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An Evaluation Of The Positive Behavior Intervention Suppot Program At One Elementary School

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AN EVALUATION OF THE POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION

SUPPORT PROGRAM AT ONE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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Educational Leadership Doctoral Program

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A DISSERTATION:

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This document was created for the dissertation requirement of the National Louis University (NLU) Educational Leadership (EDL) Doctoral Program. The National Louis Educational Leadership EdD is a professional practice degree program (Shulman et al., 2006).

For the dissertation requirement, doctoral candidates are required to plan, research, and implement a major project within their school or district that relates to professional practice. The three foci of the project are:

- Program Evaluation
- Change Leadership
- Policy Advocacy

For the **Program Evaluation** focus, candidates are required to identify and evaluate a program or practice within their school or district. The "program" can be a current initiative; a grant project; a common practice; or a movement. Focused on utilization, the evaluation can be formative, summative, or developmental (Patton, 2008). The candidate must demonstrate how the evaluation directly relates to student learning.

In the **Change Leadership** focus, candidates develop a plan that considers organizational possibilities for renewal. The plan for organizational change may be at the building or district level. It must be related to an area in need of improvement, and have a clear target in mind. The candidate must be able to identify noticeable and feasible differences that should exist as a result of the change plan (Wagner et al., 2006).

In the **Policy Advocacy** focus, candidates develop and advocate for a policy at the local, state or national level using reflective practice and research as a means for supporting and promoting reforms in education. Policy advocacy dissertations use critical theory to address moral and ethical issues of policy formation and administrative decision making (i.e., what ought to be). The purpose is to develop reflective, humane and social critics, moral leaders, and competent professionals, guided by a critical practical rational model (Browder, 1995).

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ABSTRACT

This research project examined the effectiveness and perceptions of Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) on student behaviors in a K-5 elementary school. The purpose of this project was to assess and evaluate the effectiveness of the PBIS program and to provide valuable feedback to improve and implement the program with fidelity. Research was conducted through interviews and surveys of teachers and administrators, as well as a focus group of teachers on the PBIS committee. The critical issues that were explored are the number of referrals, the areas where infractions occurred the most, and teacher needs. It is my hope that this research will shed light on the necessary improvements that need to be made to make the program successful.

PREFACE

Continuing my journey as a lifetime learner brought me to where I am today. A Doctoral Candidate at National Louis University. I have been an Elementary school teacher for over twenty years. A vast number of my experience has been in urban inner city schools. I found my years of teaching to be exciting as well as daunting at times.

I find it exciting because of the interactions I have with students, teachers, and parents. Daunting because of the large amount of discipline problems that plague our school districts and individual schools. The instances of violence in schools, coupled with in and out of school suspensions and expulsions of students causes great concern. As I have witnessed different schools trying to find remedies and strategies to quell the rising amounts of negative behaviors in school with frustration, I felt compelled to examine why programs such a Positive Behavior Intervention Support, which is a research based program to assist with modifying student's negative behaviors, was not working well in my current school. Thus, this project of Implementing Positive Behavior Intervention Support was born.

This project is important to me because I value education. I value students learning in an environment void of distractions, bullying, ill intent, and malice. I value students as lifelong learners, like myself, and to aspire to bigger things. Only through relationship building, inclusiveness, trust, and discipline can students learn. However, as a parent, I know, not only are these characteristics important to me, they are important to parents, community members, other teachers, and administrators as well.

I used to say I wanted to be a change agent in education. I no longer use this phrase. I now say I want to be a game changer in educations and the lives of students. I

know through this project and research; I can find the answers that will help me to assist

my school and hopefully other schools in the future to put in the practices and use the

information found here to implement Positive Behavior Intervention Support with

fidelity.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this project to my sister, Traci H. Boone who has pushed me to be the best in every possible way. To my children, Morgan and Kyle, who always say, "Mama you must love school." To which I reply, "I guess I do." They have been my rock on unsteady ground, and shoulders to lift me up. To all of you, I give my love.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The Positive Behavior Intervention Support program (PBIS), also referred to as

the School Wide Positive Behavior Support program (SWPBS), which for the remainder

of this paper will be referred to as PBIS or SWPBS, is a school wide program that uses

proactive, research-based strategies and reinforcements to assist in redirecting negative

behaviors to positive behaviors. I have chosen to evaluate this program at Cascade

Elementary (pseudonym) for several reasons. First, I have played a vital role in

implementing this program in several schools. For example, in a previous school, I was

instrumental in steering the PBIS committee in a positive direction to implement the

program according to national guidelines, establishing guidelines and strategic plans, as

well as witnessing successful implementation. In my experience, when programs are

implemented with fidelity and consistency, the prospect of the program being successful

is positive. Cascade Elementary implemented PBIS in 2013. Since its inception, there has

been difficulty sustaining, maintaining, and providing consistency with implementation.

Each year, three staff members are chosen to attend district training on PBIS.

These staff members are to present what was learned from their training as professional

development at the beginning of the new school year. However, the professional

development is overlooked and does not occur. Because of the lack of training, the staff

are left to their own devices. Committee members also change as well as school

processes and protocols. These changes have created several hurdles to success. For

example, because of lack of record keeping, data by the committee was minimal and

there wasn't a documented strategic plan.

Disciplinary data from Cascade Elementary indicates in SY 2014 there were 515

referrals, in SY 2015 344, SY 2016 352, and SY 2017 392 referrals, which included

cafeteria, classrooms, common areas, PE areas, hallway, and busses with the most

referrals. From the fluctuation of referrals from year to year, I have concluded there are

areas in the program that need to be reassessed. Reassessing the program allowed the

committee and administrators to determine what course of action should be taken to assist

teachers in using strategies, developing classroom management systems, and

understanding the purpose of PBIS. I believe my knowledge of PBIS, coupled with my

experience with successful implementations of the program, was beneficial in assisting

Cascade Elementary to grow a program that was consistent and sustainable.

Purpose of the Evaluation

The purpose of my evaluation was twofold: (1) It allowed me to assess the current

PBIS program at Cascade Elementary, and (2) It provided the feedback to support and

reform the existing PBIS program. In addition, teachers collaborated with the PBIS

committee and administrators to devise a strategic plan that enabled them to have

ownership within the change process. The problems surrounding the PBIS program: The

staff was not exposed to professional development on the implementation of the program

and its purpose. They were unaware of the importance of PBIS schoolwide and were

unable to use data to drive behavior modification strategies.

Conducting an in-depth assessment of the program was crucial, if transformation

was to take place. The positive changes that I expected to see were (1) leadership and

committee members established and maintained for a minimum of two years barring any

staff changes, (2) an action plan developed, (3) ongoing professional development

opportunities, and (4) data on infractions and referrals kept consistently and accurately by

the committee. This evaluation enabled me to examine PBIS to see if the school would be able to develop a systematic process where administrators, teachers, and staff implement with data analysis, consistency, and fidelity,

PBIS is designed to modify and redirect negative behaviors. Simenson (2008) stated, **"**School wide positive behavior supports (SWPBS)is a proactive system level approach that enables schools to effectively and efficiently support student (and staff) behavior" (p.32). This system is multi-tiered and targets specific behaviors of students. Each tier is organized in three levels, with level three, the tertiary level, being the most intensive level of support. The tiers are designed to place students in levels based on the severity of behaviors and the frequency. Documentation of students who have been identified as having level two and three behaviors are identified by referrals and infractions data and referred to the Multi- Tiered System of Supports Committee (MTSS). This committee's purpose is to analyze these data as well as classroom intervention data, such as student behavior logs, teacher input, and behaviors that are impeding students' academic success. The committee, comprised of administrators, guidance counselors, school psychologist, and special education teachers, may recommend further monitoring to gather more data to move to the next step. After additional data has been gathered, the committee reconvenes for further discussion. If it is warranted, the student may be placed on a Functional Behavior Assessment (FUBA) or a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) for tier 3 students. Tier 2 students may receive a less stringent plan such as a check-in check-out system or daily check system. These plans will assist teachers in helping students modify inappropriate behaviors, promote academic success, and create further documentation.

When I began teaching at Cascade Elementary, one of the questions I asked centered around whether they used PBIS. Knowing the importance of employing a schoolwide behavior system, and how it plays an important part of the school's climate and culture, I wanted to understand what course of action was taken to prevent negative behaviors and assist teachers and students with managing and maintaining appropriate behaviors. I also inquired about the success rate in reducing negative behaviors and lessening referrals. After asking numerous questions, I discovered there was a program in place, but it only met compliance standards. Also, the paper trails that linked the information together were not kept accurately, and information was not documented and turned over to the next committee chairperson. Therefore, the committee would have to begin anew each year.

As I observed committee meetings, it was evident they were not organized and unaware of the purpose of PBIS as well as the school's and district's vision. This conclusion was drawn based on a yearly survey conducted by the national PBIS organization. As the committee discussed their ranking on the quality of the program, knowledge of PBIS, implementation, and if it was working well, it was clear they were unaware of the significance and positive effects of PBIS. The committee could not agree on any consistent rankings. It was apparent a consensus would not be met and professional development was needed.

Over the course of the next several weeks**,** I observed behaviors, both positive and negative, exhibited by students, and I realized there were inconsistencies in the process of determining negative behaviors that resulted in a referral to an administrator and behaviors that could have been handled by the classroom teacher. Furthermore, PBIS has

an incentive component. Unfortunately, this too was inconsistent. The incentive at

Cascade was receiving "bucks" or fictitious money for positive behavior. These bucks

were paper dollars that students received when showing positive behaviors such as being

respectful to adults and students, helping others without being asked, or reporting cases

of behaviors that could be harmful to others, just to name a few. I asked the chairperson

of the PBIS committee whether teachers and essential staff knew the purpose of PBIS

incentives and its intended outcomes. Through conversations, I determined the staff was

aware of the purpose of the incentives, but they were unaware of its importance, the

projected outcomes, and any benefits. According to Hirsh (2005), "Effective professional

development will deepen participant understanding, transforms beliefs and assumptions,

and create a stream of continuous actions that change habits and affect practices" (p. 39).

Although the teachers in the school used incentives for positive behavior predicated on

the guidelines and procedures, their lack of knowledge was a detriment to the program

and its success. It was apparent that teachers and administrators saw the need for the

program and believed that it could be effective, but it was also evident that Cascade

Elementary lacked the skills to put it into practice and required extensive professional

development and support. In my experience, the program would not be a success unless

the teachers and administrators were knowledgeable and committed to seeing it through

to fruition. PBIS is a school wide initiative, and it takes schoolwide collaboration to

make it a success. As with any effective program, clear cut measures and outcomes must

be defined and communicated to the staff.   It should also use research-based evidence to

assist in determining what specific interventions should be used to adequately produce

desired results. The outcomes must be predicated on analysis of referral data as well as in put from teachers.

Cascade Elementary began implementing the PBIS program in 2013. Since then, the program has undergone a significant amount of change in the representatives on the PBIS committee and the overall structure of the program. This led to an inconsistent leadership team to guide effective implementation.

The goal of the program, at the school level, was to implement the PBIS program to perform the following: (1) reduce the number of inappropriate behaviors and infractions occurring across campus and on school buses, (2) educate students on the importance of displaying positive behavior, and (3) reinforce appropriate behaviors. The goals of PBIS for the school were consistent with the goals of the district and national guidelines. Behavior expectations were posted around campus but were not reiterated or enforced every day. For PBIS to be sustainable and successful, all stakeholders must play an infinite role with being consistent, firm, and fair with expectations, rewarding students for appropriate behaviors and communicating with one another.

Rationale

Districts and schools that choose to implement the PBIS program must become knowledgeable of every aspect of the program if it is to be a success in redefining, reinforcing, and monitoring student behavior. Since joining the PBIS committee at Cascade Elementary School, I have witnessed a lack of consistency and commitment on the part of administrators and teachers. They appeared to be oblivious to the level of commitment and support that was needed to provide the foundation for success. In short, in my opinion, the overall structure of the program was ineffective.

The school used a reward system based on positive behavior. The system used, however, was not uniform school wide. Students earned "bucks" by exhibiting positive behaviors. With the bucks earned, they could purchase items from their teacher's treasure box, if they have one, pay to go to dances, movie nights, or to not wear their school uniform on a day selected by the committee, plus other incentives. Despite their effort to use this tool it was inconsistent. The distribution of the "bucks" was never defined. I noticed many teachers disperse bucks for the same behaviors differently. For example, one teacher would give two bucks for picking up paper without being asked, while others may give out as many as five for the same act. This inconsistency did not project an air of fairness and equity with the reward process. PBIS is based on consistency and fairness, which was lacking at Cascade Elementary.

I have provided professional development to staff on the components, expectations, and goals of PBIS. This experience proved to be enlightening. The teachers and other essential staff understood the need for PBIS, but as with Cascade, were unwilling to put in the work that would lead to success. Their perception was that PBIS was just another "thing" to do, and their plates were already overloaded with curriculum changes, grades, and meetings. While the program suffered and ultimately became something different, it was on paper only. In another school, however, teachers were frustrated with constant disruptions in class, hindering the learning process, and students had a high disregard for authority and rules. They wanted change and were very responsive to the idea of PBIS. They were willing to attend professional development to understand the process and adhere to the guidelines. The principal formed a team comprised of the assistant principal, guidance counselor, and two grade level teachers to

be trained in PBIS over a course of three days during the summer at the district's professional development center. This team was responsible for providing staff development to teachers and staff during the initial days back to school for the new year.

One of the first goals of the committee was to develop a chart of infractions, where they occur the most, and the number of referrals to the office. With this information, a strategic action plan was devised. The staff was trained, and a school wide assembly was held to explain PBIS and the reward system to students. Matrices, which were charts or tables that were organized by specific areas in the school, such as the cafeteria, bathroom, hallways, media center, etc., were put up throughout campus. The matrices referenced the behaviors that should be exhibited in those areas served as reminders to students of appropriate behaviors. We held an assembly where we invited students and parents for an information session on PBIS. Everyone in attendance, teachers, parents, and students, were excited about the program. They asked questions and commented on how it would benefit their students to earn positive rewards instead of getting in trouble frequently. This was the beginning of changing the climate and culture of the school.

All stakeholders benefit from PBIS, because when teachers can maintain a classroom environment that is conducive to learning, it sets the tone for academic success. When rules, procedures, and expectations of the classroom are firm, fair, and consistent, students recognize the opportunity to learn with little to no distractions and become motivated to achieve academically. Less time is spent on disciplinary problems that occur and students are able to learn in a positive environment.

PBIS is the road to changing negative or inappropriate behaviors, as well as the vehicle teachers need to assist students in developing a growth mindset toward learning. It is also a way to give students instant gratification for positive behavior. Students will ultimately be able to see and reap the benefits from behaving appropriately and begin to change negative behaviors, which the program is designed to achieve.

Goals of the Evaluation

The PBIS program was developed as a systematic approach designed to minimize negative behaviors. It also uses a reward system that should ultimately redirect negative behaviors and consistently modify them so students can employ positive behaviors. This course of redirection of behaviors promotes a positive environment so every student can learn in an uninhibited environment, sans the externalities of negative behaviors. Schools initiated PBIS with expectations that it would be implemented with fidelity to achieve the desired outcomes of modifying, if not changing, student behaviors by utilizing positive reinforcements and subsequently improving academic achievement. According to Boulden (2010), "Research has found that poor social and behavioral skills are risk factors for both disruptive behaviors and academic underachievement" (p. 18). This led me to believe the teachers were not in tuned to the social and cultural dynamics of the students. It was of the utmost importance that teachers and administrators made it a priority to understand why students behave the way they do. Cultural and social proficiency among staff was important. Communicating with parents, previous teachers, talking with the student, and researching past academic and behavior issues, provided valuable insight into the student's needs, so they can be effectively addressed.

The intended goal of this program evaluation is (1) to assess if PBIS was implemented with fidelity and (2) if the methods used were successful in changing the

cultural behaviors of the students while improving student achievement. I believe that PBIS is a direct link to classroom behavior and student achievement. Effective classroom management is key and beneficial in ensuring that students can learn and gain knowledge in an environment that is engaging and relatively free of negative distractions that interrupt the learning process.

Teachers are ultimately the underlying authority figure in the classroom. There needs to be specific processes in place that will increase student engagement, minimize disruptions, and reward those students who exhibit appropriate behavior in and out of the classroom. PBIS is the platform for these processes. Having mentored beginning teachers, I have observed that without behavior interventions students will become unruly and disruptive. When PBIS is implemented in the classroom with fidelity, these behaviors can become all but obsolete, but teachers must adhere to the guidelines and goals of PBIS.

During my tenure as a teacher, I have been a part of leadership teams that has implemented PBIS with fidelity and have seen positive results. In addition to having been a member of a successful leadership team, I applied PBIS strategies in my classrooms and can attest to experiencing positive outcomes. Moreover, the campus, was vested in promoting and utilizing the strategies that were put in place. After joining the PBIS committee at Cascade Elementary, as I observed the program, it became evident there were several crucial pieces of the program that were lacking: (1) A progress monitoring system was not in place for students receiving Tier 2 and 3 interventions, (2) Teachers were not receiving continuous in-service training, and (3) Data was not being utilized to

improve the overall structure and fidelity of the program. With these processes not in place, the successful implementation of PBIS was difficult.

"My" reasons for evaluating this program was based on my knowledge, experience, and the observations I made as part of the PBIS committee. Through my observations, I discovered the program needed to be restructured, goals and outcomes needed to be reiterated to the teachers, administrators, and students, as well as the need for schoolwide professional development. I have taught for most of my career in inner city/urban schools where students exhibited a tremendous amount of negative behaviors. Each of those school implemented PBIS to assist with a climate and culture of change based on behavior analysis data. I have personally witnessed the success of PBIS, and I believe by reteaching, supporting, and modeling positive behaviors to teachers and students at Cascade Elementary, behaviors would improve, thus having a direct impact on academic achievement.

I believe this program evaluation was important to students, teachers, parents, and the school based on its ability to bring about a systematic change in behavior. By changing the climate and culture of the school, student learning took place. Involving parents in the process of change was highly important. It was imperative that parents be apprised of and educated on the programs in schools that can affect the education of their children. Bryan (2012) stated, "Democratic collaboration is inextricably linked to family and community empowerment … parents not only have equal voice but also participate in the decision making, planning, and implementation of solutions to problems affecting their children" (p. 410). When parents feel, they have a voice in their child's education, they become change agents in the climate of the school and the academic achievement of

their child. Coleman (2009) suggested when parents are involved in their child's

education, they may improve in academics, behavior, and attitudes, as well as continuing

into later years.

