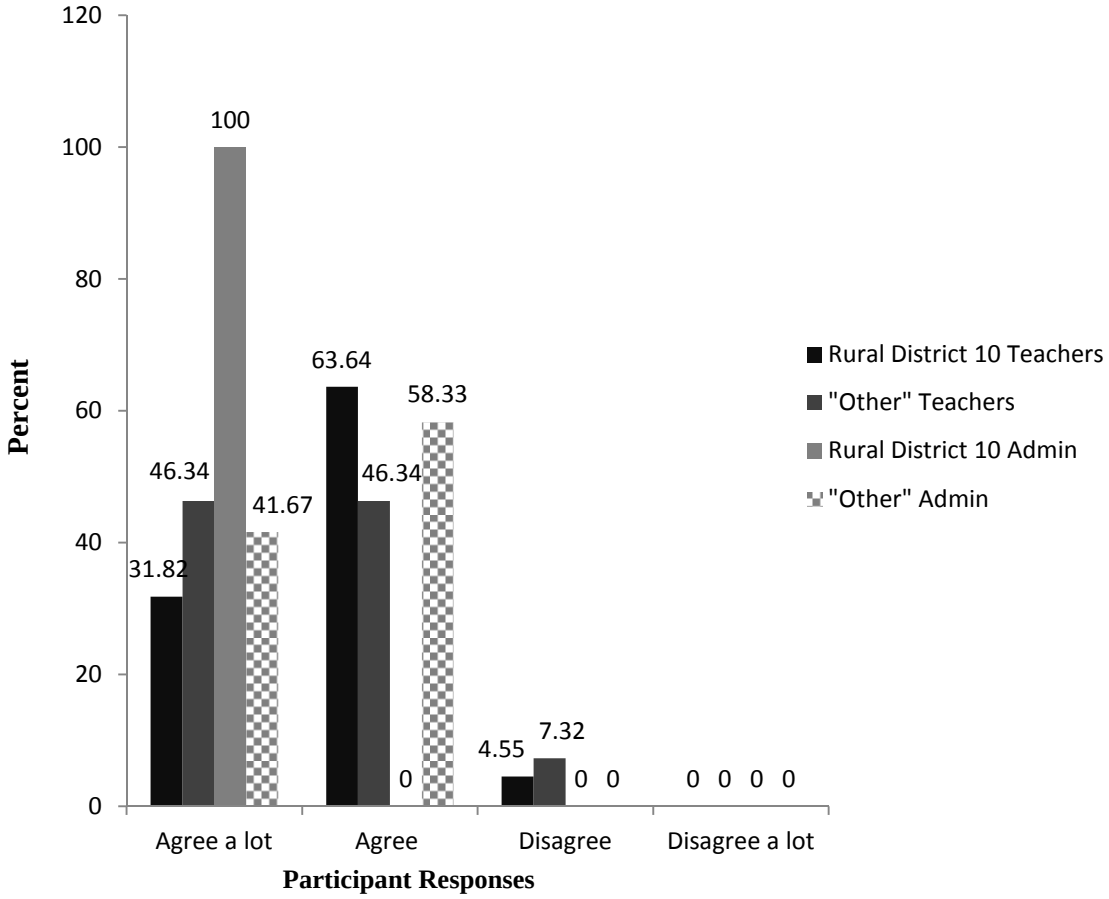


Figure 39. Survey Statement 12: I feel happy in this school.

As shown in Figure 40, all four groups of staff respondents *agree a lot* or *agree* that teachers and students respect one another in the school. A total of 19.51% of "other" teachers, 9.09% of Rural District 10 teachers and 4.17% of "other" administrators *disagree* that teachers and students respect one another.