Exploratory Questions

Before beginning any research project, you must know what data is pertinent to

your research. Posing guiding questions is a way of keeping track of important

information. My primary exploratory questions were as follows:

Primary Exploratory Questions

1. What do the participants (teachers, administration, and the guidance counselor)
   who are involved in the PBIS program at Cascade Elementary School report as
   working well?

2. What do the participants (teachers, administration, and the guidance counselor)
   who are involved in the PBIS program at report as not working well?

3. What do the stakeholders (teachers, administration, and the guidance counselor)
   who are involved in the PBIS program at report as the biggest challenges in the
   program?

4. What do the stakeholders (teachers, administration, and the guidance counselor)
   who are involved in the PBIS program at suggest as ways to improve the
   program?

Secondary Exploratory Question

1. What type of professional development do new teachers feel they need, regarding
   PBIS?

I believe the responses to my primary and secondary questions from teachers and administrators assisted me in developing strategies that equipped teachers with the knowledge of how to implement PBIS with fidelity.

Conclusion

While reflecting upon successful PBIS programs and implementations, I was fortunate to have been a member of several effective PBIS committees at other schools. I believe my knowledge of the program can serve my school as they strive to improve the climate and culture to decrease negative behaviors and increase academic achievement. Additionally, I assisted with promoting an engaging learning environment and recognized the need for behavior reinforcement programs such as PBIS. Moreover, I believe it proactively assisted students in modifying their behavior so learning could take place. Equally important, I understood that without buy-in from administrators, teachers, and other essential faculty members, the program would not be effective nor would it be successful. Also, as a twenty-year veteran in education, I have encountered a multitude of students with different belief systems and measures of discipline in their households. These belief systems play a vital role in forming and shaping their ideologies and behaviors. Whether it is deemed appropriate for school or not, it can clash with school expectations and behavior management systems causing students to receive disciplinary action.

I believe students can be taught the difference between appropriate and inappropriate school behaviors. Furthermore, I believe, if taught systematically and consistently, inappropriate behaviors can be modified and redirected to positive behaviors. This is a transformation I wanted to take place at Cascade Elementary to

change the climate and culture and become more focused on academic achievement

instead of on negative behaviors.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

Across the nation, schools are plagued with the challenges of promoting and maintaining appropriate and positive behaviors in school to not disrupt the learning process. "Managing challenging behavior and disciplining students in school environments consistently rank as the top concern among educators, parents, and policy makers" (Sailor, Zuna, Choi, Thomas, McCart, & Roger 2006, p.18). With negative behavioral issues consistently on the rise, schools must find a way to combat behaviors for students to flourish academically.

Many school districts operate on the premise of a code of student conduct for all schools in the system. This code of conduct is a guideline for principals to follow to dispense disciplinary action to students consistently and fairly who break the rules. Some, for lack of a better word, "punishments" are dispensed based on level of behaviors and frequency. They can differ from the elementary level to the high school level based on age appropriateness and the severity.

In the past, schools used punitive discipline to deter behaviors that impact learning. These disciplinary interventions are effective for the short term but are not effective in preventing the behavior from reoccurring. It is also not effective in sustaining positive behavior (Hirsh, 2008). One of the most discussed and disputed forms of discipline in schools has been corporal punishment. "Corporal punishment is defined as a kind of discipline that entails direct infliction of pain on the physical body" (Moyo, Khedwu, & Bayaga, 2014, p. 2). According to Breshears (2014), a little more than half of the states in America practice some form of corporal punishment, while the remaining states have banned the practiced altogether (p. 3). In her research, Breshears (2014) also

examined the views of proponents of corporal punishment, and those who opposed it. Her findings showed that according to Baumrind (1996) and Larzelere (1996), corporal punishment that is dispensed in a limited fashion does not have any long lasting ill effects on a child and will deter the negative behavior in the short term. Her research also concluded that those who oppose corporal punishment hold it as a disciplinary practice that ultimately harms children in the long run, possibly causing aggression, mental distress, and other emotional and psychological problems.

Another approach school districts are taking to combat disciplinary problems is instituting the policy of zero tolerance. "Zero tolerance can be defined as school-wide or district-wide policies that mandate typically harsh consequences or punishments such as suspensions and expulsions for a wide range of rule violations" (Evenson et al., 2009, p. 5) This level of discipline has been a result of disciplinary problems increasing the violence in schools. Gang violence, weapons violations, and overt disregard for order and safety has become more prevalent among students in not only high schools but also in K-12 schools across the board (Barrow, Baker, & Fusarelli, 2018).

As with corporal punishment, there are proponents of the policies as well as conscientious objectors. According to Jones (2013), those who oppose zero tolerance take the stance that the policy has more of a detrimental effect on students overall. Suspensions and expulsions ultimately rise, which increases the possibility of more students incurring criminal records. Those who agree with the zero-tolerance policy reported that if it is administered properly it can be effective in deterring disciplinary problems. Principals have also stated that there have been fewer occurrences of violent offences and weapons problems on campuses (Stader, 2006).

Knowing and adhering to all student codes of conduct and disciplinary policies are important in maintaining safe and orderly schools. It is imperative that school districts and administrators ensure that parents, teachers, and students are apprised of all disciplinary policies. This is a way to prevent all parties involved from circumventing the disciplinary process by using deniable plausibility as a reason for not understanding the disciplinary processes. Following rules, guidelines, and expectations of schools and school district policies allows for students to be able to learn in an environment void of distractions and uninterrupted instructional time.

To be more proactive and less reactive, school districts are coming up with innovative ways to deter negative, disruptive behaviors in school. One such way has been the implementation of Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS). This form of behavior modification can be very successful when implemented properly and teachers buy into the program and parents and students are aware of the expectations of the school.

I was a part of implementing and participating in successful PBIS programs for several years. Having been trained in the implementation of the program as well as having experience as the overseer of the program in previous years, I have drawn the conclusion based on literature research that providing staff development, using data to discern the effectiveness of the program, and having teacher buy-in is a necessity for a successful program.

My current school implemented PBIS in 2013. As a new teacher to the school, I was interested in whether PBIS was a part of the school's disciplinary process. As mentioned above the program had been implemented for a few years; however, I did not

see where it was being used consistently across the board and teachers having buy-in as to the effectiveness of the program. As I observed the day to day interactions with students to teachers and students to students, it was evident that for the most part, students were well behaved, but there was a pocket of students who were having difficulty maintaining daily appropriate behaviors. These students were the ones who needed to be targeted for interventions the most. Since the PBIS program is based on modifying behavior, it is important for teachers to understand the different dynamics that make such a program successful. One component that makes the program successful is the Multi-tiered system of support process. This process, which will be discussed further, is a team of stakeholders within the school, such as, guidance counselor, teacher, assistant principal, and a reading or math coach that make decisions on how to best meet the needs of students, who have behavior issues and cannot maintain proper behavior in the classroom or other areas of the school. Another component is cohesive and consistent behavior management strategies. Processes must be in place throughout the school that are the same, so students will understand the cohesiveness of the school and that rules apply everywhere in every aspect. There also must be buy-in. Teachers must believe in the program and what it is designed to do for it to be successful. Teachers are ultimately the enforcers of the guidelines of the program, but without their belief in it, it will not be implemented with fidelity and will not work.

Multi-Tiered System of Support

The Multi-Tiered System of Support team analyzes academic and behavioral data to devise academic and behavior plans to assist teachers in managing challenging behaviors and academic deficiencies. However, for this literature review, I will focus on the behavior component and not the academic. The 3-tiers consist of (1) preventative

classroom management, (2) first line interventions, and (3) intensive, individualized

interventions. These components consist of instructional practices, rules and procedures,

and classroom climate (Sayeski & Brown, 2011). Student engagement is crucial in

helping students to stay on task and minimize disruptive behaviors. Also, monitoring

students as they complete assignments or are working in collaborative groups shows

students you are aware of your surroundings and your focus is still on them. Teachers

also must ensure the level of academic learning is on target with that of the academic

levels of the students. When assignments are too hard or too easy for students they tend

to act out of frustration or get off task due to boredom, which can cause increased

disruptions in class.

Behavior Management

One aspect of teaching that is not taught in college is behavior management. No

matter how knowledgeable of the content a teacher may be in the classroom, instruction

can come to a halt due to disruptions and unruly behavior of students. These

interruptions interfere with the learning of not just one student, but all students in the

classroom. Kraft 2011 stated, "Effective teaching and learning can take |place only in a

harmonious learning environment" (p.9). PBIS can assist teachers in maintaining a

harmonious environment in their classrooms. "Two key strategies can enable teachers to

maximize success of their students and promote desired behaviors: (a) establishing and

teaching routines and expectations and (b) providing specific feedback." (Myers,

Freeman, Simonsen, & Sugai, 2017 p. 2) Consistent routines, and high expectations are

the first two rules that should be established within the classroom community. These two

simple foundational rules set the tone for how your classroom should operate. They also

assist teachers with implementing PBIS in the classroom, because routines and

expectations have already been expressed and taught. Also, giving students feedback on their behaviors to help them understand why the behaviors posed a risk or was inappropriate is very important with helping students process their actions. With these strategies in place ultimately, students will be able to learn in a classroom with little to no disruptive behaviors that impede the learning process.

Buy-In

The decision to implement new programs in schools is the easy part. Garnering buy-in from teachers and parents can be the difficult part. According to Feuerborn and Chin (2012), "gaining the 'buy-in' and support from teachers is a critical step in reaching full, building wide implementation" (p.219). Teachers must believe in the program that is being implemented. They also must feel the program is supported by the administration as well as, being provided with the necessary resources needed to implement the program. When teachers do not feel valued enough by the district or school administration to be provided with the necessary resources, professional development, and support to implement a new program effectively, buy-in is will be difficult to gain.

Whenever new programs are rolled out or implemented in any school setting there must be a consensus that there is a need. When teachers are skeptical of a program, be it because of the presentation of the program or the intricacies of the program, it is imperative that administrators and districts have enough in-depth knowledge of the program to dissuade any negative perceptions that may arise. According to Lukacs (2012), when it comes to school initiatives, many believe that teachers are put in one or two categories: recipients of change initiatives or implementers of reform efforts. Teachers who are recipients of change initiatives not only must receive and adopt the change they must also be willing to adapt to the change. Teachers who are resistant to

adopting and adapting to change can ultimately derail any efforts made to transform a program or organization. Moreover, meeting with teachers to discuss the why and what it takes to implement PBIS is very important. Also, making it possible for teachers to attend relevant staff development on the program is also key. Teachers must feel they are knowledgeable of the program and will receive the level of support it will take to make it successful.

The PBIS program in my school was being carried out for compliance purposes, but not as a program that had the potential to change the climate of the school. Because of this, providing the staff with more professional development to help them to understand the purpose and benefits of the program helped boost participation and buy-in. Once the staff was aware of the benefits of PBIS as well as the positive affects it can have in changing the climate and culture of the school, I believe they would be more willing to implement it with increased confidence and fidelity.

<div align="center">

Conclusion

</div>

There is a multitude of information on programs such as PBIS that are utilized to support positive behavior in schools. Ciphering through it all was challenging because each journal article provided new and interesting information that pertained to my research. As I continued to conduct research on this evaluation project, I found more articles that contributed to effective implementation of the program that correlated with student academic achievement. Teachers struggled with maintaining student behavior in the classroom as well as outside the classroom. This literature provided information that supported teachers in their efforts to gain control of the classroom, thus promoting an environment for all students to be able to learn with little to no distractions.

In my 20 years of teaching, I continue to look for strategies and interventions that will support an environment of cooperative and student-centered learning, rather that teacher centered. I used the developmental approach in my evaluation to help bring about change to the program in my school so there would be more learning taking place and less disruptive behavior.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Research Design Overview

Many psychologists have studied the behavior of children and have made behavior modification suggestions to parents as a recourse to combat negative or inappropriate behaviors from their children. These behaviors have often spilled over into the school setting. Schools then must put systematic approaches in place to help students maintain positive behavior in school.

I believe my evaluation of the current PBIS plan served as a blueprint to help guide and restructure the program. I also believe, with the input from surveys, interviews, and focus groups, this also assisted in identifying the deficits and the strengths of the program. More so, the design and methodology used helped me to shift the teachers and administrator's perceptions of the program and ultimately bring about a change. Even more, I believe it assisted me in developing a plan of action that assisted in guiding the program, so it could be implemented with fidelity. Finally, it is my belief, from this evaluation that teachers would be equipped with the knowledge needed to assist managing and modifying inappropriate student behaviors to positive behaviors while improving the overall culture and climate of Cascade Elementary.

I believe the surveys, interviews, and focus group session helped me to gain an insight into the perceptions of the administrators and the teachers. It also allowed me to gain an understanding of whether they agreed as to the overall effectiveness of PBIS in curbing negative student behaviors, while changing them into positive behaviors. Moreover, I was able to use the information regarding my primary and secondary questions, to further investigate resources, strategies, relevant trainings and interventions to assist CES with fidelity in implementation.

Participants

The PBIS program is not one that can stand on its own. It is a program where the essential stakeholders of the school and in the lives of students come together to form a cohesive and proactive behavioral intervention plan that will allow students to learn in an environment that is positive and will better support students throughout their educational careers. It is a program where the essential stakeholders of the school and in the lives of students come together to form a cohesive and proactive behavioral intervention plan. However, the program would not be successful without the contributions of the district, administration, teachers, and parents. For this research, I surveyed 60 teachers, 2 administrators, and 1 guidance counselor. I surveyed 60 teachers who taught kindergarten through fifth grade so that I would have a big enough sample to gather data. I also surveyed all the teachers on each grade level, so it was an equitable and fair process and not based on the perceptions of few. Also, the input of each administrator and the guidance counselor gave a broader look at the quality of the programs from a leadership perspective. The teachers interviewed were teachers who were new to Cascade Elementary with limited knowledge of PBIS. These teachers were not experienced nor did they have any preconceived notions about the program; therefore, they were able to give a fair assessment. I also conducted a focus group with the PBIS committee. This committee comprised one teacher from each grade level for a total of 7 teachers as well as the guidance counselor. The purpose of the focus group was to gather data to gauge the level of awareness of the committee, level of commitment, and buy-in.

Data Gathering Techniques

In gathering the data for this program evaluation, I used a synthesis of interviews, focus groups and surveys with teachers, administrators, and the guidance counselor. I

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also gathered data from the current year, and the last two years of program

implementation. The amount of survey and focus group data collected from the teachers,

administrators, and guidance counselor gave me enough data from participants to compile

and analyze the data for an accurate view of their perceptions of the PBIS program and its

effectiveness.

Lastly, I gathered school discipline data to help determine the effectiveness of the

program. This information was obtained from district reports, with help from the assistant

principal, for school years, 2014, 2015, 2016, and 2017. The information reviewed

suggested that when PBIS was implemented in SY 2013, the rate of infractions was

documented at 515, which was 50% of the school's student enrollment. In subsequent

years, there was a decline in incidences into the middle 300's, at approximately 35% of

student enrollment. However, by the middle of school year 2017, the number of

infractions were on the rise, reported at 400 or 40% of school enrollment. This analysis

indicated the program was flawed regarding its implementation. When implemented with

fidelity, PBIS will provide the avenue for teachers to be able to assist students in

modifying their behavior to stay out of trouble, focus on learning, and being safe

(Boulden, 2010)

The data gathered provided a starting point as to how to best provide CES with

the information and techniques to better assist their students with problem behaviors. I

used this data to assist with answering my primary and secondary research questions, by

gathering research that was focused on minimizing student behaviors while providing

effective feedback. Lastly, I also used the data to pinpoint ways to address the deficits in

the program, such as lack of classroom management skills and professional development.

Interviews

  I interviewed 4 new teachers on campus on their perceptions of the PBIS program. The purpose of the interviews was to give the participants the opportunity to discuss their perceptions concerning implementation of PBIS, as well as discuss what they believed was going well and what needed to be improved. The responses from the teachers centered on professional development, support, and overall knowledge of PBIS.

Surveys

  There were 60 teachers surveyed in grades Kindergarten through fifth grade, and out of the 60 teachers surveyed, I received 28 responses. I also surveyed two administrators and one guidance counselor with a 100% response rate. Using Wagner's AS IS Model, which addresses, context, competency, culture, and conditions, I made general assumptions pertaining to the overall problem of implementing PBIS with fidelity. After gathering and analyzing the survey results, I summarized responses to each question and provided a data chart outlining the number of responses and the percentage data for said questions. Conducting the surveys aided me in comparing the perceptions and beliefs of teachers and administrators. In addition, I applied the knowledge gained from the surveys to facilitate a growth process that will aide with consistency and fidelity.

Focus Group

  I met with four out of seven PBIS committee members who were asked to participate in the focus group. Each participant was given the opportunity to voice their opinions and concerns about what has worked or hindered the program from being implemented with fidelity and being an effective tool to assist with modifying student

behaviors (Appendix I). After the focus group interview and meeting and discussing the implementation and success of PBIS with these committee members, it became apparent they believed the PBIS program needed overhauling to be effective.

Data Analysis Techniques

I conducted my research project using both qualitative and quantitative data. For my qualitative data, I interviewed 4 out of the seven teachers who agreed to participate, 2 administrators, and 1 guidance counselor, as well as a focus group of 4 out of the 7 teachers asked to participate who were members of the PBIS committee. I also administered a survey to 60 teachers and 28 were returned. I used this method to understand how teachers and administrators perceived whether PBIS was working and implemented with fidelity and their overall perceptions of the program. For my quantitative data, I used information from schoolwide disciplinary referrals from school years 2013-2017. I compared each year based on the number of referrals submitted as well as comparing where many of the infractions occurred.

Quantitative Data

I gathered disciplinary referral data from the 2014 to 2017 school years. I compared the number of referrals for each year to determine the trend in disciplinary referrals to assist in assessing the program. I also used information pertaining to where the infractions occurred the most to determine the areas around campus that posed the most problems. I reviewed academic data from the Florida State Assessments (FSA) to see whether the number of referrals correlated to the FSA scores.

Qualitative Data

My qualitative data consisted of interviews, surveys, and a focus group. I interviewed four teachers, two building administrators and one guidance counselor at

separate times. This type of analysis allowed me to gain various perspectives according to the primary and secondary research questions. The analysis of the respondents' answers aided in examining and showing patterns and emanating themes to aid in the investigation of the PBIS program. I also used the information to help to determine if the data coincided with the research questions and whether there was enough data collected from the interviews.

Ethical Considerations

With collecting data, there is always a fine line between an ethical and unethical approach. It was very important that I adhered to guidelines in the IRRB to circumvent the appearance of any improprieties or unethical manipulation of the data. Obtaining permission from participants in the study was an absolute necessity. During the recruitment process, participants gave informed consent in writing, giving permission to take part in the study (Appendices A, B, C, D). Their participation is strictly voluntary. Not at any time were the participants, forced, coerced, or made to feel their participation was mandatory or received and retribution if they decided not to participate. Participants can opt out at any time without any negative consequences.

I explained to participants; they would be given participant an informed consent document. This document explains how the identity of the school and all participants are kept confidential, as it would be attached to the data, and I would use pseudonyms for all participants. Also, only I would have access to all surveys, interview tapes, transcripts, and field notes, which I would keep in a locked cabinet at my home or on a password protected hard drive for up to 5 years after the completion of this study. The adult participation survey form was signed before completing and returning the survey. There were two consent forms for each participant. The consent forms gave permission for the

participant to be surveyed and to discuss questions or concerns they may have about the survey process or clarification about the purpose of the study. The participants kept a copy of the consent form and the other was kept in a sealed envelopment in a secure location with my documentation and would be shredded at a future date with all interview transcriptions... I also asked permission from my site based administrator using the Site Based Administrator Form to gain permission to survey and interview on the school's campus using approved IRRB consent forms. The evaluation of the program posed minimal to no risk at all to the participants. Moreover, all data was kept in a confidential location under lock and key to prevent accidental release of the data.

I informed all study participants in the process of sharing the study results. Participants could request study results via email (Appendix E). Participants were informed that results would not be shared electronically but in individual packets if they chose to know the results. While the results of this study would be published or otherwise reported to scientific bodies, the participants' identity in no way would be revealed.

Conclusion

Through this research, I gained more knowledge to assist me with making recommendations, developing strategies, and conducting professional development that promoted positivity. This served as a catalyst to help the PBIS committee and the administration improve on the processes and the fidelity of implementation. Most importantly, changing the behaviors of problem students and other students nurtured a climate and culture of change.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Findings

My purpose for using qualitative and quantitative data was to assess and find ways that can support the teachers and administrators in implementing the program and soliciting buy-in for the program. I believe my findings assisted in supporting teachers and administrators in recognizing the importance of having a classroom environment and campus that is void of disruptions and distractions but is conducive to student learning and academic achievement. My findings and analysis increased teacher and administrator's knowledge of perceptions of the program, how it has been implemented, and the areas where infractions are occurring, so it could be addressed as a team.

My end result is for teachers and administrators to collaborate on the processes and protocols of the program. It provided information on what has gone well and what needed improvement with the implementations and what corrective actions were needed. When schoolwide and classroom expectations were inconsistent in delivery and follow through, students exhibited inappropriate behaviors based on what they perceived the expectations are. PBIS gave Cascade Elementary the necessary tools to implement the program with fidelity and deter negative behaviors that impede learning.

Teacher Survey

I asked 60 teachers to take the survey and received 28 responses, which equated to a 43% response rate. No demographic data of teachers were included on the survey. The teacher survey consisted of 16 questions based on their perceptions of the program and how it has been implemented and its effectiveness (Appendix F). The survey responses were based on a Likert scale ranging from strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree.

Survey item #1 stated: Teachers in my school perceive PBIS as an important part of the school's function. Out of the 28 responses received, 12 (43%) agreed, 11 (approximately 40. %) disagreed 2 (average of 7%) strongly agreed that it was an important part of the school's function, 2 (approximately 7%) were neutral, and 1 (approximately 3%) strongly disagreed. Of the respondents, 43% perceived PBIS as not an important part of the school's daily function. Adding in the neutral category, this could indicate that 50% of the teachers are unaware that when properly implemented, a PBIS program can improve the culture and climate of a school, and therefore support the good functioning of a school (Sayeski & Brown, 2014). Additionally, a school's culture and climate can have significant impact on student learning (Reno, Friend, Caruthers, & Smith, 2018) so teachers are unaware how much this could benefit our school, if we can create an understanding about how PBIS can support accomplishing our school improvement goals or needs. The staff has not bought into the program and therefore, requires professional development on the purpose of PBIS and its effectiveness.

Table 1

Statement 1: Teachers in my school perceive PBIS as an important part of the school's function.

28 responses out of 60 surveyed	N	%
Strongly agree	2	7
Agree	12	43
Neutral	2	7
Disagree	11	40
Strongly disagree	1	3

Survey item #2 stated: Teachers perceive PBIS as being effective in deterring negative behaviors. According to the responses to survey item #2, 35% of teachers strongly disagree that PBIS is effective in deterring negative behaviors. Combined with the 7% who disagree, the response is 42%. This indicates there is a need for support with

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effective behavior strategies that are aligned with PBIS. Stormont and Reinke (2012) found that "coaching can be used within systems of schoolwide positive behavior support to help increase successful implementation of evidence-based practices within the classroom setting" (p. 12). Being able to understand the correlation between classroom intervention strategies and PBIS strategies can assist teachers with establishing classroom procedures, expectations, and rules to assist students with exhibiting appropriate behaviors in and out of classrooms.

Table 2

Statement 2: Teachers perceive PBIS as being effective in deterring negative behaviors

28 responses out of 60 surveyed	N	%
Strongly agree	1	3
Agree	8	27
Neutral	7	25
Disagree	2	7
Strongly disagree	10	35

Survey item #3 stated: Teachers in my school perceive PBIS as being implemented with fidelity. According to the responses in statement #3, it is interesting that 48% perceive that is has not been implemented with fidelity. This percentage may indicate teachers have not fully bought into the premise that guides PBIS. According to Feuerborn and Chinn (2012), the perceptions of teachers regarding PBIS can play a major role in the successful implementation of the program. The perceptions of teachers can affect the overall climate of a school. It is important that teachers feel empowered during the transformational process while implementing new programs. "Organizational health and climate can be an important factor in effective change efforts. At the same time, an unhealthy school climate can lead to ineffectiveness" (Allen, Grisby, & Peters, 2015, p.

1). It is essential that teachers are engaged through communication and the collaborative process if they are to become vested in the necessary changes.

Table 3

Statement 3: Teachers in my school perceive PBIS as being implemented with fidelity.

28 responses out of 60 surveyed	N	%
Strongly agree	0	0
Agree	6	22
Neutral	9	32
Disagree	11	41
Strongly disagree	2	7

Data in table 4 represents responses to survey statement #4 regarding teachers' perception of the PBIS committee as being transparent in relaying information to staff. Of respondents surveyed, teachers (40%) neutral, 8 teachers (27%) responded agree, 7 teachers (25%) responded disagree, 2 teachers (7%) responded strongly disagree, and o% responded as strongly agree. The responses to these data indicate that 40% of teachers are not engaged in the collaborative process regarding PBIS. One of the primary responsibilities of the PBIS committee is to communicate with teachers and staff, share new practices and routines, and monitor for effective implementation. (Creesey, Whitcomb, McGilvray-Rivet, Morrison, & Shander-Reynolds, 2014). Effective communication between the committee and staff is essential in building relationships that will cultivate a climate of shared vision and collaboration.

Table 4

Statement 4: Teachers perceive the PBIS committee as being transparent in relaying information to the staff

28 responses out of 60 surveyed	N	%
Strongly agree	0	0
Agree	8	27
Neutral	11	40
Disagree	7	25
Strongly disagree	2	7

Statement #5 refers to whether information about PBIS incentives are relayed in a timely manner. Of the respondents reporting, 11 teachers (40%) agreed, 9 teachers (32%) were neutral, 7 teachers (25%) disagreed, 1 teacher (3%) responded strongly agree, while 0% of responded in the strongly disagree category. Because PBIS is based partly on positive reinforcements, students are afforded the opportunity to participate in incentive celebrations if they have exhibited desired behaviors. These incentives consist of but are not limited to movie nights, after school dances, breakfast with a friend, and game nights. It is important that notice of these events is relayed in a timely manner, so teachers can inform students and parents of upcoming events. Providing parents with notice of incentive events gives them the opportunity to prepare and plan for their children (child) to attend the celebrations as a reward for exhibiting appropriate behaviors around campus, as well as giving them the opportunity to participate in the celebration of success. Celebrating students' efforts to comply with rules and expectations not only gives them a sense of accomplishment and promotes self-efficacy and self-esteem, it also gives them reasons to continue to maintain appropriate behaviors.

Table 5

Statement 5: Information about PBIS incentive celebrations are relayed in a timely manner?

28 responses out of 60 surveyed	N	%
Strongly agree	1	3
Agree	11	40
Neutral	9	32
Disagree	7	25
Strongly disagree	0	0

Statement 6 refers to whether my school has a set of guidelines to follow regarding PBIS. Of the 28 respondents, 11 teachers (40%) were neutral, 7 teachers

(25%) agreed, 7 teachers (25%) disagreed, 3 teachers (10%) strongly agreed, while 0% of

respondents strongly disagreed. Of the teachers surveyed, 40% of teachers were neutral

regarding whether the school has a set of guidelines to follow for PBIS. These responses

imply that teachers are unaware of the guidelines that drive the program. PBIS is a

systematic approach used in schools focused on creating a school climate that is

conducive to learning, safe and orderly, as well as promoting social competence

(Creesey et. al, 2014). Within the PBIS framework are built in guidelines that define and

outline the processes for effectively implementing PBIS. It is important that teachers are

not just aware of the guidelines, but also understand and adhere to the expectations and

core values of the program. It is also important that administrators provide the necessary

support to aid teachers "to increase the capacity of schools to serve more children within the

context of prevention tiers of support." (Stormont and Reinke 2012, p. 18) I believe teachers

who feel supported will become more engaged in the process and willing to embrace the

changes needed.

Table 6

Statement 6: My school has a set of guidelines to follow regarding PBIS

28 responses out of 60 surveyed	N	%
Strongly agree	3	10
Agree	7	25
Neutral	11	40
Disagree	7	25
Strongly disagree	0	0

Statement 7 refers to whether there are guidelines set for the distribution of gator

bucks. Of the teachers surveyed, 11 teachers (40%) responded as neutral to whether there

are guidelines in place, 8 teachers (27%) strongly disagree, 7 teachers (25%) agree, 2

teachers (7%) disagree, and 0% of respondents disagreed with the statement. While

reviewing the responses to this statement there is a clear connection between these

responses, and the responses in statement 6 which referred to the guidelines of the PBIS

program   Similarly, 40% of respondents in statement 6 were neutral about PBIS

guidelines, as 40% of respondents are neutral to the guidelines of distributing gator

bucks. Given these data points, it is clear as mentioned previously that teachers have not

been made aware of guidelines that serve to drive the successful implementation of PBIS.

It is important as PBIS is implemented throughout the school and teachers are informed

of all implementation guidelines that will allow PBIS to be successful. The distribution

of gators bucks as rewards for appropriate behavior is essential because of the ability to

assist students in modifying behaviors. Gators bucks serve as instant gratification for a

job well done. It has been my experience, when students receive instant gratification for

their efforts, they are apt to continue with positive behaviors.

Table 7

*Statement 7: There are set guidelines for the distribution of gator bucks that all teachers
        follow*

28 responses out of 60 surveyed	N	%
Strongly agree	0	0
Agree	7	25
Neutral	11	40
Disagree	2	7
Strongly disagree	8	27

Statement 8 refers to whether positive behaviors are reiterated to students every

day. According to the responses, 12 teachers (43%) agree, 10 teachers (36%) strongly

agree, neutral and disagree both report at 3 (10%), and 0% of teachers respond as

strongly disagree. This data indicates the teachers understand how important it is to

reinforce positive behaviors each day by emphasizing the importance of appropriate

behaviors in school. It is also important for students to have positive behaviors modeled

for them so they can understand what positive behaviors look like

Table 8

Statement 8: Positive behaviors are reiterated to students every day

28 responses out of 60 surveyed	N	%
Strongly agree	10	36
Agree	12	43
Neutral	3	10
Disagree	3	10
Strongly disagree	0	0

Statement #9 refers to teachers in my school receiving professional development

on PBIS. According to the responses 12 teachers (43%) of teachers responded as neutral,

9 teachers (32%) responded as disagree, 6 teachers (22%) responded as agree, I teacher

(3%) responded strongly disagree, and 0% of teachers responded as strongly agree. As I

~~have~~ assessed the data, I have noticed a trend of high teacher responses of neutral. These

consistent responses lead me to believe there is little engagement from teachers

concerning PBIS. Providing professional development is essential to effectively

implementing programs. Effective professional development deepens understanding and

can transform beliefs and perceptions (Hirsh, 2005). Also, professional development can

aid in the manner teachers effectively implement programs. Moreover, it can increase

teacher engagement in the transformational process. According to Clinches, Russell,

Chavez, and Ortiz (2017), "An engaged teacher is available to provide student support to

accomplish the assigned tasks, adjusts ones teaching to accommodate students' pace; sets

aside time to know students' needs and concerns" (p.10). These components are essential

to creating an atmosphere where PBIS can flourish and students become engaged in the

process as well.

Table 9

Statement 9 Teachers in my school have received professional development on PBIS?

28 responses out of 60 surveyed	N	%
Strongly agree	0	0
Agree	6	22
Neutral	12	43
Disagree	9	32
Strongly disagree	1	3

According to responses to statement #10, teachers in my school are committed to

PBIS, 40% of teachers responded as being neutral regarding their commitment to PBIS.

Combined with the 32% who disagree and 3% who strongly disagree, this equates to

approximately 75% of teachers who have not fully bought into the PBIS program. For

PBIS to be successful teachers must understand the purpose and intentions of the

program its capacity to assist in modifying students' behaviors with positive

interventions. Teachers need to see PBIS as a program that will add to what is already in

place and not as another initiative added to their daily responsibilities. (Flannery & Sugai,

2009). When this occurs, teachers will be able to recognize the potential for change and

began to embrace the process.

Table 10

Statement: 10 Teachers in my school are committed to PBIS

28 responses out of 60 surveyed	N	%
Strongly agree	0	0
Agree	8	27
Neutral	11	40
Disagree	9	32
Strongly disagree	1	3

Statement #11 refers to whether administrators support PBIS. According to the

responses, 15 teachers (55%) agree with the statement, 7 teachers (25%) are neutral,

while, responses to strongly agree and disagree each reported at 10% or 3 teachers each.

When combined strongly agree and agree these equals 65% of teachers believe

administrators support PBIS. Administrators consist of the principal, assistant principal

and usually the guidance counselor. Each play a vital role in the culture and climate of

the school regarding discipline. However, each role has specific responsibilities. "He is

helper, enforcer and referrer. An effective program of discipline can be implemented only

when the teacher and the principal work in a team effort" (Allen, Grigsby, & Peters,

2015, p. 37). In like manner, it is important the assistant principal becomes involved in

the collaborative process with teachers. They also serve as support to the teachers and

students and help to set the tone for the overall climate of the school (United States

Department of Labor, 2008). Guidance counselors are also important due to the role they

play in the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) process that is discussed in Chapter

3. This process helps to identify students who need Tier 2 and 3 behavior support to

maintain appropriate behaviors. They are also important in the collaborative process with

teachers to define interventions needed to support students.

Table 11

Statement11: Administrators support the PBIS program

28 responses out of 60 surveyed	N	%
Strongly agree	3	10
Agree	15	55
Neutral	7	25
Disagree	3	10
Strongly disagree	0	0

Responses to statement #12 reflect the perceptions of teachers on whether they are

trained in strategies that aid in preventing negative behaviors on campus. Of the teachers

surveyed, 13 teachers (47%) report as neutral, 12 teachers (43%) disagreed, 2 teachers

(7%) strongly disagree, 1 teacher responded as strongly disagree (3%), and 0 teachers

responded strongly agree. The response to neutral (47%) and disagree (43%) represent a

total of 90% of teachers who have not had the necessary professional development that

supports PBIS. These responses are like responses to statement 9, teachers in my school

have received professional development. With these responses being so closely related, I

have concluded that teachers at Cascade Elementary feel professional development is

very important to understanding PBIS. Without the necessary preparation and tools to

effectively teach PBIS expectations to students or to implement the strategies and

interventions, the program cannot be implemented successfully.

Successful implementation of PBIS hinges on the school being able to apply a

systematic approach to behavior management. However, successful implementation will

not occur unless evidenced based practices are in place. According to Wood, Goodnight,

Bethune, Preston, and Cleaver (2016), professional development can influence teachers'

use of evidenced based practices. Also, combined with coaching, demonstrations, and

practiced, the teacher's knowledge and application of processes will be increased (p. 161)

Table 12

Statement 12: Teachers are trained in strategies to prevent negative behaviors?

28 responses out of 60 surveyed	N	%
Strongly agree	0	0
Agree	1	3
Neutral	13	47
Disagree	12	43
Strongly disagree	2	7

Statement #13 refers to teachers being aware of students who are on tiers 1, 2, and

3. According to the responses, 11 teachers (40%) of teachers disagree, 7 teachers (25%)

of teachers are neutral, 5 teachers (18%) agree, 3 teachers (10%) strongly disagree, and 2

(7%) strongly agree). The responses indicate, when neutral, strongly disagree, and

disagree are combined, 75% of teachers are not aware of tier 1, 2, and 3 interventions

which are important components to the MTSS process. "MTSS programs in schools

are designed to provide a more systematic, data-driven and equitable approach to

solving academic and behavioral issues with students" (Bessler, Shillingford, & Joe, 2016

p. 253). They also contend tiers 1, 2, and 3 are designed to place students according to

the severity of their behavior. Tier I students exhibit appropriate behaviors, tier 2

students exhibit behaviors that need intensive support, while students who are exhibiting

tier 3 behaviors need intensive monitoring that involves testing, intervention

implementation as well as progress monitoring (Bessler, Shingleford, & Joe, 2016). They

also contend it is important for teachers in my school to use data concerning behaviors to

inform the decision-making process concerning discipline interventions. This will allow

teachers in my school to formulate plans that are individualized to meet student needs

Table 13

Statement 13: Teachers are made aware of students who are on tiers 1, 2, or 3 behavior
      interventions

28 responses out of 60 surveyed	N	%
Strongly agree	2	7
Agree	5	18
Neutral	7	25
Disagree	11	40
Strongly disagree	3	10

Statement 14 refers to teachers who are satisfied with the PBIS program. Out of

the 28 respondents, 11 teachers (39%) were neutral, 8 teachers (28%) disagreed, 7

teachers (25%) agreed, 2 teachers (8%) strongly disagreed, and 0 strongly agreed. There

is a minimal difference between those who are neutral and those who disagree and

strongly disagree. This indicates the teachers at Cascade Elementary are disillusioned

with the PBIS program. For a change in student behavior to occur, teachers must

understand the purpose and the dynamics of PBIS. This entails ongoing professional

development to ensure teachers are equipped with strategies to assist with classroom

management as well as being aware of interventions that are used for students on each

tier. Moreover, teachers need to feel supported by the administrators and the PBIS

committee. It is important for administrators to garner buy-in from their teachers. This

can be done through effective communication and collaboration. A lack of

communication can lead to lack of awareness and can negatively affect the overall

implementation of PBIS.