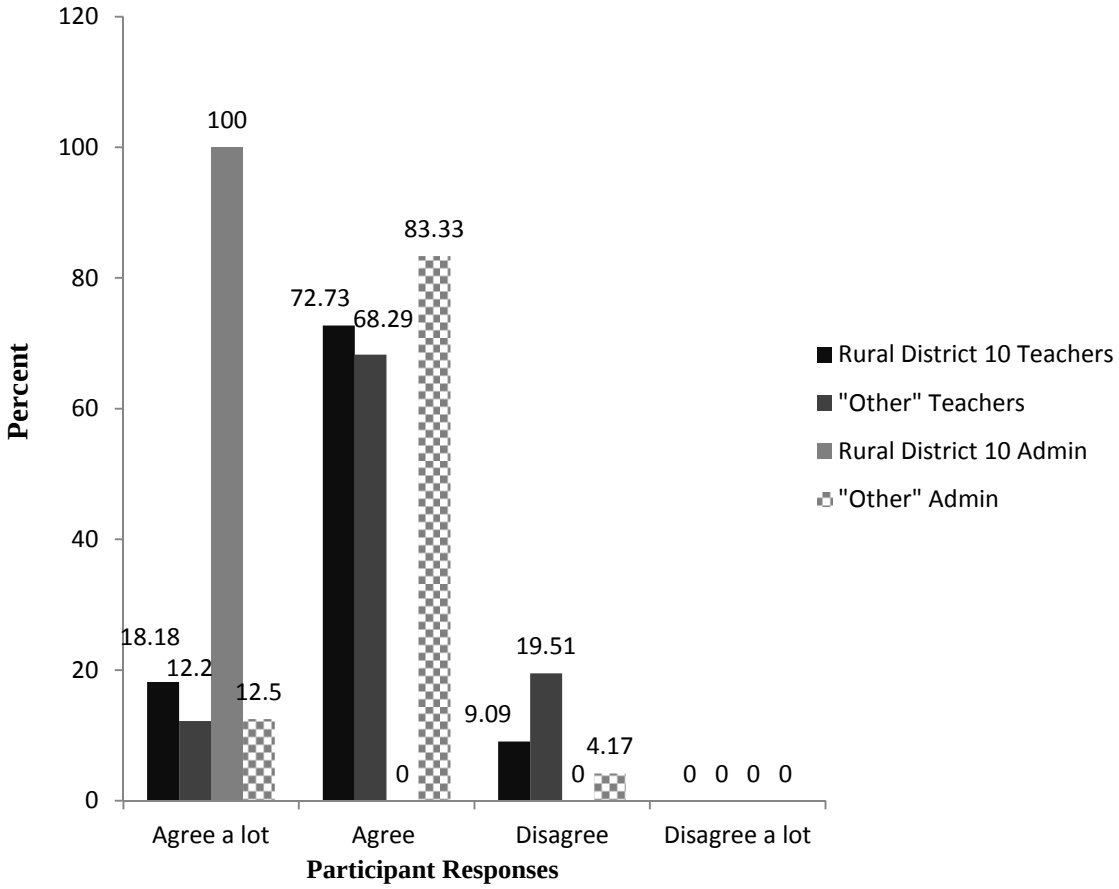


Figure 40. Survey Statement 13: Teachers and students respect one another in this school.

As shown in Figure 41, the majority of respondents from all groups responded that they *agree* that teachers and students like one another in this school. A total of 4.55% of teachers from Rural District 10 and 2.44% of "other" teachers *disagree* that they like one another in the school.

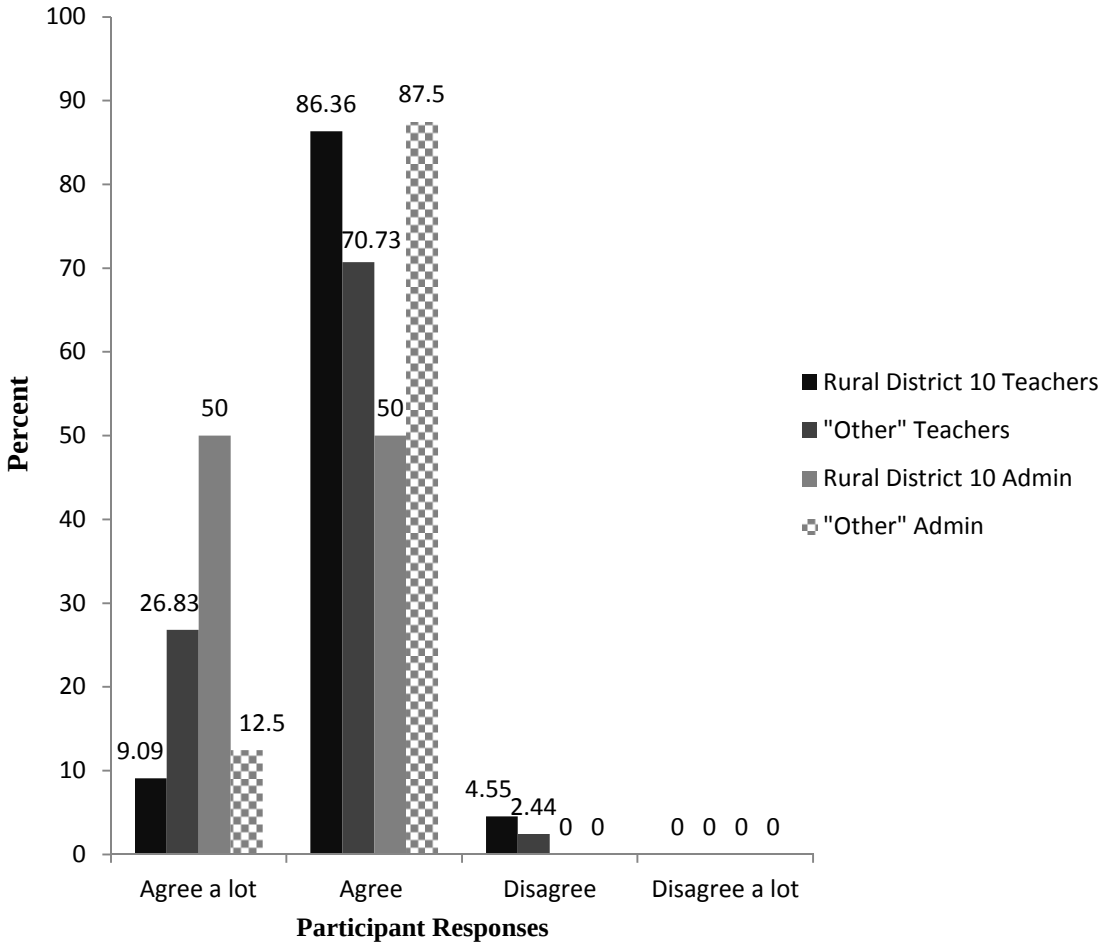


Figure 41. Survey Statement 14: Teachers and students like one another in this school.

As shown in Figure 42, every group of respondents *agree a lot* that they like the school. 100% of Rural District 10 administrators and 100% of "other" administrators *agree a lot* that they like the school. A total of 7.32% of "other" teachers and 4.55% of teachers from Rural District 10 *disagree* that they like the school.