Table 14

Statement: 14 Teachers are satisfied with the PBIS committee

28 responses out of 60 surveyed	N	%
Strongly agree	0	0
Agree	7	25
Neutral	11	39
Disagree	8	28
Strongly disagree	2	8

Statement #15 refers to teachers being satisfied with the PBIS committee. The

responses were, 10 teachers (35%) strongly disagree, 8 teachers (27%) agree, 7 teachers

(25%) are neutral, and 1 teacher (3%) strongly agree. These responses correlate and

support responses made regarding statement 4, teachers perceive the PBIS committee as

being transparent in relaying information to the staff. As stated about statement 4, their

perception of the committee reflects the lack of communication between the committee

and teachers. As stated previously with statement 4, one of the primary responsibilities of

the PBIS committee is to communicate with teachers and staff, share new practices and

routines, and monitor for effective implementation (Creesey et al., 2014). Both responses

indicate the teachers' dissatisfaction with the committee. Changes in the protocol for the

committee needs to be reviewed for effectiveness for teachers to be successful

implementing PBIS.

Table 15.

Statement 15: Teachers are satisfied with the PBIS committee

28 responses out of 60 surveyed	N	%
Strongly agree	1	3
Agree	8	27
Neutral	7	25
Disagree	2	7
Strongly disagree	10	35

According to responses in statement #16 regarding teachers are satisfied with the

level of professional development given, 11 teachers are neutral (40%), 11 (40%)

teachers strongly disagree, 3 teachers (10%) disagree, and 0% of teachers strongly agree.

These responses correlate to responses in statement 9, teachers receive professional

development. Of those surveyed, 78% of teachers responded closely to this data with

statement 9 where 90% of teachers combining neutral, strongly disagree, and disagree.

Both data responses show teachers discontent with the lack of professional development

opportunities. Since professional development is necessary for successful

implementation, it is imperative teachers receive training in the intricacies of the

program, so they will implement it with fidelity.

Table 16.

Statement 16: Teachers satisfied with the level of PBIS professional development given

28 responses out of 60 surveyed	N	%
Strongly agree	0	0
Agree	3	10
Neutral	11	40
Disagree	3	10
Strongly disagree	11	40

Administrator Survey

I asked 3 administrators at Cascade Elementary to take the survey on their perceptions of the PBIS program. All 3 participants, the principal, assistant principal and guidance counselor, returned the survey for a response rate of 100%. I conducted this survey because I wanted to understand if there were any underlying themes and patterns between administrators and teachers' perceptions. These responses were crucial to helping me identify the root causes of why the program has not been effective in implementation or in deterring student negative behaviors. I also feel identifying the root cause would assist me in furthering my investigation into the underlying factors that contributed to the problems. I felt this identification would lead me to further research that would assist Cascade Elementary in taking another look at the implementation process and protocols to evaluate what may have gone wrong and what went well addressing exploratory questions one and two.

I wondered if the surveys for administrators and teachers would show that both parties felt the need for a program that would be systematic in process that would assist with modifying students' behaviors for a more conducive learning environment, and allow them to begin to effectively communicate their vision and desires about the school's climate and culture to one another. When implementing new programs, it is highly important that all parties communicate the objectives and goals they wish to accomplish.

The first statement on the administrative survey was: The PBIS committee in my school meets at least once a month for 30 minutes. All three administrators responded

agree for a 100% response rate. Conducting meetings on a consistent basis aids in

assessing the progress of the program to ensure it stays on track.

Table 17

Statement: 1 The PBIS committee in my school meets at least once a month for 30
*   minutes*

Surveyed 3 out of 3	N	%
Strongly agree	0	0
Agree	3	100
Neutral	0	0
Disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0

Statement 2 stated: The PBIS committee in my school is an integral part in

implementing the PBIS program. All 3 administrators responded positively with 100%

agree. The committee is charged with driving PBIS with purpose, direction, and focus.

The committee is an integral part of the implementation process, because it assists with

communicating a shared vision for the school regarding culture, climate, and behavior

management in conjunction with PBIS goals. It is also responsible for making sure that

staff understands the purpose of PBIS as well as its philosophy. Furthermore, the

committee devises the strategic plan for implementation based on data and communicates

it to staff members.

Statement 3 stated Teachers in my school are aware of tier 1, 2, and 3

interventions. There was a 3-way tie among the 3 administrators resulting in 1

administrator responded agree, 1 administrator responded neutral, and I administrator

responded disagree. These responses indicate that administrators are not in tuned to

whether communication between the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) committee

and teachers has been established. Because in part, PBIS is supported by MTSS, it is

important that teachers understand where their students place on the 3 tiers which are, tier

1 needing little support, tier 2 needing moderate support, and tier 3 needing intensive

support. Understanding where the students rank, benefit teachers by assisting them in

knowing which strategies to implement for the success of each student.

Table 19

Statement 3: Teachers in my school are aware of tier 1, 2, and 3 interventions

Surveyed 3 out of 3	N	%
Strongly agree	0	0
Agree	1	33.3
Neutral	1	33.3
Disagree	1	33.3
Strongly disagree	0	0

Statement 4: My district provides professional development on PBIS had a 100%

response rate in the neutral category. These responses indicate communication between

administrators and the district is lacking. District offices and school campuses must work

together for the good of the students, teachers, and community. Yet, it is often perceived

as if they are two separate entities, standing alone, yet, working toward the same goal.

Table 20

Statement 4: My district provides professional development on PBIS

Surveyed 3 out of 3	N	%
Strongly agree	0	0
Agree	0	0
Neutral	3	100
Disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0

Considering these perceptions, it is important they find ways to bridge the gap to

be on one accord. But, "as long as this disconnect exists, it is students who suffer most."

(Mizell, 2010, p. 47) Effective communication between the two is vital when striving to

implement new programs. Not only must the district office convey their expectations and

support of implementation of PBIS to the administrators and staff at Cascade Elementary,

but likewise, CES must convey their needs and desires for guidance and support to the district office to be successful with PBIS.

Statement 5 indicated: My district provides follow-up in-service training on PBIS. The response rate to this statement was also in the neutral column and corresponds with previous statement 5 referring to professional development, as was the conclusion drawn within that context communication between the district and CES is key. The district office must monitor the implementation process to ensure fidelity and to assess the needs of the school for further in-service training. Their support is crucial to assist with teacher efficacy and buy-in

Table 21

Statement: 5 My district provides follow-up in-service training on PBIS

Surveyed 3 out of 3	N	%
Strongly agree	0	0
Agree	0	0
Neutral	3	100
Disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0

Statement 6 indicated: The teachers in my school are committed to the PBIS program. The responses reported that 2 administrators, 66.66%, agreed and one administrator, 33.33%, was neutral. These responses indicate that administrators are not communicating with one another about PBIS and the perceptions of the staff regarding PBIS. It is critical for administrators to take the pulse of the school to discern how their teachers feel regarding programs and program implementation.   Becoming more aware of the way teachers perceive how well or not well PBIS is working will assist administrators with cultivating a climate and culture of a shared vision and shared beliefs. "Culture is ultimately created, embedded, evolved, and ultimately manipulated by

leaders." (Sabanci, Sahim, Sŏnmez, and Yilmaz, 2010, p. 156). Therefore, administrators

must work together amongst themselves as well as with the committee to foster an

atmosphere of cohesiveness and togetherness.

Table 22

Statement 6: The teachers in my school are committed to PBIS.

Surveyed 3 out of 3	N	%
Strongly agree	0	0
Agree	2	66.66
Neutral	1	33.33
Disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0

Statement 7 indicated: The distribution of gator bucks among teachers is

inconsistent garnered a response of 2 administrators 66.66% agree, and 1 administrator

33.33% neutral. These responses indicate administrators' views are on the practice of

distributing gator bucks as incentives is inconsistent. As with statements, 6 and 7

communication at CES is problematic. Incentives is a key component of PBIS.

Table 23

Statement: 7 the distribution of gator bucks among teachers is inconsistent

Surveyed 3 out of 3	N	%
Strongly agree	0	0
Agree	2	66.66
Neutral	1	33.33
Disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0

The process of distributing incentives to students is not only about rewarding

positive behavior. It is also a way for teachers and administrators to support and monitor

student behaviors for turn around.   Therefore, it is important for the distribution of

incentives to be fair and impartial. Understanding the 'why' behind incentivizing will

assist teachers with buy-in, as well as, with how to incorporate incentives into their classroom management as well as with school wide behavior management.

Statement 8: Teachers in my school are made aware on MTSS data regarding student's behavior garnered a response rate of 2 administrators (66.66%) were neutral and 1 administrator (33.33%) disagreed. Data-based decision making is an essential part of the MTSS process. It allows teachers and administrators to collaborate and determine how to best meet the needs of the students. According to Foreman and Crystal (2015), MTSS requires data-based decision making in relation to student interventions" (p. 282). Teachers are the first line of defense regarding student behaviors. Given that, it is crucial for teachers to be a part of the decision-making process. However, the response rate from the 3 administrators surveyed, indicate that teachers are not a part of the MTSS process.

Table 24

Statement: 8 Teachers in my school are made aware of MTTS data regarding student's behavior

Surveyed 3 out of 3	N	%
Strongly agree	0	0
Agree	0	0
Neutral	2	66.66
Disagree	1	33.33
Strongly disagree	0	0

This deficit puts teachers at a disadvantage when it comes to defining strategies for students who need tier 2 and 3 strategies or behavior plans. These data are also in direct correlation with responses from teachers regarding statement 13, teachers are aware of students who are on tiers 1, 2, and 3 behavior interventions in the teacher survey. Of those who responded, 43% of teachers strongly disagree with the statement. As a result of these responses, CES administrators must make the effort to include

teachers in the process and provide the necessary support concerning behavior

interventions around campus.

Statement 9: My district has implemented PBIS in all schools across the district

received a response rate of 2 administrators (66.66%) being neutral and 1 (33.33%) as

disagree. As it has been noted previously, there is an absence of communication between

administrators and the district. Administrators must stay apprised of initiatives that

impact their school and the district. This awareness not only keeps administrators abreast

of changes and improvements in the district, it also, afford them the opportunity to

collaborate with schools across the district. Collaborating with other schools can assist

CES with implementing PBIS by providing insight into what may be working well and

what may need to be reassessed for improvement.

Table 25

Statement: 9 my district has implemented PBIS in all schools across the district

Surveyed 3 out of 3	N	%
Strongly agree	0	0
Agree	0	0
Neutral	2	66.66
Disagree	1	33.33
Strongly disagree	0	0

Statement 10: My district follows national PBIS guidelines received a response

rate of 2 administrators (66.66%) were neutral, while 1 (33.33%) disagreed. These data

represent the ongoing disconnect between CES administrators, and the school district.

Communication concerning the implantation process and the expectations of the district

need to be shared with administrators. This can only be done through collaboration and

the sharing of ideas. For CES to move forward there must be open lines of

communication between them and the district.

Table 26

Statement 10: My district follows National PBIS guidelines.

Surveyed 3 out of 3	N	%
Strongly agree	0	0
Agree	0	0
Neutral	2	66.66
Disagree	1	33.33
Strongly disagree	0	0

Teacher Interviews

Seven new teachers to Cascade Elementary were asked to interview for this research project (Appendix H). Only 4 teachers agreed to the interview. The interviews ranged from 15 to 25 minutes. Pseudonyms have been used to protect teachers' identities.

In response to teacher interview questions #1, which asked what teachers thought was working well with the PBIS program, the most frequently reported theme was, students enjoy the incentives they can attend when they earn enough bucks. Three teachers said students become excited when they can attend movie night. With movie night, for a certain number of bucks, students can pay for them, and their family members to sit on the school lawn and watch a movie for free. This gives them the opportunity to share what they have earned with their families. Fifth graders can dress up and go to an after school dance on early release days. This gives them a chance to mingle with their peers and friends in a different setting other than instructional. From one teacher there was a considerable amount of silence before she replied. When she responded she noted students enjoyed receiving caught being good recognition notes to receive incentives. One of the core components of PBIS is recognizing students for exhibiting positive behavior. The over consensus from the three teachers concluded, recognition of students was a positive outcome of the PBIS.

In response to teacher interview questions #2, which asked what strategies are put in place to help reinforce positive behavior while deterring the negative behaviors, the most frequently reported theme was that the teachers again agreed that incentives worked well. However, even though the teachers felt the students enjoyed receiving the incentives, it is apparent from the responses that, although the gator bucks were working well, each teacher added a different component to assist with the strategy. From this I gleaned that although PBIS is a systematic process, there are other behavior system that can work within the PBIS system. These answers also paved the way for future research into pairings with PBIS. One teacher, Avery, responded that although there was a strategy in place of using gator bucks as incentives, it was not working. Teacher 2, Lena, stated she used a clip chart and gator bucks in her class as well as some of the other teachers on the grade level. Teachers three and four, Cynthia and Karen agreed that verbal positive reinforcement and gators bucks appeared to work as well. As stated throughout my research PBIS uses a reward system to assist with modifying student behaviors.

In response to teacher interview questions #3, which asked to describe whether the program is being implemented with fidelity, the most frequent underlying theme was a lack of communication and professional development of PBIS at CES. Teacher 4, Karen, stated that it was hard for her to explain whether PBIS was being implemented with fidelity or not because of her lack of knowledge. She felt it was hard to give an answer. Teacher 2, Lena, simply replied somewhat. Avery stated the program was inconsistent and weak across the board, while Cynthia felt the PBIS committee was trying to implement PBIS, but teachers did not follow through with the expectations. The answers provided to this question indicates CES needs to provide more professional

development and in service training for teacher understanding It is crucial when a program is being implemented, the expectations, purpose, and needs are outlined for those who will be carrying out the processes. Administrators must engage their teachers and staff in the process to ensure its success.

In response to teacher interview questions #4, which asked what process the PBIS committee uses to make decisions about student incentives, the most frequent underlying theme was that new teachers have a low level of awareness of the responsibilities of the PBIS committee and how information is disseminated throughout the school. All four teachers stated they were aware of the PBIS committee and that they meet to discuss PBIS however, information is not passed to the teachers. Therefore, they remain unaware of the decision making process. Again, this shows a lack of communication and collaboration among the teachers and staff at CES.

In response to teacher interview questions #5, which asked, do you feel the program is supported by the administration, the most reported theme was inconsistent support from the building administrators. Avery responded she felt the administrators slightly supported the program. When asked a follow-up question of why she felt that way she stated there wasn't any follow-through. Karen and Lena stated they felt the administration did support PBIS. When asked how so, they said the administrators celebrated good behavior and had consequences for negative behavior, as well as, are open to suggestions from teachers. Cynthia felt they supported PBIS but not to the level that would make it effective. Leadership support is very important to establishing a culture of continuity and togetherness. It is also important there are shared beliefs and goals throughout. School administrators must create environments where teachers feel

valued and their voices are heard. Moreover, it is important for administrators to empower teachers through conversations, collaboration, and commitment.

In response to teacher interview questions #6, which asked vision of PBIS and leadership support, the most reported them was neither of the four respondents were aware of the vision of PBIS. They stated it had not been communicated to them. They referred to their answers form question 5. This indicates as it has throughout that communication at CES is limited and inconsistent.

In response to teacher interview questions #7, which asked what the role of the PBIS committee is, the most reported theme was, the committee was there to support PBIS, but were unsure of the other responsibilities. Avery and Cynthia said it was to promote positive behavior, Lena stated she didn't know, and Karen said it was a group of teachers working together to create incentive programs that will support and sustain positive behavior for a better learning environment. Avery also commented that she didn't think the PBIS committee was living up to their role. Again, this shows the lack of communication that contributes to the lack of awareness on the part of the teachers to be able to effectively implement PBIS.

In response to teacher interview questions #3, which asked what are the problems with the distribution of gator bucks for positive student behaviors, the most reported theme was, the inconsistencies as to how to manage the distribution of gator bucks. Teachers, Avery, Cynthia, and Lena noted the distribution of gator bucks is inconsistent. Also, there aren't any consistent guidelines as to how many to give nor is there a list of behavior look-fors to guide students. Avery also suggested, the distribution to be unfair an unequitable. She stated, based on how much a teacher may like a student, could

determine how many bucks that student would be given, versus if the teacher didn't really care for a student. The need for consistency and equity is evident.

Lastly, Karen noted there is difficulty for teaches acquiring more bucks when they run out, students are not enthusiastic, and students are not aware of the gator bucks store open and closed days. Incentives are a very important component of PBIS. For teachers to perceive the system is flawed and students are no longer showing enthusiasm shows that CES must collaborate more on guidelines and procedures to be effective.

In response to teacher interview questions #9, which asked what factors positively impact student behaviors, the most reported theme was that the positives about PBIS were ensuring that all students felt safe and had positive experiences in school. All respondents to this question, except for Lena, who did not have a response at that time, responded according to what they felt are positive factors in general but are not necessarily specific to Cascade Elementary. The three suggested factors such as, immediate gratification, a caring supportive environment, a positive relationship with teachers and peers, as well as having a safe space. These responses show that teachers are aware of what it takes to ensure students have positive experiences in school. Positive experiences can help promote positive behaviors and create a positive learning environment.

In response to teacher interview question #10, which asked, describe the type of professional development you've been given in regard to tier 1, 2, and 3 interventions, the most reported theme was a lack of knowledge on tiers 1, 2, and 3 data. Tiers, 1, 2, and 2 data helps to decide what behavior plans students should and should not be placed. It assists teachers with behavior management in the classroom. All four teachers felt they

were placed in difficult positions when they are unaware of strategies that can aide their

students in managing behaviors. They also felt they should be a part of the decision-

making process during Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) meetings when their

students are being discussed and important decisions are being made that can impact the

classroom and their learning. Teacher input is very important to the MTSS process.

Teachers can bring other perspectives of student's behaviors to the meetings along with

anecdotal notes that could assist with the tier placement as well as developing strategies

and interventions for their students.

In response to teacher interview questions #11, which asked, describe the type of

professional development you were given on PBIS at the beginning of the year, the most

reported theme was, the consensus on the lack of a schoolwide behavior plan or grade

level plans coincided with lack of professional development. Cynthia noted, as a new

teacher she was briefly introduced to PBIS by her grade level colleagues. Even though

she had prior knowledge, she was unaware of how it worked at CES. Therefore, she felt

like she needed support and professional development to be effective. Likewise, Avery

also stated, she was not given professional development and needed support if she were

going use it in her classroom along with the system she already had in place. These

responses show new teachers are left to their own devices to figure out how to implement

PBIS in their classrooms. Professional development is critical to the implementation

process. Teachers need to fully understand the purpose, processes, and strategies used to

be able to establish expectations in the classroom and follow through with schoolwide

expectations.

Interview question #12, asked, has the different grade levels discussed consistent behavior incentives? Describe what kind of grade level incentives your grade level dispenses. The most reported theme was the inconsistencies across grade levels and within their respective grade level teams. All four teachers responded to the first part of the question by stating they were unaware of the discussions on different grade levels, only the discussions of their respective levels. Avery, Cynthia, and Karen were fifth grade teachers, while Lena was a third grade teacher. Neither grade level had discussed consistent behavior incentives, but had put in place minimal incentives. Fifth grade had two dances a year and two movie nights, which students needed a certain number of gator bucks to attend. Third grade according to Lena, only participated in the school wide incentives at the end of each quarter, but not anything on the grade level. Consistency is another key component regarding effective implementation. It was clear from the responses that the lack of communication throughout the school with CES has contributed to the inconsistencies with the distribution of gator bucks, reinforcements, and other incentives.

Teacher Focus Group

Seven teachers from the school's PBIS committee were asked to be a part of a focus group session regarding the implementation of PBIS. However, only four teachers agreed to participate. The focus group lasted 35 minutes. Pseudonyms were used to protect teachers' identities. The areas discussed directly related to my primary and secondary questions outlined in chapter one. The emerging themes from the conversation were (1) communication, (2) cohesion, and (3) ongoing in-service training.

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Focus group question #1 asked, what is working well with PBIS? The immediate response from all participating members were students enjoyed receiving gator bucks and participating in the incentives offered. One component of PBIS is a reward or incentive practice that allows students to receive instant gratification for behaving appropriately. The students are able to spend their bucks to attend one of the incentive opportunities, such as movie night, breakfast with buddies, and the fifth grade dance to name a few. The reward program offers a strategy that is tangible and immediate. Also, according to the four teachers the students begin to feel really good about themselves when they are able to attend the events.

Question #2 asked, what are some obstacles that hinder the effectiveness of the PBIS program? There was a consensus from all four teachers that communication and professional development were the two main problems that interfered with the effectiveness of PBIS. It was also stated there was not enough time for the committee to meet to solve problems and bring about new ideas. Providing opportunities for committees to meet is key when initiating new programs as well as sustaining those that are already in place. Meetings give committees time to analyze data, pose, and answer questions, as well as revising strategies and interventions according to the data analysis. Furthermore, it affords them the opportunity to collaborate and provide teachers and staff with important information concerning the PBIS process.

Question #3 asked, what are your suggestions for making the program more effective? One respondent noted, she believed teachers needed more support understanding PBIS and its purpose to promote buy-in. When asked a follow-up question regarding whether it would be beneficial to have an outside trainer give professional

development on PBIS, all four participants unanimously agreed that it would be more effective, than having only three staff members trained during the summer. Quality professional development is key when training staff to implement new strategies and interventions. It is also important that all parties involved, not just a few are trained and attend ongoing professional development. However, when it is not feasible for all to be trained at once, using a train the trainer model, which is when key members attend training and return to train those in their organization, can be effective when it is aligned with the goals and objectives outlined for implementation.

Question # 4 asked, what are your suggestions for solving the issue of disruptive students? Each respondent had a variation of a behavior clip system. The clip system is a visual for students to view on what level of behavior they are on at that moment. For example, the colors on the chart may be in sequence of green, yellow, or red, mimicking a stop light. Students will move a clip to the appropriate color that portrays their behavior at that time. The clips can be moved back and forth according to behavior. They also used gator bucks for instant gratification as well as praise. Positive Behavior Intervention Support is a systematic approach that uses research based interventions and strategies to help curb and modify disruptive behaviors (Sailor et al., 2006). In conjunction, teachers are using other management systems within their classrooms with PBIS. These other systems, such as, moving colored clips back and forth to reinforce positive behaviors, go hand in hand with the distribution of gator bucks as an incentive. When students are showing positive behavior with the clip system, they are given the gator bucks which are a part of the reward system in PBIS. Both working together can be effective interventions in deterring negative behaviors.

Question #5 asked, how will the tier 1, 2, and 3 behavior data help drive the committee to reform the PBIS program? Two respondents said they were familiar with the tiers but had not been formally trained in using them. Another respondent said she was new to the school but was made aware of the interventions from her previous school. The fourth respondent said she felt the information was given on a need to know basis, but it would be more effective if everyone were trained. All four agreed that communication from administrators, and the multi-tiered system of supports team would assist teachers with classroom management and developing behavior interventions. Having access to more information would help. Because of the lack of communication, teachers were not able to know and understand the student behavior data that would assist them with classroom management. The three tiers consists of Tier 1 students who are maintaining appropriate behavior, tier 2 students who need slight intensive interventions, and tier 3 students need intensive interventions. When teachers are ill equipped with the knowledge of what students need to be successful because of the lack of communication and training student behaviors may fall through the cracks.

Question #6 asked, what steps or actions will the committee take to help resolve problems with the program? All four quietly responded that more communication between the committee, administrators, and teachers should be the first step in resolving the problem. As reported previously, communication is key in successful implementation of PBIS. All four committee members realized the lack of collaboration and communication had hindered the PBIS program.

Question #7 asked, what do you think your administrators' role is in schoolwide discipline? One responded that their role was to give guidance and inform about the

behaviors of the students and referrals written and how they could bring them down. Another commented on bringing and discussing data during a faculty meeting. One other responded noted she attended a meeting at another school where she found every person in the school knew where the problem behaviors occurred the most. This helped faculty to stay on alert and be proactive to prevent problem behaviors. It was clear the respondents felt administrators needed to play a bigger role in communicating what was working and not working with the staff.

Question #8 is centered on how the administrators could help with the implementation of PBIS. It was agreed by all that the administrators needed to be visible to the students and communicate better with teachers, as they had alluded to in previous responses. They also felt there needed to be a consistent and fair disciplinary process. , These responses indicate a lack of support from the administrators. Feeling supported by the school's administrators is very important in cultivating a climate and culture of teamwork, collaboration and equity. It is important for leaders to have a focus and chart a clear course for the teachers, staff, and students. When teachers began to feel a disconnect between themselves and their leadership, they began to lose faith in the process and their leaders

Question #9 was, do teachers send mixed messages to students about behaviors that are inappropriate? And the question asked for an explanation. The consensus was there are some teachers who give out a generous amount of gator bucks for positive behaviors. They also noted there is not a flow chart of behaviors to guide the process, and they felt it would be beneficial if it were in place. Also, it had at one time been a topic of discussion to develop a flow chart, but there wasn't any follow through. Being

consistent when implementing any program is critical to its overall effectiveness. The distribution of gator bucks as an incentive is a vital part of the PBIS reward system. Students receive these bucks based on positive and appropriate behaviors exhibited. But, because there aren't any guidelines governing the distribution, there is no equity within the process. For students to benefit and the administrators and teachers to see marked improvement in student behaviors, there must be guidelines in place to ensure fairness and accurate measurable data.

Regarding question # 10, I asked how, as a committee, they could assist teachers become more consistent with discipline. They suggested at the end of faculty meeting to take a few minutes to give teachers the opportunity to voice some of the effective strategies they were using to deter negative behaviors in their classrooms. Also, they need opportunities for teachers to visit other teachers' classrooms and maybe that would bring about some form of consistency. Affording teachers, the opportunity to learn from one another through modeling and observation is an effective way for them to learn new strategies and interventions. It also gives them the opportunity collaborate with others. Also, having the opportunity to ask questions and voice their concerns, allows them to have ownership in the process.

When asked question #11, as a committee, how they would help sustain the PBIS program, and the response was making sure everyone was on the same page and retraining everyone. They felt there are a lot of pieces to PBIS and only having one professional development opportunity is not enough. It needs to be ongoing. Teachers must be prepared through professional development and ongoing in service training to be able to effectively implement classroom and on campus behavior management.

Providing professional development allows for constructive feedback from teachers, and helps them to establish nest practices. Professional development must be ongoing to consistently support teachers as they are implementing and establishing PBIS strategies and interventions to aid with modifying students' negative behaviors and to feel supported by administrators.

The final question, #12, asked, what specific assistance would be helpful to you in implementing new practices in PBIS. For PBIS to be effective, everyone needed to be in the loop of what's happening, otherwise they don't know what the problem areas are or much about what's happening if they are only exposed to a certain amount data concerning PBIS. Another respondent stated because they don't have access to the data, it is hard to collaborate as a committee to make suggestions for improvement. The four members of the PBIS committee realized the importance of everyone being one cohesive team. Data driven decision making is very instrumental in helping teachers to understand the strategies and interventions that need to be put in place for students on tiers 2 and 3. These students need interventions that will not only assist them with being successful behaviorally, but also academically. The Multi-Tiered System of Supports team uses data to help decide what types of interventions are best suited for each student. It is imperative that teachers are a part of the team and the process. It is the teacher who most intimately knows the student's behaviors, triggers, and academic proficiency. The team, and the teachers must work together to make informed decisions about a student's well-being.

Organizational Changes

The organizational change I would make is centered on a schoolwide discipline plan that will foster a culture and climate that is inclusive of all and conducive to

learning. Culture is based on values and beliefs, while climate is based on best practices, relationship building, and attitudes. Although they differ, by working together, a positive environment will ensue. Instituting a school wide discipline plan will ensure that everyone is on one accord and working towards a common goal. It also means, students will have well defined rules and expectations to follow daily to assist with exercising proper behavior. Most importantly, it will help with establishing routines around campus and in the classrooms that will support the type of climate and culture that is needed at CES.

Within the larger educational context, "PBIS programs are associated with reductions in problem behaviors, improved perception of school safety and improved academic results" (Belser, Shillingford, & Joe, 2016, p. 251). Problem behaviors in the classroom often hinder the learning process and often infringe on the learning of other students. It is also important to note: a school wide discipline plan will promote fairness and equity. According to IDEA, students are given the opportunity to learn in the least restrictive environment. Which means students with disabilities can learn in the same environment as their peers. When we think of disabilities in schools, it is often attributed to academic achievement. However, there are disabilities that center around behaviors as well. To some extent, these behaviors are moderate to severe. Having a disciplinary plan that is school wide and addresses behaviors of Tier 1, 2, and 3 students is essential. Because students with behavioral disabilities most often fall in the Tier 3 category, which needs intensive behavior plans, it is important for everyone to be aware of behavior plans put into place by the MTSS team, as well as the behavior triggers of the students. When teachers are unaware of these factors, students with disabilities can be unfairly singled

out and disciplined more frequently. In line with students with disabilities are students of color who are statistically disciplined more than other students, which leads to increased suspensions and expulsions, (Belser, Shillingford, & Joe, 2016) Ensuring that teachers are culturally proficient will aid in acknowledging biases, which can play a part in inequitable discipline. Equipping teachers with strategies that will strengthen best practices will increase relationship building, which will allow for understanding and not judgment. Establishing guidelines and discipline plans that will combat problem behaviors is critical to the academic success of all students.

The reason I selected this issue to address with organizational change is because school districts across the country are focused on student achievement and how to move students toward proficiency, and Cascade School District is not any different. Although there is an emphasis placed on high student achievement, student proficiency levels, and making Adequately Yearly Progress (AYP) to show overall school growth, when discussing these matters in PLC meetings (Professional Learning Communities) one crucial aspect of the conversation has been missing. This is a conversation based on how student behaviors affect the learning environment. Negative behaviors in the classroom impede the learning not only of that student but of other students within that learning environment. Using Positive Behavior Intervention Support as a strategy can help modify negative behaviors and lessen undesired behaviors in the classroom so learning can take place. It is disturbing to see the number of students who have been sent out of class for time out, only to sit in various cubby holes of the office, disrupting the work of other staff and personnel who do not have the space or time to watch them.

Based on School discipline records from SY 2014, there were 510 referrals, in SY 2015, 344, SY 2016, 352, and SY 2017, 392. Although there was a decline in referrals from SY 2014 to SY 2015 with the inconsistencies and the constant changing of the guard with the PBIS committee, teachers are constantly learning and understanding new ideas and processes as with each change the number of referrals began to rise.

Students require firm, fair, and consistent procedures to have change occur. Without this, students learn that follow-through is minimal and will revert to the same behaviors. By creating this project, I am hoping to create a paradigm shift in the way teachers perceive and implement behavior modification and to address the deficiencies within the PBIS program.

With this project, I will use the 4 C's AS-IS model, context, culture, conditions, and competency, to assist in examining the need for an overhaul of the PBIS program in Cascade Elementary. I also intend to use the 4 C's to examine teacher perceptions on the PBIS program to determine the effects it has on decreasing negative student behaviors. Furthermore, it will allow me to acquire information on different strategies that will assist teachers in implementing behavior modification plans in their classrooms that correspond with PBIS.

Context

Schools are in a quandary as to how to deal with student behaviors that impact the classroom environment as well as student achievement. Furthermore, a prolific amount of research has been conducted and supports how important it is to have effective classroom management (Boulden, 2010). "Positive behavior intervention support (PBIS), The applied science of positive behavior supports was initially developed as an alternative to

aversive interventions for changing self-injurious and aggressive behaviors of individual

youth with developmental disabilities" (Netzel & Eber, 2003, p. 71). However, the

program has been mainstreamed into the regular education classroom. School districts

across the country have initiated the program to help modify classroom behaviors.

Cascade Elementary is no exception. It implemented the PBIS program in 2014 in

keeping with the district's initiative. Subsequently, the context of this change plan

focuses on the staff and students of Cascade Elementary and their awareness of the

importance and understanding of classroom management, the PBIS program, and the

rationale behind the reward system.

Since the implementation of the program, the leadership of the PBIS committee

has changed several times. With these changes, information and protocols put into place

were lost in the transference from one chairperson to the next. However, the school's

administrators have continued to ensure the implementation of the program. Each year a

committee is formed of teachers and administrators to discuss and plan how the program

will run for that year. Even so, with the changing of the guard each year the committee

has been forced to reorganize and propose new guidelines and plans for the success of the

program. Teachers desire a way to positively impact student behaviors. They also desire

to implement classroom management strategies that are proactive and not reactive as they

have in the past. This will allow for a positive learning environment and will give the

students the opportunity to modify behaviors without punitive consequences.

The national PBIS organization outlines the specifications of the program for

school districts and schools to follow. However, district professional development on

PBIS is limited to an administrator and two teachers. The teachers are expected to return

to their respective schools and train teachers and staff on the purpose of PBIS, positive outcomes, and routines and procedures. Yet, with the district expectation that schoolwide professional development on PBIS ensues, teachers at Cascade Elementary continue to be unaware of its importance because of the lack of follow-through regarding subsequent professional development. In addition, a PBIS committee is selected to spearhead the program and design behavior expectations and matrices for teachers, staff, and students to follow. A reward system is also designed to praise students for displaying positive behaviors and as reinforcement for said behaviors. Unfortunately, the unawareness of the importance of providing gator bucks to students, the misuse, and inconsistencies of rewarding students, nullifies the positive effects that are desired.

The students enrolled in Cascade Elementary have varying degrees of social skills and understanding of what is considered by administrators and teachers as appropriate school behavior. Research has found that poor social and behavioral skills are risk factors for both disruptive behaviors and academic underachievement. (Bolton, 2010) Because of the varying degrees of these skills, students tend to behave in school according to how they behave at home or in other public settings. It then becomes the responsibility of the teachers and administrators to make them aware of the importance of positive, appropriate behaviors in the school setting. Students must be informed and taught the importance of appropriate behavior in school and how it affects their academic success. Therefore, because the lack of knowledge the teachers have on the importance of PBIS, students in Cascade Elementary are unaware of how it plays a role in their daily school routines and academic success.

Conditions

Undoubtedly, the administrators of Cascade Elementary desire order; unfortunately, they do not stress their desires and expectations to staff on a consistent basis, which leads to a culture of indifference and ineffective implementation of the program. Given that the implementation of PBIS has been subpar, and teachers are not vested in the PBIS and its process and implementation, students are also not vested in the process. It is highly important that students buy-into the program if a systematic change in behavior is to occur.

PBIS "specifically addresses school climate as well as problem behavior." (Sailor et. al, 2006, p.19) However, if students have become disengaged from the process, the expectation of the program will have a direct effect on students' behaviors is futile. The reward system that guides PBIS is built upon the premise that students receive incentives for exhibiting appropriate behaviors. The reward system can vary from school to school determined by the PBIS committee. For example, at Cascade Elementary, the students receive "bucks," or fictitious money, as instant gratification for exercising good judgment while demonstrating positive behaviors. With the bucks, students can purchase incentives from the gator store, attend movie nights, paying with their bucks, and breakfast with friends, to name a few. Yet, some students become desensitized to its effects. One conclusion that can be drawn is the bucks are overused. There is an inconsistency as to the number of bucks that are given for positive behaviors. Some teachers give out an abundance of bucks for a behavior, while others only give a minimal amount for the same behavior. This leads students to switch off because they essentially do not have to work hard to be rewarded. Another conclusion is the ambivalence of

teachers to the process. If teachers do not project a positive persona regarding PBIS, students will ultimately become disengaged from the process.

Culture

Setting the tone of a school's culture and climate begins with the administrator outlining expectations and guidelines on how to deal with disciplinary issues. It is important for teachers, students, parents, and other essential staff members to understand and carry out the expectations and guidelines subject to the administrator's objectives. This not only allows for cohesiveness and fluidity of discipline throughout the campus, it also projects to students that exhibiting appropriate behaviors is paramount and discipline measures are firm, fair, and consistent across the board. Moreover, it sends the message that teachers, essential staff, administrators, and parents, work conjointly to maintain a safe and orderly environment. Also**,** developing a school climate that is respectful, effective, and an emphasis on school values is important in assisting students in modifying behaviors and developing intrinsic motivation. "In order to foster intrinsic motivation in students, educators must be intentional in the use of motivators, choosing to use motivational strategies that will yield the "best" results for students: the foundation of lifelong learning" (Crow & Small, 2011, p. 5).