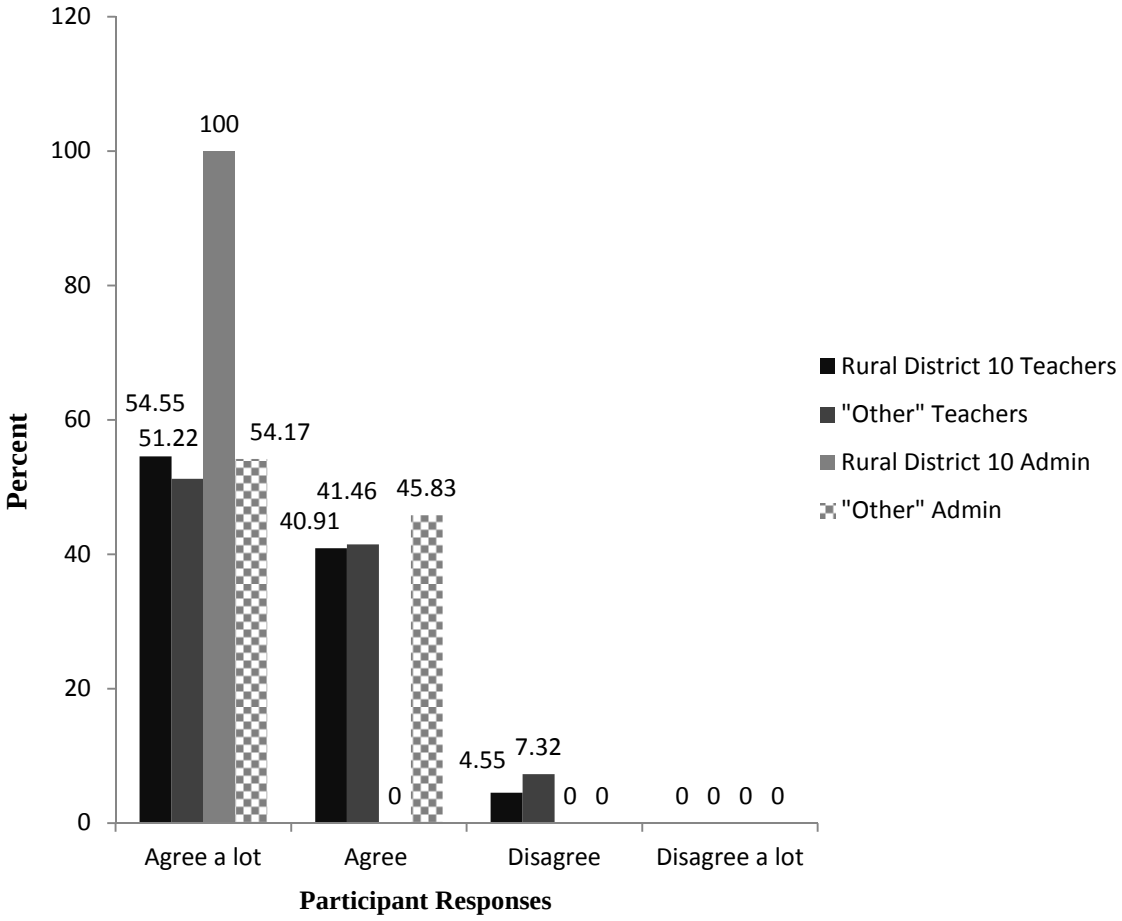


Figure 42. Survey Statement 15: I like this school.

Summary

Past research related to the implementation of SW-PBS and its relationship between the amount of behavior problems and general climate of the school have been mostly limited to studies examining elementary schools (Little, 2005). High school implementation and the potential effectiveness of SW-PBS is a relatively limited body of research (Horner & Sugai, 2011). Given that implementation of SW-PBS in Rural District 10 began at the high school level rather than in the elementary schools, this is a very unique study.

The longevity of time (nine years) in which discipline data were collected also gave great insight into the effectiveness of SW-PBS. Office discipline referrals for Rural District 10 for the period prior to SW-PBS implementation (2004-2008) and during implementation (2008-2013) were compared using a dependent *t* test analysis. Then the study examined if an increase or decrease occurred within the time span during SW-PBS implementation. Surveys were sent to secondary schools in Missouri from the nine regions that have implemented SW-PBS. Perceptions of the overall climate and culture of the building were compared between districts.

Chapter Four included a review of the purpose of the study, research questions and demographic data. A presentation of the data analysis was shown and an observation from each survey was made. To test the null hypothesis, a two tailed type two t-test was conducted on the discipline data in Rural District 10 from 2004-2012. Chapter Five reviewed conclusions of the study as well as discussed next steps for possible future research.