The use of effective behavior intervention strategies must be proactive rather than reactive. Focusing on what students do right, instead of on the negative behaviors, helps to foster a good teacher-student relationship. Also, fostering a positive student relationship will help to curb behaviors as well as enhance academic achievement**.**

Competencies

Without a doubt, Cascade Elementary has encountered its share of pitfalls while implementing PBIS. Specifically, the leadership team and committee members, (principal, assistant principal, and guidance counselor, teachers) have outlined expectations that have been posted around campus as a reminder to staff and students. Also, teachers have created behavior monitoring systems for their classrooms to reinforce school expectations and to aid students in tracking and modifying their behaviors. Research conducted by Hart (2010) on classroom management reported information from The Elton Report that states "teachers' group management skills are probably the single most important factor in achieving good standards of classroom behavior" (p. 353). Promoting positive behaviors in the classroom can be one the most effective ways in combatting and redirecting negative behaviors. It is important for students to be taught to recognize what positive behaviors look like so they can begin to make changes. Classroom behavior charts act as reminders to students they are not meeting classroom expectations. For example, management charts used can entail moving clips up and down a chart according to severity of behavior. These charts also give students the opportunity to improve behaviors to move back to the positive space. Another example is the use of a check system. Students receive a check for every positive behavior exhibited and can trade them in for incentive bucks, coinciding with PBIS. Similarly, Classroom Dojo is a computer-based program that assists with creating a positive culture. Teachers can encourage students for any skill or value, whether it's working hard, being kind, or helping others (see ClassDojo.com). Hart (2010) also discusses how important it is for teachers to have a positive response to students' behaviors, instead of a punitive response,

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which is also a strong component of PBIS. The importance of following rules, behaving appropriately, and understanding school and classroom expectations must be stressed to students each day to make an impact on the choices students make.

One the most significant unanswered question I still have is, does the staff at CES have the conviction and fortitude to stay the course and begin to make the systematic changes necessary to move PBIS forward and what steps will they take to sustain the program. It is vital for CES to have staff has buy-in. To garner buy-in, it is a necessity for the administrators to communicate the importance of why PBIS should be implemented or established as part of the school's improvement plan. They must also emphasize the need for and how PBIS meets the need of Cascade elementary regarding improving student behaviors and academic achievement.

One of the major problems CES has encountered with sustaining the program has been the overturn of PBIS committee members from year to year. This has caused teachers to become frustrated with the process and eventually fulfilling the obligation for compliance. Moreover, it has caused dissonance and a lack of commitment. Cascade Elementary must find ways to ensure the sustainability for PBIS for it to be successful.

A PBIS committee was established to drive the PBIS program. They are responsible for initiating an action plan that will drive implementation of the program. The action plan must be deliberate, systematic, and intentional in its delivery and implementation. It also must outline specific objectives that need to be achieved to be effective. The committee is comprised of teachers who are committed to educating all students in an environment void of distractions that interfere with the learning process and academic achievement. Flannery and Sugai (2009) stated, "A strong team requires

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active recruitment of highly regarded and motivated staff members who are committed to the functioning of the school and who are willing to invest in the work" (p.32). The members of the committee collaborate to provide support, resources, and strategies to teachers and staff for effective implementation.

Making a systemic change can also promote collegial inquiry, efficacy, and relationship building. Moreover, according to Chen and Reigeluth (2010), "a systemic transformation approach in K-12 settings could bring significant improvements to the educational experience of students and their families, school employees, and the entire community" (p. 223). Based on the research results, I have concluded that Cascade Elementary is in critical need of systemic change that will transform the culture and school climate to one of shared values, social and cultural responsiveness, as well as open communication. The success of this type of systemic change hinges on the leadership at CES. They are responsible for ensuring teachers and staff are well equipped to implement strategies and interventions that will foster relationships and high expectations with their students. Furthermore, it is also important for teachers and staff to commit to transformation efforts and to consistently follow through with leadership expectations. Cascade Elementary can benefit greatly from this form of transformation.

For PBIS to be successful, CES must move from compliance to performance. However, this cannot be accomplished without steps and actions put into place to facilitate the changes needed. The first step is to identify the pitfalls that are hindering implementation. One way to accomplish this is by understanding the needs of the staff through communication and collaboration. Both can be accomplished by establishing effective professional Learning Communities (PLC) and professional developments.

According to Fink (2018), "PLC is grounded in data and includes careful analysis of both student and teacher work. Together, members develop and practice strategies to more effectively reach students" (p. 44). This gives teachers a way to collaborate and discuss crucial information that affects their student's ability to be successful. It also allows them to develop action plans, share resources, and more effectively.

Another step is to provide professional development opportunities for all staff. Moreover, the professional development (P.D.) must be relevant, informational, and ongoing. Administrators must ensure those who are providing the P.D. must be knowledgeable of all facets of PBIS and align it with the strategic goals of the district. Inviting the district's PBIS coordinator to provide the initial introduction of PBIS is vital. The coordinator can help teachers and other staff members understand the purpose of PBIS, as well as model strategies, discuss interventions, and provide answers to questions that staff members may have. Furthermore, ensuring those who will be designated as PBIS committee members receive ongoing training. Using the train the trainer model, where teachers receive professional development and subsequently present it to staff, is also an effective course of providing ongoing training. I believe these steps and actions will serve to improve the overall effectiveness of the program

Establishing collaborative relationships with stakeholders in the community is also very important. Parents should be encouraged to become a part of the educational process as well as other key stakeholders such as, business partners, community affairs, and school board members, to name a few. Brown and Moffett (2007) stated, "Only through collaborative inquiry and dialogue with companions along the way can we achieve organizational growth" (p. 106) Research has also found that parents who believe

themselves to be on top of the education totem pole are more apt to advocate for their

students, while those of low socio-economic status tend to shy away and not become

involved, unless the schools try to involve them (Rodriguez, Blatz & Elbaum, 2014, p,

80). Therefore, it is crucial the organizational leadership ensure an inclusive and

welcoming environment, for all, to share their opinions, ask questions, to have ownership

in the process. Involving parents in monthly parent teacher conferences to not only

discuss academic data but also behavior data as well gives parents the opportunity to ask

questions for understanding and work with the teacher to find ways to help their child to

be successful. It also gives parents and teachers an opportunity to begin to form trusting

relationships. Moreover, involving and inviting community stakeholders to be a part of

the school's leadership team shows a level of transparency. It sends the message, the

school community, wants to work collaboratively and have a shared vision and goals to

foster an environment of inclusiveness.

Collaboration is essential for making sure that everyone understands the goals,

vision, values, and purpose for an effective working relationship. Furthermore, like

teachers, school board members, community members and parents need professional

development and training to help them understand the purpose of PBIS and how it plays a

role in the success of all students. Understanding PBIS will help with communication and

to build a relationship of trust to be honest and open in discussing the success of students

at Cascade Elementary School.

Interpretation

Based on the research results, I have concluded, Cascade Elementary is in critical

need of systemic change that will transform the culture and school climate to one of

shared values, social and cultural responsiveness, as well as open communication. The

success of this type of systemic change hinges on the leadership at CES. They are responsible for ensuring teachers and staff are well equipped to implement strategies and interventions that will foster relationships and high expectations with their students. Furthermore, it is also important for teachers and staff to commit to transformation efforts and to consistently follow through with leadership expectations.

Making a systemic change can also promote collegial inquiry, efficacy, and relationship building. Moreover, according to Chen and Reigeluth (2010), "a systemic transformation approach in K-12 settings could bring significant improvements to the educational experience of students and their families, school employees, and the entire community" (p. 223). Cascade Elementary can benefit greatly from this form of transformation. This conclusion was drawn from conducting surveys, interviews, and a focus group of administrators and teachers at CES.

The significance of the results is that CES has to revamp the way they conduct business concerning PBIS. Their unawareness of the importance of the program and its purpose has led to a lack of communication, building community, and establishing expectations. During the analysis of data, it was evident the lack of communication between the administrators and teachers was considerable. The data showed that information was not shared consistently across the board, nor were there data meetings with teachers to discuss ongoing strategies or new strategies needed to support students. Communication is key to the success of any program. Communication is the avenue to ensure each team, committee, teacher, and administrator is on the same page. When each faction is using their own strategies and not working in conjunction with one another, the process will not be a success. Furthermore, communication helps to build community.

Teachers and administrators need the opportunity to collaborate. Through collaboration, the decision-making process becomes easier. Moreover, collaboration provides each person with a voice to have input and ownership in the process.

Also, establishing schoolwide expectations is a must. Expectations provide the blue print for how students are to behave daily and the rules that need to be followed. It is important that teachers and administrators communicate on what will be the schoolwide expectations. Expectations must be reiterated to students every day and modeled to assist them with learning, understanding, and communicating the expectations. However, teachers and administrators must follow through with the process of PBIS daily. Inconsistency of the process is not an option to its success. By supporting and implementing these components the results of the data can change from one of unawareness to clarity.

One key reason why I believe the results turned out the way they did is not only because of the lack of awareness of the positives and success of PBIS, but also because teachers are very ambivalent to strategies and programs that will modify student behaviors. They feel there is a lack of disciplinary support from administrators and parents. Because of this, teachers view PBIS as another thing added to their already full plates to keep track of and do not make it a priority.

Also, teachers are not completely confident in the way the administrators address behavior problems. They believe the administrators want to keep the number of referrals low. By not cataloging referrals, the district office will not be privy to the number of behavior problems that exists at CES. They also believe administrators do not want to deal with the parents and avoid any difficult conversations with parents about their

students. This has caused teachers to become disgruntled and burned out with the disciplinary process.

Lastly, from my observations and interactions with teachers at CES, it is apparent they have low expectations of many of the students concerning behavior. At any given time, teachers can be heard saying students don't care, their parents don't care, as well as students have not been taught any better. These comments suggest an implicit bias that teachers have towards students. In order to combat this, ways must be found for teachers to acknowledge and confront these biases to be able to move forward with changing the school's culture and climate.

Judgments

With this project, I posed primary and secondary research questions. In this section, I will discuss how the data from my research answered these questions. The research questions guided my study and helped with the development of my methodology and later my educational change plan. The data from the teacher survey, principal survey, teacher interview, and the focus group answered my research questions by providing me with me the perceptions and perspectives of teachers and administrators. By disaggregating the data, I was able to gain insight into the disparities of responses and how it could be used to answer my primary and secondary questions.

Primary question one asked, what was working well? By looking at the collective responses, I was able to compare the teachers' and administrators' responses to draw a conclusion about the effectiveness of the strategies and the implementation process. The conclusion that I drew from responses collected for each set of data was that behavior expectations for CES were reiterated to students every day. It was also noted that students enjoy the incentives such as movie night, breakfast with buddies, and spending

their bucks at the gator bucks store. This shows that administrators and teachers feel that the reward system, which is an important part of PBIS, is an effective part of CES' implementation.

Primary question two asked, what do the participants (teachers, administration, and the guidance counselor) who are involved in the PBIS program at report as not working well? The administrators' and teachers' responses were not on one accord. For example, two administrators agreed and one administrator was neutral regarding whether teachers were aware of tier 1, 2, and 3 MTSS data. Whereas, many teachers felt the data had not been communicated to them. Also, teachers felt the level of communication between administrators and teachers was lacking. However, two out of the three administrators felt the communication was good. These examples show that teachers and administrators cannot agree on what is not working well. Therefore, a concise conclusion could not be drawn to this question, but it is evident, Cascade Elementary lacks effective communication and must commit to working together for the success of the students and PBIS.

Primary question three asks, what do the stakeholders (teachers, administration, and the guidance counselor) who are involved in the PBIS program at report as the biggest challenges in the program? The biggest challenge to the PBIS program from all stakeholders is the level of communication. The teachers feel the administrators have not communicated important aspects of PBIS to them such as, MTSS data, guidelines for the distribution of gator bucks, and professional development to all teachers on PBIS. The administrator responses indicated there is a minute lack in communication, but overall communication was effective. Again, the conclusion to this question is in keeping with

the theme of the previous two questions that the lack of communication is an ongoing

problem at CES.

Primary question four asks, what do the stakeholders (teachers, administration,

and the guidance counselor) who are involved in the PBIS program at suggest as ways to

improve the program? The teachers feel more professional development is essential, and

the administrators and the PBIS committee communicating information that is essential

to the overall functioning and effectiveness of the program, would help with the level of

commitment and buy-in from the teachers. They also believed having the support of the

administrators would help to improve the program. Based on their responses from the

administrators, there were not any specific improvements that should be made noted. Yet,

it can be gleaned from the responses that ongoing professional development could be

improved.

Secondary question one asks, what type of professional development do new

teachers feel they need, regarding PBIS? According to the new teachers interviewed,

they felt they needed professional development on the purpose of PBIS, the strategies and

interventions, MTSS data, and guidelines on the distribution of gator bucks as incentives

or rewards. These elements are important for new teachers to understand implementing

PBIS with fidelity.

Applying the results to my questions gave me the opportunity to dig deeper into

what may have caused the program to fall short of its intended goal. Moreover, I was able

to apply the responses to determine whether teachers and administrators were like-

minded in their thinking or disjointed. I also used the results in conjunction with my

research questions to expand my research through literature reviews. This allowed access

to more information on strategies used to promote buy-in, professional development and effective communication.

Lastly, the results to my questions assisted me with understanding the cultural dynamics of CES. It also assisted me to find ways I could influence the PBIS process in a supportive manner and not one of judgement and condemnation. Also, I was able to share my findings in a systematic approach that was based on shared beliefs.

Overall, the results from my data research were unclear. While analyzing the results of the teacher and administrator surveys, I found there were a vast amount of neutral responses. Because neutral responses can lean in either direction, it can make it difficult to draw a definite conclusion on the data. The respondents who chose neutral showed their indecisiveness on the relevance of the question posed to them or they were unsure of their knowledge of the question asked. This allowed me to not be able to draw a solid conclusion, but it did allow me to be able to infer that the respondents did not want to make a solid commitment to any one answer. Furthermore, their neutral responses also showed there was still a lot of work to be done at Cascade Elementary to ensure during the implementation process. Also, neutral responses indicate those are areas that need to be reassessed more often to gauge changes in behaviors and thought process of the staff.

The responses from the interviews and focus group were more straightforward because of the lack of having the choice of a response. However, their responses were still mixed. While the teachers, and the PBIS committee leaned more towards the negative in their responses, the administrators were more positive. Which again makes the overall conclusion unclear.

Recommendations

The absence of disruptive behaviors provides an atmosphere that is conducive to the learning process. Diperna, Lei, Bellinger, and Cheng (2016) stated, ". Socioemotional interventions implemented at the class- and school-wide levels have produced positive effects on students' academic competence." (pg. 189). At CES, there are isolated interventions in place that support behaviors by using Functional Behavior Plans (FUBA) and Behavior Intervention Plans (BIP) as in like manner, programs to support students who are placed in special education programs. Yet, the programs do not work in conjunction with one another. They are lacking socioemotional interventions in and out of classrooms.

Guidance counselors and school psychologists can play an integral role in helping students understand and control their emotions. They can impact "everything from school climate to classroom achievement to individual behavior" (O'Connor, 2018, p. 37). They can also provide professional development for teachers to promote positive interactions between teacher and student, as well as model ways for teachers to use strategies in their classrooms. Their support provides teachers with the skills to assist students to maintain focus and positive interactions in the classroom. Furthermore, when all stakeholders, guidance counselors, school psychologists, administrators, and teachers work together, it creates an atmosphere of community. When students feel safe and supported, they will begin to develop a sense of self-worth, and a positive attitude that will help them excel academically.

The organizational change I would like to promote at Cascade Elementary regarding PBIS is a shift in cultural responsiveness and behavior management. According to Betters-Bubon, Brunner, and Kansteiner (2016), "Successful

implementation of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) programs should include culturally responsive practices to reduce disproportionality in school discipline referrals and create effective learning environments for all students" (p. 263). They also contend, through their research, that PBIS lacked focus on the sustainability of cultural responsiveness during the implementation process (p. 263). Teachers are ill equipped to manage behaviors of students whose cultural backgrounds differ from theirs (Hershfeldt, Sechrest, Pell, Rosenberg, Bradshaw, & Leaf, 2009, p. 3). The inability to understand and recognize cultural differences can cause a breakdown in communication between teachers and students. Furthermore, when teaching students from different backgrounds, it is very important for teachers and administrators not to impose their beliefs onto the student's behavior. As individuals we tend to assume that everyone has been raised with the same value systems as ours. However, this is not so. It is crucial for administrators and teachers not to put a one size fits all label on students.

One change needed is within pedagogy and practice. This change will produce an environment that establishes a culture of learning and promotes inclusion that guides children to make pro-social decisions that will affect behavior. Instituting morning meeting in the daily classroom routine is a safe and non-threatening way for students to share their feelings and to understand the feelings of their classmates. This routine can form bonds of trust between teacher and students.

I selected this issue because it is very important for all students to have a fair and equal opportunity to a high quality education. The landmark case of Brown v. Board of Education established it was unconstitutional to have segregated schools and although this issue has not reached that level, the problem of equity in public schools is an issue.

The lack of equity in the way discipline is dispensed among children of color and white students has been a topic of conversation throughout school districts. It is no secret that research found children of color are more likely to be suspended and disciplined more harshly than white students. With that in mind, it is safe to say that the culture and climate of the school district and school play a major role in this disparity. As referenced earlier, implicit bias can play a role in the way students are treated in school and in the classroom. In the case of CES, there is a high population of students of color, with the majority being Hispanic and then African American, who garner most referrals. I believe implicit biases from teachers play a major role in this discrepancy. Also, the fact there were only two African American teachers on staff may have contributed to the problem as well. I feel the staff should not only be highly qualified teachers, but also be a fair representation of the population they teach.

I also believe the culture should be changed to one of inclusion for all. There are students who are seldom given the opportunity to rise to the occasion of success. Each day should be a new day; however, students are continuously penalized by teachers for behaviors that happened in the past. Those past behaviors carry over into the future and prevent students from being able to build themselves back up. This also causes a rise in disciplinary problems and more referrals. To conclude, I believe CES must explore the opportunities for teachers to participate in cultural proficiency training, as well as equity training, to be able to include all students in an environment that is nurturing, healthy, and conducive to learning for all.

CHAPTER FIVE: TO-BE FRAMEWORK

Introduction

The organizational change hinges on teachers, administrators, and other essential staff members at CES to make a paradigm shift regarding climate and culture change throughout the school. Establishing an inclusive environment where everyone takes ownership in the process can be the catalyst for organizational change. However, for this to be effective CES must examine the beliefs systems of the faculty and staff. It is also necessary to recognize and eliminate barriers that hinder the change process.

The organizational change at CES will focus on cultural proficiency and responsive that will lead to an overall school climate change. "Cultural responsiveness is the ability to learn from and relate with people of one's own culture as well as those from other cultures."(Schult, Hurt, & Lindo, 2014, p. 5).   Cultural proficiency is the ability to understand and recognize beliefs that are different from theirs.   Both will be established and utilized at CES to promote an environment of community and inclusiveness, to achieve academic proficiency.

One of the components of the process is a shift in pedagogy and practice. Every teacher has their own set of ideals and beliefs that can spill over into the classroom. As a result, it can impact the interactions between teachers and their students. Being able to adjust beliefs and values is critical to the change process, because they help to form and develop classroom practices (Chafi & Elkhouzai, 2017)

Review of Literature Related to Change

Introduction

The goal of my organizational change plan is to assist Cascade Elementary in dissecting the reasons why PBIS has not been effective and to find ways to align the core

stands of learning within an environment that enlists (1) a productive climate and culture, (2) best practices regarding classroom and behavioral management, and (3) proficient understanding of teaching in a multicultural classroom setting. For these goals to be met, CES must embrace the sense of urgency needed to move from the status quo into a more productive learning environment. Coupled with the sense of urgency, a shared vision for the future must be established. Not only is it important to have a shared vision, it is also important that CES puts a guiding coalition in place to create an atmosphere where voices are heard and respected. The coalition also provides direction and creates vision. Equally important to creating a vision, there must be active participation in the transformation process as well as, believing in themselves, and their capacity to make a paradigm shift throughout the building (Brown & Moffett, 1999). It is my hope that CES will be able to make this shift and transform the school into an environment where teachers, administrators, and students alike work with purpose and success.

Transforming School Climate

Change is not easy. It is often difficult because of the different perceptions, views, and opinions of those involved. True change, real change, comes from "asking people to confront painful issues and give up habits and beliefs they hold dear" (Heifitz & Linsky, 2003, p.64). With all change comes pushback. There will be naysayers who do not believe or feel the need for change. At the same time, leadership must be persuasive in their approach when leading the change effort. They must also gain trust by demonstrating through their words and actions that the change plan is the right plan for moving forward (Garvin and Roberto, 2005). As noted previously, confronting biases giving up habits, and eliciting trust is crucial to the change effort trust. These

components help to establish a culture and climate that assist in eliminating teacher dissonance and stress.

I believe school climate plays an important role regarding retention of teachers and preventing teacher burn out. I also believe if the climate throughout a school's campus is toxic, resignations, and teacher burnout is inevitable. According to Hamit (2018), the school climate defines the quality of a school that engenders a healthy learning environment, initiates students' and parents' dreams and aspirations, stimulates teachers' creativeness and enthusiasm, and develops all of its stakeholders" (p. 82). Transforming a school's climate to one of this nature must begin with top leadership and trickle down the organizational structure. To be exact, those in leadership positions must be resonant leaders. Ones who have the capacity to lead with compassion, mindfulness, and hope (Boyatzis 2005). It is these three components combined that can transform an organization. A study conducted by Dahlkamp, Peters, and Schumacher (2017) found that a negative school climate was instrumental with decision making of teachers to remain or exit a position at a university. However, I believe if principal leaders develop a sense of resonance, they can combat the level of dissonance that hinders teachers from being effective facilitators of behavior management as well as academics.

Training the Trainer

As a veteran teacher of 20 years, I have reflected upon what I needed to understand and known as a novice teacher. My reflection lead to the conclusion that the one college preparatory class I needed, but did not receive, was one on classroom and behavior management strategies. As a new teacher, I had to learn the strategies on my own through trial and error. Through day to day observations and speaking with novice

teachers, it has become increasingly apparent that there hasn't been much change when referencing whether behavior management strategies have been taught. I believe it is imperative that aspiring teachers are given strategies that will help them establish rules, expectations, and consistency, which will assist them with classroom management, behavior modification, and academic proficiency.

Under the umbrella of No Child Left Behind was a section defining highly qualified teachers. Highly qualified teachers must meet certain criteria to be deemed so. They must have a bachelor's degree, demonstrate competency in their subject matter, and be licensed by the state in which they teach. (Kareleitz, Fields, Levy, Martinez-Gudapakkam, & Jablonski, 2011)   Moreover, teachers must set goals they wish to accomplish and show progress toward those goals. Yet, one can hardly be considered a highly-qualified teacher without a "mastery of sound best-practice strategies for managing classroom time, space, and student behavior." (Clement, 2010, p. 41). Courses that are research based regarding classroom management can assist teachers with understanding strategies and implementation of effective classroom management. New teachers are often given advice by veteran teachers and others on how to deal with negative classroom behaviors. However, not all advice is good advice. They must, during student teaching, be given the opportunity to write and teach fabulous lesson plans, but also to practice classroom management strategies.

Understanding Diversity in the Classroom

Teachers, principals, district leadership, and others in education often have preconceived notions on how to meet the needs of diverse student populations. These ideals can hinder both effective classroom instruction and management. I believe when

biases and perceptions are not acknowledged, transforming a school's culture can fall short of the vision and goals set by all stakeholders. I also believe assisting teachers with understanding cultural diversity is the key to ensuring there is an equal education for all students. Furthermore, as reported by Greene and Underwood (2007), multicultural education addresses prejudices in education across social economic, racial, ethnic, linguistic, and sexual orientation to name a few and helps to acknowledge student differences. Embracing cultural differences will make classroom experiences richer.

The landmark case of Brown vs The Board of Education in 1954 was the first test of students of color intermingling with white students in public education. It is a test that continues today. Schools are becoming more diverse every day and it is crucial for teachers to gain a broader understanding of how teach such diverse populations. Today, in public schools, "According to U.S. Census data, nationally, culturally and linguistically diverse students are growing into the majority of public school students" (Greene & Edwards-Underwood, 2015, p. 400). So, "Educational programs must be devised and implemented that will decrease home and school discordance or, put positively, will increase the compatibility between home and school environments" (Alic & Turkyilmaz, 2014, p. 114). When there is a home-school disconnect, crucial relationships cannot be established, thus placing barriers between teachers and students.

For teachers to effectively teach diverse populations they must understand equality and social justice surrounding education. According to an article written by Omiunota Nelly Ukpokodu (2007), "new teachers are poorly prepared to teach in diverse, multi-cultural schools" (p. 10). Her research also suggests, "Teaching fellows are often thrown into urban classrooms without opportunities to develop reflective knowledge

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based on cultural diversity" (p. 10). Tindle, Freund, Belknap, Green & Shotel (2011) discuss the importance of pre-services teachers be given opportunities to experience and develop areas that will allow them to meet students where they are and respect their differences, while fostering an environment with high standards for learning. I believe understanding the social, economic, and cultural differences in your teaching environment is crucial to understanding how to structure and use strategies that will support and foster a productive learning environment.

Envisioning the Success TO-BE

Based on the 4C's "AS IS" chart (Appendix J), I have created a 4C's "TO BE" (Appendix K) organizational chart that depicts the vision of the future where the problems have been resolved. In this chart, changes have been made to the initial 4C's "AS IS" chart that outlined the current status and circumstances surrounding the PBIS program at Cascade Elementary. It also provides insight into the changes that need to take place according to context, culture, conditions, and competencies.

Contexts

The adaptive change is classroom responsiveness and the overall awareness of the importance of PBIS in relation to student behaviors. Responsive classroom practices and PBIS are two separate programs that can be intertwined to meet the needs of students. "Responsive Classroom is a research-based teaching approach that gives teachers concrete practices for ensuring a high-quality education for every child every day," while "PBIS is a framework for providing behavioral supports and interventions that enhance students' academic and social outcomes" (see www.responsiveclassroom.org). However, both provide strategies such as, modeling, creating rules, positive teacher-student interactions, and classroom organization. One of the core differences is PBIS uses

tangible reinforcements for positive behaviors, and the responsive classroom uses positive language as a reinforcement. Even though this is so, intertwining the two can bring about a change, and an awareness of how to foster intrinsic motivation in students to implement PBIS successfully with an infusion of classroom responsiveness.

Culture

Regarding culture, there are three main components that need to be addressed that will assist with a shift in the culture of CES. Moving from compliance to performance involves establishing a strategic plan that will show measurable outcomes and how those outcomes were accomplished. The next part of changing the culture, is collaborating to develop a shared vision. Having a shared vision gives teachers and staff the opportunity to have a voice and to have ownership in the decision making process. Lastly, there is promoting cultural responsiveness by being able to put into practice ways for students to learn from the experiences of others as well as from their experiences and opinions. Also, it allows teachers administrators, and other staff members to acknowledge their own biases, and the potential impact it can have on the students, the classroom, and schoolwide.

Conditions

Conditions refer to the circumstances of a situation. At CES the state or circumstances that need changing is the amount of professional development teachers are receiving, not only regarding PBIS, but also with cultural proficiency. Cultural proficiency, much like cultural responsiveness centers on understanding and embracing the different beliefs, value systems, and cultural traditions of students. To achieve proficiency the school must implement the practices that will drive the change. This

means, ongoing professional development and in-service training is needed to sustain the desired outcomes.

Also, collaboration between teachers, administrators and the Multi-tiered System of Support committee is needed. The feeling of isolation can cause desolation and despair among teachers. They begin to feel the pressure of trying to do everything by themselves instead of with support from a selective group, which can lead to teacher burn-out. The MTSS team is a vital component in assisting teachers with understanding how to implement strategies that will assist with reaching students who have behavior deficiencies. It is important for teachers, and the team to have the opportunity to discuss students to make decisions that will meet their needs based on copious teacher notes, behavior referrals, academic achievement, as well as those with Individualized Education Plans. Fostering a collaborative environment will ensure teachers feel supported and create a place where everyone will benefit.

Competencies

The competencies that need to be addressed is the ability to analyze data to drive decision making and to take that data and develop a strategic action plan that will support the successful implementation of PBIS. Data driven decision making, (DDDM) as it is noted by Mandinach (2012), is the widely-used phrase when determining how to use assessment data to make informed decisions about student achievement and growth, to inform best practices. However, teachers have been using data to evaluate the acumen of students for years. They have used formative assessments, summative assessments, monitoring, and a check and balance approach. But, these forms of assessment and data gathering were done in isolation, in their own classrooms, specifically for their own use.

Over the years the tide has changed from one of isolation to one of collaboration, especially with the emergence of Professional Learning Communities (PLC). The PLC approach allows teachers, instructional coaches and administrators to come together and discuss data to make informed decisions. Mandinach (2012) also stated, when we use data "schools will improve to from the classroom the school, to the district, to the state education agencies (SEAs), and to the federal government" (p. 72). This same rationale can be applied when using data to drive decision making based on student behaviors that can ultimately impact academic achievement.

Integrating PBIS in the Classroom

All teachers in CES grades K-5 have some sort of classroom management system in their classrooms to aid in managing student behaviors. However, there has been a disconnect between bridging their system within the system of PBIS. Effective classroom management entails establishing rules, routines, and expectations. It is important for these routines to be modeled on a consistent basis, so they will become a natural part of the classroom structure. These management systems in the classroom should be practiced and carried over into the behavior model of School wide PBIS. (Freeman, Simenson & Sugai, 2017). Merging the two systems, will bring cohesiveness and structure into the classroom environment.

<div align="center">

Conclusion

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Evaluating the current status of PBIS at Cascade Elementary allowed me the information needed to devise a TO BE action chart based on Wagoner 4 C's. With the information provided from the chart I was able to formulate a strategies and action plan. It is my hope the following strategies and actions will provide the necessary material that will assist them with revising the program.

CHAPTER SIX: STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

Introduction

Before change can take place in any organization there has to be a need for that change. Change does not occur simply because members of the organization are disgruntled with a process or are unhappy because it is not going according to how they envisioned. Change must be invoked because there is a specific and profound need for that change. It must be understood there are two different types of change that can occur. One change is technical, while the other is adaptive. According to Daly and Chrispeels (2008), "technical changes are concerned with applying "fixes" to problems that exist within a system. Adaptive change is creating the conditions for individuals to confront existing values and norms" (p. 33-34). For my organizational change plan, I focused on adaptive change. From my research I have not only focused on addressing my primary and secondary questions, but also, merging my AS IS and my, TO BE, Wagner, et al (2006) Four C's model. This model is based on, context, culture, conditions, and competencies. These components will ultimately connect to improve student learning at CES.

For the challenges within the culture, conditions, and competencies of CES, as outlined in my AS IS chart, to change, school administrators, the PBIS committee, and the district office must provide support with PBIS implementation. These supports should be in the form of best practices, collaboration, strategies, and feedback. Educators are equipped with a vast array of teaching practices that they use every day. However, it is imperative they focus on changes that are taking place in the learning environment, so they can make informed decisions on the use of interventions that best fit the students learning. (Munro, 2005, p. 2) A strategic action plan lends itself to promoting informed

decision making. Essentially, it is a blue print that will guide the school through the intentional use of steps outlined to meet objectives. Goals in a strategic plan must be measurable, attainable, and sustainable. A strategic plan also gives a glimpse into what could and should be for the future success of CES. It is also important to understand that an action plan is a living document. It is ever changing and evolving according to the changes taking place among the school environment. Lastly, devising a plan is a collaborative process. The planning team should comprise, community members, teachers, administrators, and parents, who are important stakeholders in the school community.

Integrating PBIS in the classroom is important. All teachers in CES grades K-5 have some sort of classroom management system in their classrooms to aid in managing student behaviors. However there has been a disconnect between bridging their system within the system of PBIS. Effective classroom management entails establishing rules, routines, and expectations. It is important for these routines to be modeled on a consistent basis, so they will become a natural part of the classroom structure. These management systems in the classroom should be practiced and carried over into the behavior model of Schoolwide PBIS (Freeman, Simenson, & Sugai, 2017). Merging the two systems will bring cohesiveness and structure into the classroom environment.

A driving force behind Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) is data collection. Just as data is collected to assess student academic proficiency, it is also collected to identify students who have behavior challenges. "For PBIS, the most commonly used measure is office discipline referrals (ODRs) to identify students who are displaying inappropriate behaviors at an alarming rate" (Harn, Basaraba, Chard, & Fritz,

2015, p. 4). The purpose of the MTSS team is to analyze student behavior data based on office referrals, suspension rates, and teacher input. In the past, teachers have not been invited to the MTSS meetings because the lack of teacher coverage and time. I charge CES through this change plan, to develop a plan that will provide coverage and time for teachers to attend MTSS meetings.   Attending MTSS meetings will assure that are a part of the decision-making process, not only based on referrals but through daily observations as well. Moreover, it will give teachers the opportunity to discuss behavior strategies with the committee that will provide the best interventions for all students.

The ideal climate of CES should be one where the perceptions of PBIS and the support given is positive, inspiring, and promotes an environment that is purposeful and productive. In like manner the culture should be one of shared beliefs regarding the PBIS process, and become reflective practitioners that will allow them to embrace the philosophy of PBIS to begin the change process.

Strategies and Actions

Effective organizational change takes place when strategies are put into place to aid in reaching the goals set for success. According to Sirkin, Keenan and Jackson (1990), there are four factors that can play a role in successful transformation: Duration, Integrity, Commitment, and Effort (DICE) (pgs.100-102). By understanding that it takes all these components working cohesively together, CES can begin to take the steps necessary to the change needed will proceed with the correct strategies in place. One strategy that fits into the schema of DICE is strategic planning and assessment. At CES there is not a well-defined strategic plan or timeline in place. Establishing a well thought out strategic plan allows for setting projected goals to be achieved. Not only does it

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allow for goal setting, but also supports utilizing a timeline assess performance and goal attainment by periodically having benchmark assessments to determine proficiency.

Sirkin, et al (1990) discussed integrity as being the ability of a leader being able to rely on others in leadership positions plus essential staff members to carry-out roles and responsibilities, which will allow the organization to run successfully and fluidly (p.101). Although, CES has a PBIS committee to steer implementation, others in leadership roles such as administrators and district leadership, have not played an instrumental role to creating an air of cohesiveness and support. The committee has not had the ongoing professional development it needs from the district to provide feedback and support to teachers and other staff members. Likewise, school administrators do not attend committee meetings, due to other school obligations, to provide needed support. This hinders the committee from having opportunities for collaboration and communication with leadership for guidance. It also impedes their ability to communicate effective strategies, interventions, and data analysis with teachers and staff. A strategy used to ensure the committee understands PBIS is having the districts PBIS coordinator train the committee members on district expectations for implementation, as well as, on the purpose, protocols, and processes of PBIS. This professional development should be ongoing. Also, school administrators will be required to attend all PBIS meetings to show their support of PBIS and the committee.

The third factor in the Sirkin et al. (1990) article is commitment. They stated, "If employees don't see the company's leaderships backing a project, they're unlikely to change" (p. 102). As alluded to previously, district leaders and school based leaders have not been providing the necessary support to teachers and staff at CES as warranted. Their

lack of commitment sends a clear message that PBIS is not an important component to the overall effectiveness of the school's function. In any organization there is a hierarchy of leadership that depends on one another. In my experience, when employees do not sense a level of commitment and desire for success from the leader above them, their level of engagement will begin to wane, and sooner than later, will become disengaged. Also, because the level of accountability is low and expectations appear to be minimal, teachers and administrators implement PBIS on its most rudimentary level. An effective strategy to show commitment is PBIS being modeled daily by building administrators. Within PBIS the expectations should be reiterated every day on a consistent basis. Administrators every morning will state the expectations of CES for all students. They will also ensure teachers are modeling PBIS by having expectations posted in their classrooms, ensuring students are practicing PBIS expectations by use of correction. Lastly meeting with teachers to brief them on behavior data and collaborating on making improvements, or praising teachers for a job well done.

Finally, there is effort. Teachers already feel they have too much on their plates with, testing, grading papers, lesson planning, and student behaviors, to name a few. The last thing they need is another item added to their already overwhelming workload. Administrators must find a way to balance out the need for precision with PBIS, working jointly with other responsibilities and not as a separate entity. If CES is to succeed with PBIS, administrator must find ways to restructure the way things have always been done, and become flexible for change. However, it the school district where CES is located, there are certain policies in place that prohibit teachers from being required to stay after school longer than their required workday without compensation. Because of this,

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administrators must come up with innovative ways for teachers to receive the level of

professional development they need to be effective. These strategies will include

compensating teachers with compensatory time for staying longer after school for

professional development, holding professional development on a workday, or using part

Effort is not only on the part of the administrators, it is the teachers and staff as well.

Teachers must also be willing to become more flexible in their thinking and accepting of

changes of the mandated planning day. Change comes when all parties involved find

ways to work together for the good of the students and school.

As discussed, duration, integrity, commitment, and effort (DICE) is a strategy that

will be used to assist CES with achieving implementation with fidelity. Each element is

paired with a strategic action that will aid in achieving the desired results. The duration

that it takes to achieve the goals of organizational change, depends on the structure of the

organization, the areas of improvement and the timeframe set for attainment. One of the

actions of strategic planning is to develop a framework of goal setting and to monitor for

success. Consistent monitoring of progress provides the leadership the ability to look at

the data points to make the appropriate and necessary adjustments to continue moving

forward. Cascade Elementary leadership and PBIS committee must look at the behavior

data to pinpoint the why of the problem. In conjunction with the behavioral data, they

must also take a needs assessment to gauge the perceptions of the teachers and staff to

assess progress. The monitoring progress also provides opportunity for shared ideas and

ownership.