Chapter Five: Discussion and Conclusions

SW-PBS and its systems have been accepted, implemented and extended in elementary and middle schools. "However, the same levels of implementation have not been documented widely and have not been replicable at the high school level." (Bohanon-Edmonson, Flannery, Eber, & Sugai, (2010). Sugai (2010) wrote:

> Applications of SWPBS in high school settings, however, have not been demonstrated and documented widely or sufficiently. In part, the emphasis has been on elementary and middle schools, but we also are learning that implementation of SWPBS may need to be adapted in high schools to accommodate their unique organizational and structural features, the progressive social and developmental aspects of adolescence, and variations in how problem behaviors and social responsibility are defined and considered at the secondary level. Our initial efforts to implement SWPBS in high schools have been exploratory at best, and much more work needs to be done to study systematically the SWPBS effects on high school social climate, academic achievement, rates of problem behavior, and School-Wide PBS in HS organizational efficiency and efficacy. (pp. 8-9)

This research attempted to add to the limited body of research available on high schools. Research as to how SW-PBS affects high school social climate and culture is very limited. One major issue with implementation of SW-PBS in high school is sustainability (Diggan, 2013). Many high schools have attempted to implement SW-PBS and cease with the initiative just a few years later (Bohannon et al., 2006).

Identifying variables that make high school implementation successful or ultimately a failure are hard to pinpoint. Horner, Sugai & Anderson (2010) explained:

> The evidence base for any practice will be continually emerging and subject to refinement. Considering SWPBS as a practice or set of practices, four issues may be fruitful to guide ongoing research efforts: sustainability, cost, educational levels of implementation, and interactive effects. Sustainability refers to the durability with which a practice is used with fidelity and impact and is a function of a host of variables. One of the enticing features of SW-PBS has been the evaluation reports of sustained SW-PBS implementation. It is encouraging to note that SW-PBS has been sustained for extended time periods, but identification and documentation of the variables specifically responsible for sustained and failed implementation would increase the efficiency of SW-PBS implementation. (p.10)

Findings

Research question 1. What relationship, if any, exists between the years of implementation of SW-PBS in Rural District 10 and the number of office disciplinary referrals at the secondary level before and during implementation?

There was a difference between the number of discipline referrals of Group one Rural District 10 prior to implementation of SW-PBS during the years 2004-2007 (M = 1585.5; SD = 377.60; SE = 188.38) and Group two in Rural District 10 during implementation of SW-PBS during the years 2008-2012 (M = 1186.2; SD = 270.4842; SE = 120.96421). During implementation discipline referral numbers decreased with the p value (0 .127247) > (0.05). However, if discipline were maintained at the current level

of 820 referrals for two more years and a *t*-test conducted at the end of that time, the test would show a *p* value (0.04053) < (0 .05).

Research question 2. What are student, teacher and administrator perceptions of the climate of Rural District 10 as it relates to student behavior at the secondary level after implementation of SW-PBS?

When comparing answers to common questions given in the surveys, teachers and administrators from Rural District 10 had more closely aligned answers than students from Rural District 10. Overall, teachers and administrators had a more favorable view of the climate of the building in regards to respect, student behavior and relationships.

Research question 3. What are teacher and administrator perceptions of the climate of the building as it relates to student behavior at the secondary level in other districts that have implemented SW-PBS and how does this compare with Rural District 10?

Teachers and administrators from other districts in Missouri that have implemented SW-PBS for at least two years had similar answers with teachers and administrators from Rural District 10 on seven of the fifteen questions. On all of the questions that the two groups disagreed upon, teachers and administrators from other districts had a more negative view of the school they were in as it related to safety, fairness of rules, student friendliness, clear expectations, student responsibility and teacher/student respect for one another. Based on the perceptions gathered by the questions on the survey, Rural District 10 teachers and administrators felt as though the climate and culture of the building was better overall as compared to other districts in Missouri that have implemented SW-PBS for at least two years. Rural District 10 is in the

sixth year of SW-PBS implementation.

Null hypothesis. There is no relationship between the implementation of SW-PBS in Rural District 10 and the number of office disciplinary referrals at the secondary level before and during implementation.

Although discipline referral numbers did decrease during implementation of SW-PBS from 2008-2012, the *p* value was (0 .127247) > (0.05) which suggests that there was no significant difference between the means of the sample of pre SW-PBS implementation ODRs and during implementation of SW-PBS ODRs. However, if discipline were maintained at the current level of 820 referrals for two more years and a *t-test* was ran at the end of that time, the test would show a *p value* less than .05 which would suggest a significant difference between the means of the sample populations. With analysis of the data presented, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

Limitations of Findings

There were two major limitations in this study. The first was other variables that could contribute to reducing ODRs other than the implementation of SW-PBS. Prior to implementation of SW-PBS at Rural District 10, a new assistant principal was hired in 2005.

During the 2004 school year the most referrals were submitted in a school year with 2,087. The first year the new assistant principal was on the job referrals were reduced to 1,573. After asking the assistant principal and teachers who worked in the building during that time, they acknowledge that the reason for such a drastic decrease during that year was that the new assistant principal identified what was classroom managed versus office managed behavior, and office discipline referrals were reduced

drastically until SW-PBS was first implemented in 2008.

The other limitation was the level of consistency of which the teachers were submitting ODRs. As there was turnover within the teaching positions at Rural District 10, ODRs were submitted at a different rate by new teachers. It was nearly impossible to gauge with relative accuracy how consistent teachers are submitting ODRs for common issues.

Relationship of Findings to Conceptual Framework

The most effective behavior intervention plans are based on the function of behavior. These interventions are designed so teachers can focus on encouraging prevention of the problem as well as the reaction (Scott et al., 2005). SW-PBS has a conceptual framework that a school can adopt to make a successful impact on student behavior. Schools that implement SW-PBS often use the theory of Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) as the method of assessing the relationship between the environment and behavior.

Researchers have demonstrated the effectiveness of using FBA in determining the function or purpose of the behavior (Scott et al., 2005). In order to be effective, school personnel must develop and implement logical and practical strategies that are tied to the function of the behavior (Scott et al., 2005). Schools that were observed during this study regularly use an FBA when implementing different tiers of SW-PBS. Rural District 10 continually monitored the relationship between the environment and behavior. Decisions to add incentives or reconfigure tiers were analyzed using FBA's. If ODRs in Rural District 10 continue on the current trajectory for two more years, a strong relationship between SW-PBS and the total number of ODRs would be visible.

Conclusions

An initial spike in referrals occurred when SW-PBS was first implemented in Rural District 10. This occurrence was possibly due to the fact that through the consistency of the teachers and principal, which was encouraged by the SW-PBS framework, teachers began to record tardiness and cell phone violations by having a common understanding of what constituted a violation. When a violation occurred, teachers were consistently writing ODRs which caused more ODRs to be written. As teachers maintained this consistency and students began to realize that all teachers would be consistent with these policies, numbers of ODRs began to drop over the next several years. ODRs continue to fall in Rural District 10 and they are currently on track to finish the 2013-14 school years with just over 600 referrals.

Positive school climates are an extremely important variable in determining whether a school is successful or not. SW-PBS attempts to improve school climate by introducing interventions that target certain elements of school climate. Rural District 10 as well as all of the other schools surveyed in this research try to improve school culture and climate. Koth, Bradshaw, and Leaf (2008) explained:

> Since the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, two aspects of school climate, achievement and safety have become central in schools' improvements. A wide range of interventions have been proposed to address climate, some of which are aimed at individuals and others of which are more focused on classrooms or the school level. However, the impact of interventions on achievement and safety may depend on the target of the intervention, Therefore, it is important to identify

> specific factors at different ecological levels (student, classroom, and school) that may influence students' perceptions of these two aspects of school climate. (p. 96)

Teachers and administrators in Rural District 10 had similar answers with students from Rural District 10 on seven of the 15 questions. On all of the questions that teachers and administrators from Rural District 10 disagreed with students on, the students from Rural District 10 had a more negative response to that statement. Students from Rural District 10 had a more negative view of the school as it related to safety, fairness of rules, student friendliness, teachers caring for students, clear expectations, students following rules and how often students are praised. Based on the perceptions gathered by the questions on the survey, teachers and administrators in Rural District 10 felt as though the climate and culture of the building overall was better compared to the perceptions of students in Rural District 10.

Teachers and administrators from other districts in Missouri that have implemented SW-PBS for at least two years had similar answers with teachers and administrators from Rural District 10 on seven of the 15 questions. On all of the questions that the two groups disagreed upon, teachers and administrators from other districts had a more negative view of the school they were in as it related to safety, fairness of rules, student friendliness, clear expectations, student responsibility and teacher/student respect for one another. Based on the perceptions gathered by the questions on the survey, Rural District 10 teachers and administrators felt as though the climate and culture of the building was better overall as compared to other districts in Missouri that have implemented SW-PBS for at least two years.

There could be many possible reasons as to why Rural District 10 teachers and

administrators had a more positive perception of the climate and culture of the building. One possible reason could be the fact that Rural District 10 started the SW-PBS program in the high school rather than in the elementary schools. Rural District 10 has the only known high school in the state of Missouri to have begun this way. This may cause teachers and administrators in Rural District 10 to take more ownership and pride in the program because they initiated it rather than having it forced upon them by the district.

Implications for Practice

There is much research still to be conducted on how SW-PBS can be effective in a high school setting and what potential roadblocks high schools may face when implementing and sustaining SW-PBS. High school students and teachers tend to believe that SW-PBS is an elementary concept and have a tendency to have a more negative view. This study shows that there is a slight disconnect between the perception that teachers and administrators have in a school and what students think.

Many times, educators believe they are doing great things within a school but miss a crucial step, they forget to get the students opinion. Teachers and administrators need to include students in the decision making process of SW-PBS when making decisions on effective rewards, interventions and strategies. The student voice is an extremely valuable one that cannot be overlooked.

Teachers and administrators also need to look at the school through the lenses of a student's perspective. Many times teachers and administrators can perceive that students are not bullying one another, students are being friendly to one another or that students really enjoy the school when in fact they really do not. Teachers and administrators do not see everything that goes on in the building, and students are extremely good at hiding

the things they do not want adults to see. Regularly surveying students anonymously can give great insight into what exactly the students are seeing and feeling. Schools must be sensitive to all student needs and try to look at the school from their vantage point if the school wants to continue to improve the climate and culture.

Recommendations for Future Research

There are two main recommendations for future research. First, discipline data over five to ten year periods of time need to be analyzed in other SW-PBS schools as well as schools that have not implemented SW-PBS. The average number of ODRs can be compared in non-SW-PBS schools as well as SW-PBS schools. The decline and rise in ODRs can also be compared in the same schools to see if a greater correlation exists between SW-PBS and office discipline referrals.

Second, student surveys measuring climate and culture need to be given to students from every school in Missouri. This could be an initiative by MODESE to collect the data for all school districts to access on a yearly basis. This data can then be broken down by non-SW-PBS schools and schools that have implemented SW-PBS schools. Perceptions can be compared to see if SW-PBS makes a significant difference in how students perceive the climate and culture within the building. Statements in the survey might include:

1. Teachers listen to students when they have problems.
2. Students get along with each other.
3. Students care about each other.
4. Teachers listen to the concerns of parents.
5. Teachers show respect towards parents.

6. Students know they are safe in this school.
7. Students know the rules.
8. The consequences for breaking rules are fair.
9. The schools Code of Conduct is fair.
10. Teachers treat students of all races with respect.
11. Adults in this school care for students of all races.
12. The color of your skin does not matter to teachers in this school.
13. Teachers try to make this school an enjoyable place to be.
14. Teachers look out for my best interests in this school.
15. This school helps my self-confidence, self-worth and gives me hope.

These opinions would be extremely valuable to educators to determine future steps in the implementation of SW-PBS.

Summary

Educators are discovering that different approaches must be employed in order to change behavior. The United States dropout rate emphasizes the inability of educational systems to prepare students to take on responsibilities of adulthood (Sprick, 2009). Punishing students and only providing negative consequences in the hope of making students want to stay in school and strive to excel is not working (Sprick, 2009). In contrast, a more proactive approach that emphasizes teaching expectations and rewarding positive behavior has resulted in a more long term behavior change (Cohen et al., 2007).

Schools across the United States have found a more proactive approach to discipline in SW-PBS. The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between the years of implementation of SW-PBS at the secondary level and the number

of office discipline referrals. The perception of the overall climate of the building as it relates to student behavior was also reviewed.

In Chapter One, a historical basis for the research and the conceptual framework were described. The statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the study questions, and the hypothesis were also introduced. The key definitions, limitations, and assumptions were presented. In Chapter Two, a historical background of the study and a literature review was provided.

An explanation of the methodology used in this quantitative study was stated in Chapter Three. An overview of the problem and purpose of the study was recounted, and the null hypothesis was identified. The population and sample were described, as well as the instrumentation and analysis process.

In Chapter Four, the sample and demographic data were reviewed. The data were collected from a survey that was issued to students, teachers and administrators about their personal perception as to the climate and culture at their high school. A survey was sent to every group in December 2013. A total of 31 students in grades 9-12 from Rural District 10 completed the survey. A total of 24 teachers and administrators completed the survey from Rural District 10. A total of 65 teachers and administrators from 19 districts around the state of Missouri that have implemented SW-PBS for at least two years completed the survey. The research questions and null hypothesis were restated. The data were evaluated, and tables and figures were designed to present the data.

In Chapter Five, findings, conclusions, and the research questions were discussed. Examining research question one, although discipline referral numbers did decrease during implementation, the *p* value of (0 .127247) > (0.05) suggested there was no

significant difference between the means of the sample populations and the null hypothesis was not rejected. However, if ODR rates were maintained at the current level for two more years and a *t*-test was conducted at the end of that time, the test would show a *p* value less than .05, which would suggest a significant difference between the means of the sample populations.

Responses to the research questions and determination of the hypothesis were provided. Implications for practice and recommendations for future research were detailed. In examining research question two, when comparing answers to common questions given in the surveys, teachers and administrators from Rural District 10 had more closely aligned answers than students from Rural District 10. Overall, teachers and administrators had a more favorable view of the climate of the building in regards to respect, student behavior and relationships. Examining research question three, teachers and administrators from other districts in Missouri that have implemented SW-PBS for at least two years had similar answers with teachers and administrators from Rural District 10 on seven of the fifteen questions.

Schools are very complex organizations with many moving parts. A program, framework or initiative is only as good as the people implementing it. The details make the difference when it comes to change.

Because of the complexity of the school organizational structure it is hard to pinpoint the exact reason certain changes occur. Many variables existed within Rural District 10 that could have made in impact to ODRs and school climate and this study looked at one of those variables that is beginning to make a real difference within the school. The ultimate goal is to ensure that schools are engaged in the right kind of work

to develop classrooms, schools, and districts that make the fullest possible use of our collective capacity to improve student learning. Over time, SW-PBS is showing that it is one framework that if implemented correctly can lead to positive changes within a school.

Appendix A

Student Survey Statements

These surveys are designed to provide a brief, useful measure of school climate. There are three separate surveys: ***Student***, *Teacher and Administrator*. The completion of the survey should take approximately five minutes of your time. Your responses are voluntary and will be confidential. Responses will not be identified by individual. If you choose to participate, completion of the survey constitutes your implied consent.

1) The school rules are fair.
   a. Agree a lot
   b. Agree
   c. Disagree
   d. Disagree a lot

2) This school is safe.
   a. Agree a lot
   b. Agree
   c. Disagree
   d. Disagree a lot

3) Rules in this school are made clear to students.
   a. Agree a lot
   b. Agree
   c. Disagree
   d. Disagree a lot

4) Students in this school are friendly with each other.
   a. Agree a lot
   b. Agree
   c. Disagree
   d. Disagree a lot

5) Students threaten and bully others in this school.
   a. Agree a lot
   b. Agree
   c. Disagree
   d. Disagree a lot

6) Teachers care about their students.
   a. Agree a lot
   b. Agree
   c. Disagree
   d. Disagree a lot

7) This school makes it clear how students are expected to act.
   a. Agree a lot
   b. Agree
   c. Disagree
   d. Disagree a lot

8) Most students follow the school rules
   a. Agree a lot
   b. Agree
   c. Disagree
   d. Disagree a lot

9) Students are punished a lot.
   a. Agree a lot
   b. Agree
   c. Disagree
   d. Disagree a lot

10) Students are praised often.

   a. Agree a lot
   b. Agree
   c. Disagree
   d. Disagree a lot

11) Students are taught to feel responsible for how they act.

   a. Agree a lot
   b. Agree
   c. Disagree
   d. Disagree a lot

12) I feel happy in this school.
   a. Agree a lot
   b. Agree
   c. Disagree
   d. Disagree a lot

13) I try my best and follow the rules at school.
    a. Agree a lot
    b. Agree
    c. Disagree
    d. Disagree a lot

14) I like most of my teachers and administrators.
    a. Agree a lot
    b. Agree
    c. Disagree
    d. Disagree a lot

15) I like this school.
    a. Agree a lot
    b. Agree
    c. Disagree
    d. Disagree a lot

Appendix B

Teacher/Administrator Survey Statements

These surveys are designed to provide a brief, useful measure of school climate. There are three separate surveys: *Student*, ***Teacher and Administrator***. The completion of the survey should take approximately five minutes of your time. Your responses are voluntary and will be confidential. Responses will not be identified by individual. If you choose to participate, completion of the survey constitutes your implied consent.

1) The school rules are fair.
   a. Agree a lot
   b. Agree
   c. Disagree
   d. Disagree a lot

2) This school is safe.
   a. Agree a lot
   b. Agree
   c. Disagree
   d. Disagree a lot

3) Rules in this school are made clear to students.
   a. Agree a lot
   b. Agree
   c. Disagree
   d. Disagree a lot

4) Students in this school are friendly with each other.
   a. Agree a lot
   b. Agree
   c. Disagree
   d. Disagree a lot

5) Students threaten and bully others in this school.
   a. Agree a lot
   b. Agree
   c. Disagree
   d. Disagree a lot

6) Teachers care about their students.
   a. Agree a lot
   b. Agree
   c. Disagree
   d. Disagree a lot

7) This school makes it clear how students are expected to act.
   a. Agree a lot
   b. Agree
   c. Disagree
   d. Disagree a lot

8) Most students follow the school rules
   a. Agree a lot
   b. Agree
   c. Disagree
   d. Disagree a lot

9) Students are punished a lot.
   a. Agree a lot
   b. Agree
   c. Disagree
   d. Disagree a lot

10) Students are praised often.
   a. Agree a lot
   b. Agree
   c. Disagree
   d. Disagree a lot

11) Students are taught to feel responsible for how they act.
   a. Agree a lot
   b. Agree
   c. Disagree
   d. Disagree a lot

12) I feel happy in this school.
   a. Agree a lot
   b. Agree
   c. Disagree
   d. Disagree a lot

13) Teachers and students respect one another in this school.
    a. Agree a lot
    b. Agree
    c. Disagree
    d. Disagree a lot

14) Teachers and students like one another in this school.
    a. Agree a lot
    b. Agree
    c. Disagree
    d. Disagree a lot

15) I like this school.
    a. Agree a lot
    b. Agree
    c. Disagree
    d. Disagree a lot

Appendix C

Mantz, Lindsey S lmantz@udel.edu **7/1/13**

Good morning, Isaac.

Thank you for your interest in the Delaware School Climate Survey. Our survey is available for use, and we just ask that you reference the tool was used. The current surveys can be found on our website (http://wordpress.oet.udel.edu/pbs/school-climate/delaware-school-climate-survey-2011-2012/).

If you're interested in learning more information about the surveys (such as the background, supporting research, or relevant statistics), please refer to the Technical Manual (found here: http://wordpress.oet.udel.edu/pbs/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/Final-Technical-Manual.pdf). If you have any further questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact me. Thank you!

Best wishes,
Lindsey Mantz

Lindsey S. Mantz, M.A.
Graduate Student, School Psychology
Graduate Assistant, Delaware Positive Behavior Support Project
Center for Disabilities Studies
University of Delaware http://www.delawarepbs.org/
302-831-8805

Appendix D

LINDENWOOD

DATE: November 20, 2013

TO: Isaac Sooter
FROM: Lindenwood University Institutional Review Board

STUDY TITLE: [520481-1] The Relationship between School-Wide Positive Behavior Support Implementation and Office Discipline Referrals at the Secondary Level

IRB REFERENCE #:
SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: APPROVED
APPROVAL DATE: November 20, 2013
EXPIRATION DATE: November 20, 2014
REVIEW TYPE: Full Committee Review

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this research project. Lindenwood University Institutional Review Board has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a study design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

This submission has received Full Committee Review based on the applicable federal regulation. Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the study and insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form. Informed consent must continue throughout the study via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require each participant receive a copy of the signed consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this office prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

All SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported to this office. Please use the appropriate adverse event forms for this procedure. All FDA and sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed.

All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must be reported promptly to the IRB.

This project has been determined to be a Minimal Risk project. Based on the risks, this project requires continuing review by this committee on an annual basis. Please use the completion/amendment form for this procedure. Your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date of November 20, 2014.

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years.

If you have any questions, please contact Tameka Tammy Moore at (618) 616-7027 or tmoore@lindenwood.edu. Please include your study title and reference number in all correspondence with this office.

If you have any questions, please send them to IRB@lindenwood.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within Lindenwood University Institutional Review Board's records.

Appendix E

Recruitment Letter

Hello,

I am currently working on a dissertation on School-Wide Positive Behavior Support through Lindenwood University. For this dissertation, research will be done on the relationship between SW-PBS and secondary school climate. Surveys will be used to gather information on school climate. For this I would like to recruit you to fill out a short survey.

These surveys are designed to provide a brief, useful measure of school climate. There are three separate surveys: *Student, Teacher and Administrator*. The completion of the survey should take approximately five minutes of your time. Your responses are voluntary and will be confidential. Responses will not be identified by individual. If you choose to participate, completion of the survey constitutes your implied consent.

If you have any questions about the research, you can email isooter@wolves.k12.mo.us.

Thank you!

Isaac Sooter

Appendix F

LINDENWOOD

INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

The Relationship between School-Wide Positive Behavior Support Implementation and Office Discipline Referrals at the Secondary Level

Principal Investigator _Isaac William Sooter_____
Telephone: 417-xxx-xxxx E-mail: isooter@wolves.k12.mo.us IWS210@lindenwood.edu

Participant _____ Contact info _____

1. You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Isaac Sooter under the guidance of Dr. Sherry DeVore. The purpose of this research is to find the relationship between School-Wide Positive Behavior Support and the climate of secondary schools.

2. a) Your participation will involve
   - Filling out a school climate/student behavior survey.
   - The survey will be completed on surveymonkey.com

   b) The amount of time involved in your participation will be 5-10 minutes.

   Approximately 100 subjects will be involved in this research.

3. There are no anticipated risks associated with this research.
4. There are no direct benefits for you participating in this study. However, your participation will contribute to the knowledge about SW-PBS in secondary schools.
5. Your participation is voluntary and you may choose not to participate in this research study or to withdraw your consent at any time. You may choose not to answer any questions that you do not want to answer. You will NOT be penalized in any way should you choose not to participate or to withdraw.

6. We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. As part of this effort, your identity will not be revealed in any publication or presentation that may result from this study and the information collected will remain in the possession of the investigator in a safe location.

7. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, or if any problems arise, you may call the Investigator, Isaac Sooter (417-xxx-xxxx) or the Supervising Faculty, Dr. Sherry DeVore (417-881-0009). You may also ask questions of or state concerns regarding your participation to the Lindenwood Institutional Review Board (IRB) through contacting Dr. Jann Weitzel, Vice President for Academic Affairs at 636-949-4846.

I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I may retain a copy of this consent form for my records. I consent to my participation in the research described above.

By completing the survey, you consent to participate in this study.

Thank you for your time,

Isaac Sooter

Doctoral Student

Lindenwood University

Appendix G

LINDENWOOD

INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARENTS TO SIGN FOR STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

The Relationship between School-Wide Positive Behavior Support Implementation and Office Discipline Referrals at the Secondary Level

Principal Investigator __Isaac William Sooter_____
Telephone: 417-272-8171 E-mail: isooter@wolves.k12.mo.us

Participant _____Parent Contact info _____

Dear Parent,

1. Your child is invited to participate in a research study conducted by Isaac Sooter under the guidance of Dr. Sherry DeVore. The purpose of this research is to find the relationship between School-Wide Positive Behavior Support and the climate of secondary schools.

2. a) Your child's participation will involve
   - Filling out a school climate/student behavior survey.
   - The survey will be completed on surveymonkey.com

   Approximately 100 subjects may be involved in this research.

   b) The amount of time involved in your child's participation will be 5-10 minutes.

3. There are no anticipated risks to your child associated with this research.

4. There are no direct benefits for your child's participation in this study. However, your child's participation will contribute to the knowledge about School-Wide Positive Behavior Support and secondary school climate.

5. Your child's participation is voluntary and you may choose not to let your child participate in this research study or to withdraw your consent for your child's participation at any time. Your child may choose not to answer any questions that he or she does not want to answer. You and your child will NOT be penalized in any way should you choose not to let your child participate or to withdraw your child.

6. We will do everything we can to protect your child's privacy. As part of this effort, your child's identity will not be revealed in any publication or presentation that may result from this study.

7. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, or if any problems arise, you may call the Investigator, Isaac Sooter (417-272-8171 ext. 1291) or the Supervising Faculty, Dr. Sherry DeVore (417-881-0009). You may also ask questions of or state concerns regarding your participation to the Lindenwood Institutional Review Board (IRB) through contacting Dr. Jann Weitzel, Vice President for Academic Affairs at 636-949-4846.

I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I will also be given a copy of this consent form for my records. I consent to my child's participation in the research described above.

_____ _____

Parent's/Guardian's Signature Date

_____

Parent's/Guardian's Printed Name

_____

Child's Printed Name

_____ _____

Primary Investigator's Signature Date

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Vita

Isaac William Sooter was born in Carthage, Missouri, on March 28, 1983. Isaac had the privilege of growing up on a farm next to his grandparents, where he learned about relationships and self-discipline from them and both of his parents. Isaac is currently is a member of Second Baptist Church in Springfield, Missouri, where he serves as an Adult Bible Fellowship teacher. Isaac loves spending time with his family. He has been married to his wife Bethany for 10 years and together they are raising two wonderful children, Isabelle and Jackson.

Isaac received his Bachelor of Science in Social Science Education from Evangel University in Springfield, Missouri, in 2005. He earned a Master's Degree in Educational Administration from William Woods University in 2008. Isaac received his Specialist Degree in Educational Administration from Lindenwood University in 2012.

Isaac taught and coached for five years prior to becoming an administrator. He served for one year as building principal at Mansfield High School, and three years as an assistant principal at Reeds Spring High School before assuming the duties of high school principal at Reeds Spring High School in 2014.