Sustaining organizational change requires integrity and commitment from the

collaborative partnership of all stakeholders. Each person's input is crucial to help

change and shape the future. "Transformation, to be sustained, must ensure that faculty and staff not only *feel*, but in fact *are*, fully enfranchised" (Guarasci & Lieberman 2009, pg. 27). Leaders should surround themselves with those who are committed to the process and do it with integrity and openness. The action for this strategy should include creating a space where people can ask questions, having clear intentions with no hidden agendas (Harnack & Seebaum, 2017). By promoting an environment where everyone can be heard and come to a shared consensus, the school can begin to implement best practices while facilitating awareness of the problems that plague the program.

With any change effort there is always some resistance. When those involved do not understand the need for change or why the change is needed, they will not trust the process. Therefore, leadership must ensure there is open communication. It is critical the myths of change be dispelled as well as effectively communicate the need for change. Those in leadership must provide support, participate and provide direction as well as training (Paren, 2015). Eliciting best practices through professional development shows an effort on the part of administrators, and the PBIS committee to furnish teachers with strategies they need to assist with classroom PBIS integration. "In addition, professional development opportunities can help faculty feel less isolated and disconnected from colleagues, build a community of learners, improve teaching, and help to build organizational capacity" (Mohr & Shelton 2017, p. 125). The actions of the change process concerning PBIS will benefit CES by enabling them to employ the strategies needed to meet the needs of the students and contribute to a healthy culture and climate.

Lastly, implementing strategic plan will pave the way for designing and implementing new policy that will set boundaries for equity and fairness with discipline

practices. It will also provide teachers with specific guidelines and consistency across the

board. Moreover, teachers will have blue print to understand rules and procedures.

Appendix L outlines a strategies and actions chart (Appendix L) that describes

appropriate methods for promoting improvement. The strategies and actions chart consist

of ways that CES can address the changes needed to meet PBIS goals and objectives.

The action plan identifies specific items and actions that will drive the implementation

process.

Conclusion

Moving from a place of unawareness to mindfulness of the conditions that impede

the cultivation of a culture and climate that promotes student achievement hinges on the

collective voice of all stakeholders. In order to achieve this goal all stakeholders must

collaborate to develop a shared vison and strategic plan that will drive successful

implementation of PBIS. Also, applying Wagner's "As Is" and "To Be" model will assist

with creating a foundation for continuous improvement

CHAPTER SEVEN: IMPLICATIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Considering the latest violent school attack by a non-attending student of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida on February 14, 2018, the problem of school violence is once again thrust onto every national, state, and local policy agenda. Due to the unrelenting outcry of students, parents, and the community of Parkland, Florida, legislators are drafting new policies to address the. One such policy that has been signed in to legislation is STOP School Violence Act of 2018, 407 to 10.

The Act specifically states:

The bill reauthorizes a program created in 2001 through the Justice Department to prevent threats against schools. The legislation authorizes $50 million to intensify school security, pay for federal "threat assessment teams" to help school districts sort through reported threats, create an anonymous reporting system so that students and others can report threats and pay for training and technical assistance programs for law enforcement and school officials to help identify potentially violent behavior. (O'Keefe & Gardner, 2018)

This bill was introduced by Rutherford of Florida on the cusp of the devastating event at Marjorie Stoneman Douglas High School, signaling that legislators were concerned about the welfare and safety of students. Coinciding with policy mandates, came stricter guidelines and programs across school campuses. These measures were put in place not only to keep students safe, but to also assist teachers in maintaining a safe and orderly learning environment. MacNeil, Prater, and Busch (2009) pointed out that finding a successful school that lacks discipline can be difficult. They also stated, there is a correlation between good behavior and high academics. "When schools are places of

proper conduct, regular attendance, and respect for teachers, students are more likely to learn effectively and get better grades" (MacNeil, Prater, & Busch, 2009, p.4). Students lose valuable instructional time when teachers spend a large amount of their time redirecting inappropriate and challenging behaviors.

There is no doubt that school safety is at the forefront of every school district across the country. In the last twenty years, there has been an increase in school violence in schools. Since the tragic event that took place in Columbine High School in 1999 and Sandy Hook Elementary 2012, legislators have been scrambling to find ways to combat school violence. Numerous policies such as, the 2001-220111 Secure our Schools Act, which was signed in to legislation to assist with communication between law enforcement and schools, as well as, to equip students and school staff with the necessary tools to help prevent school threats and violence. Also, stricter security measures have been put in place spanning but not limited to, zero tolerance, police surveillance, cameras, metal detectors and lockdown procedures help keep student's safe. Also, programs such as Positive Behavior Intervention Support, mainly in elementary and middle schools, and restorative justice in high schools, are being utilized to assist in modifying student's behaviors before they escalate into more serious offenses. However, these measures do not appear to be stemming the tide of the number of cases of bullying, physical altercations, verbal assaults, and vandalism that lead to more serious behaviors in and out of school. "As a result, there is a need for proactive systems of support such as, Positive Behavior Intervention Supports, also referred to as PBIS that will assist in redirecting inappropriate behaviors" (Gavoni, Edwards, Kennedy & Gallery, 2017, p. 30). Yet, ensuring that teachers are well equipped with the knowledge and resource to

implement the program can be daunting. School districts and administrators must

provide relevant professional development and resources to promote buy-in. It is

important for teachers to understand the purpose and processes, so the program can be

implemented with fidelity. It is imperative for teachers to understand that PBIS is a

proactive program that is designed to modify student's inappropriate behaviors and to

continue to reinforce and praise positive behavior for those who do not display negative

behaviors in the classroom.

Policy Statement

This advocacy policy will address the need for disciplinary Deans in K-5

elementary schools to assist campus administrators with overall school discipline.

Disciplinary deans serve as liaisons between students and principals. They work closely

with teachers and other essential personnel to provide guidance and provide intervention

steps to help modify and deter in negative behaviors. This mandated position will also

aid to alleviate the backlog of discipline referrals that assistant principals are not able to

process because of other numerous administrative duties.

I am recommending this advocacy policy because of the amount of minor and

major disciplinary infractions, such as instances of bullying, physical altercations, threats,

and weapons that do not only plague middle and high, but elementary schools as well.

Moreover, I believe early intervention of negative behaviors of elementary students will

assist in modifying and deterring negative behaviors that may escalate into severe

behaviors as they enter middle and high school. According to Peguero and Bracy (2014),

"The perceptions of disorderly schools can negatively affect students' school

experiences, behaviors, and interactions" (p. 414). A culture and climate of high

expectations, consistency, and fairness must be employed to maintain safe and orderly

schools. Furthermore, MacNeil, Prater, & Busch (2009) suggested that "it is the responsibility of each stakeholder within the school to cultivate, design, and enforce strategies that will focus on high learning and behavioral expectations that will redirect students who cannot or are unwilling to participate in the educational process" (p. 3). I believe providing a Disciplinary Dean in elementary schools will guide, assist, and provide leadership that will shape values, relationships, norms, and practices within the school climate. Fostering and cultivating a sense of order and safety for students will produce an environment that is conducive to learning and promoting high achievement. I hypothesize taking this avenue will provide the structure in elementary schools that will subsequently interrupt the pattern of negative behaviors for continued success during their secondary school experiences.

Educational Analysis of Needs

The educational context of this policy discusses the positive or negative experiences for students regarding school climate and the culture of the school's environment. Although school climate is a broad concept with many components, it is commonly characterized as "shared beliefs, values, and attitudes that shape interactions between students, teachers, and administrators and set the parameters of acceptable behavior and norms for the school." (Peguero & Bracy, 2014, p. 412) Each year students report to schools across the country with their own set of values and beliefs that must meld in with the values and beliefs of the schools they attend. Therefore, schools must find ways to link the two together. Administrators and teachers must make it a priority to find strategies to help form positive relationships with students and parents.

School discipline practices in the present just as it had been in the past has focused on being punitive and reactive instead of being positive and proactive. Even

though school discipline measures have changed from the harsh form of corporal punishment to zero tolerance and expulsion, the fact remains that students are continuing to be suspended, expelled, and even dropping out. "We haven't seen the shift away from antiquated discipline practices as mission-critical to our broader mandate to ensure excellence and equity for all kids." (Kocon, 2017, p. 17). No matter how well meaning, misguided disciplinary tactics are doing more harm to students than good. Schools can change the outcome of students' academic careers into positives or negatives. With the positive it can serve as a vehicle for students to learn, bond and have access to educational and economic opportunities (Perguero & Bracy, 2014). On the negative, it can create the school-to-prison pipeline and it's up to schools to dismantle it (Kocon, 2014).

Economic Analysis

Promoting school safety has had a direct impact on federal, state and local funding. Since the 1970's, the federal government has passed a wealth of laws, bills, acts, and programs to combat the growing problem of school violence and safety that result from student misbehaviors. "The rise of school safety programs and policies administered by federal agencies can be traced to the early 1970s, a period in which youth crime and drug use became focal points in the public and congressional debates about criminal justice policy" (Brock, Keiger, Miro 2018, p. 1). The report on school violence that was released in 1975 found that school violence was on the rise due to drug use and disciplinary issues. They also report that because of this, federal legislators felt there was a need for further investigation into how to interrupt the progression of escalating disruptive behaviors in school. In the 1990s, federal legislation such as, but not

limited to, Drug-Free Schools, Gun Free Schools Act, Zero Tolerance, and the Safe

Schools/Healthy Schools Initiative instituted by Bill Clinton in 1999.

In years to follow, numerous tragic events involving school shootings has

impacted communities across the country. One, the tragic event at Columbine High

School event put schools and the nation on high alert. It also highlighted the issues of

bullying and ever growing instances of violence in schools. Even though school safety

has been a focus nationwide, the enormity and the implications of the devastation

experienced at Columbine put the plight of school safety front and center. State and

National government began to take a hard look at gun laws to figure out how laws could

be changed to address the problem. Since then, the federal government has up the ante

for funding drug-free and safe schools. Local governments have been given more

financial aid to help secure schools. My research found that "Most of the school safety

money in the Education Department was added through Title IV of the Every Student

Succeeds Act, a catchall grant that schools can use for broad purposes under the umbrella

of providing "safe, healthy learning environments for students."(Phenicie, 2018). These

monies are to assist local governments with their efforts to provide schools with access to

safety measures that will help to secure their schools to keep students and staff safe.

Social Analysis

There is no shortage of research that investigates the disparities of suspensions,

expulsions, and overall disciplinary problems between children of color and those who

are not. Research conducted by Moody (2016) stated that "the over-punishment of Black

children reflects a long-standing racial inequality that has been systemically reinforced in

America for the last several hundred years" (p. 152). This statement paints a startling picture of the social implications and context of the policy problem.

Political Analysis

Positive Behavior Intervention Support has been touted to be a very effective form of discipline that will assist in modifying student behaviors in schools. However, it is not without its pitfalls when addressing students with disabilities and minority students who have behavior problems. The political implications of these pitfalls have sparked many discussions and debates on how to address these issues. In 1975 the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was implemented. According to the ACT students with disabilities be afforded a free and public education (FAPE) specific to their needs in the least restrictive environment. School districts are required to build in accommodations for students with special needs. These accommodations are put into place after extensive testing of students have been conducted to determine the services they require. After testing, students are given Individual Education Plans (IEP) tailored to their need. These plans are legal and binding and must be implemented and followed to specification.

In 1997, IDEA was amended by Congress to include forms and measures of discipline that students in special education could receive. Included in the amendment were specific guidelines and restrictions on how school officials can discipline students with disabilities. Students with disabilities who misbehave in school can be disciplined the same as students without; however, there are limitations on the methods used. For instance, students with disabilities can be removed or suspended from school according to their actions, but the number of days of suspension are reduced. Students without

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disabilities can be suspended indefinitely, while students with disabilities can only be suspended for no more ten days. However, if more than ten days is needed a manifestation determination meeting, which is a meeting that decides whether a student with disabilities can be excluded from the restriction, is held (Hartwig & Reush, 2000). These restrictions have had a profound effect on the way teachers and administrators disperse and enforce disciplinary problems regarding students with disabilities that have highly disruptive and reoccurring infractions.

Another issue that has produced a political firestorm, is the discipline of minority students, and the disproportionate number of referrals they receive as compared to white students. This implication poses whether minority students' civil rights have been violated regarding discipline. "According to data collected by the Office for Civil Rights and cited in the letter, black students, who make up about 15 percent of the student population nationwide, receive about 35 percent of one-time suspensions and 36 percent of expulsions from school" (Epstein, 2014, p. 29). Epstein also referred to a letter written by the office of Civil Rights and the Department of education suggests processes need to be instituted that will ensure minority students are not discriminated against, violating Title IV and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act.

Legal Analysis

Some form of discipline in schools is necessary to maintain a safe and orderly environment. But it is important for districts and administrators to find a balance. There must be systematic approaches in place that will be fair and no single one student, or groups of students over the other. However, with the high rate of violence in schools and

zero tolerance measures, administrators are put in perilous predicaments to ensure they are not taking away the rights of students while dispensing disciplinary consequences.

In society, due process is a fundamental right afforded to every citizen in the United States. Similarly, in education, students have a right to due process, not as a fundamental right, but as a property right, set forth by The United States Supreme Court under the Fourteenth Amendment, as cited in the case Goss v. Lopez (1970). In this case, ten students who were suspended for ten days sued an Ohio school district for disregarding their due process rights under the fourteenth Amendment. In schools, when students receive discipline action that causes them to lose property rights, they are to be given a notice, giving them the opportunity to appeal (Mott, 2017). The students in this case argued they did not receive notice. Thus, denying them the opportunity to appeal the ruling. The Supreme Court ruled in their favor. This is just one example that has legal implications for school districts regarding school discipline.

Another key point, school districts must be mindful of the legalities concerning students with disabilities. As with regular education students, students with disabilities are not immune to receiving disciplinary consequences. However, the guidelines by which they are governed is different. Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) with respect to discipline, this means that school district officials must extend additional due process protections to students with disabilities (Yell & Rolzalski, 2008). Furthermore, students with disabilities can be suspended up to 10 days like other students if they, too, receive dues process. Also, under special circumstances such as being caught with drugs or weapons, they can be suspended up to forty-five days. In addition, if a manifestation of determination is held and it is sufficiently found

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dependable, the student can be expelled (Yell & Rolazlski, 2008). Given these points, it is important for school districts and administrators to have a clear understanding of the legal and procedural guideline governing the disciplinary process for all students.

Moral and Ethical Analysis

Despite the strides that are being made to close the achievement gap, there remain discrepancies in the disciplinary gap. According to Ganoa, Silvestre, & Glenn (2013), more African American students are disciplined, suspended or expelled than any white students. We need to examine the pervasive issue of implicit bias in public schools and how it fits into the schema. Research conducted by Simson (2014) suggested the long history of stigma and inferiority placed on African Americans has helped to fuel the implicit bias perspective in public schools. He also suggests, African American students and white students can commit the same behavior infractions, yet, the African American students receive a more stringent punishment that white students. According to Simson, this is attributed to the stereotype that "African American are more violent and dangerous than any other racial group, especially whites" (p. 547). School based administrators set the tone for the climate and culture of the school. The expectations they put in place must be fair, consistent, equitable and ethically sound. "Leaders of a school have an ethical responsibility to ensure that all stakeholders experience a sense of belonging" (McCray & Beachum, 2006, p. 2) Although this may be true, if they do not emphasize the same to their teachers and staff There will be a breakdown in fluidity of maintaining school expectations, school structure, and discipline.

The school based administrator is the final step in the discipline process. He/she is the one who decides the consequence for the action imposed. However, if he/she has

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an implicit bias against a racial group the consequences can be morally and ethically unfair. To combat the perception of moral and ethically wrong treatment of African American students, it is important for administrators and teachers to confront their implicit racial biases. Moreover. It is equally important for them to have open and honest dialogue to help shape the culture of the school to one of inclusion and acceptance.

Implications for Staff and Community Relationships

As mentioned in several areas throughout my research, the culture, and climate of a school building is instrumental in cultivating relationships among staff. The leadership in the building must ensure staff members feel included in the decision making process. This includes having a voice concerning the disciplinary process and protocols throughout the building. They must also be able to understand the vision of the building principal regarding student culture and behavior. When teachers perceive they are on the outside looking in, and are confused about the procedures, dissonance can begin to occur throughout the building.

During my tenure as a teacher, I have experienced such dissonance. In one school there was a large amount of discipline problems. Teachers were frustrated because there were not clear expectations set for students and teachers concerning discipline. Students were disrespectful, belligerent, and often physically abusive towards their peers. Yet, the students did not receive any clear and consistent consequences for their behavior. This caused teachers to either quit or contemplate quitting. According to Boyaztsis (2005), "when we are in emotional turmoil and under stress for a long period of time, and are sowing the seeds of dissonance of those around us, it is difficult to maintain top form personally or with those around us" (p. 51).

Administrators must be able to recognize when their teachers are exhibiting

dissonance and have open line of communication. This will allow teachers to feel valued

and respected for who they are, and the contributions they make daily. When this occurs,

it can create a culture of shared vision and family.

Each school districts community has its own unique story and set of

circumstances. These circumstances can range from the plight of the poor, advantages of

the elite, and racial divide. These circumstances and stories help to shape the good, the

bad, and the ugly state of education in the district's community. For school districts to

thrive it is important to acknowledge all areas of deficits and assets in the community.

There also must be a sense of cohesiveness and shared values. However, this cannot be

accomplished without district and school leaders communicating with parents and their

students. Effective communication between all involved is very critical to the success of

all students. Conversations must be had on both sides for solutions to be found for

existing problems. When there is minimal to know communication between parents and

leadership, the children are the one who suffer. As an example, I will draw from my

professional experience.

Much of my teaching experience has been in urban inner city schools, with little

to no parent involvement and or engagement. Students exhibited inappropriate

behaviors, and their academics were low. After having worked there for a while, it

became evident that the teachers and administrators were not communicating effectively

with students or parents. It seemed as if the students had been written off. Expectations

for the students were low. The school district was in what Block (2009) called a stuck

community: "This is a community where reasons are made to be afraid and exploits the

fear of the urban core" (pp. 39-40). Reasons to be afraid of Religious groups, terrorism, African Americans, and other ethnic groups to name a few. This was exhibited in this school community when all the fault was placed on students and their parents. No one sought to figure out or find out other factors that may have played a hand the parents and students found themselves in. The school and district needed to move towards what Block (2009) refers to as the restorative community: "The choice to value possibility and relatedness over problems" (p. 47). Providing an extra hand, such as a disciplinary Dean on staff can assist in alleviating the problems with principal and assistant principals have with scheduling appointments with parents, and assisting the teachers with parent-teacher conferences and communication. He or she will also be able to aid teachers with moving from low students' expectations and parent blame to a more responsive classroom that will help students become more successful.

Most disciplinary infractions can be handled in the classroom, or by the building administrators. However, there are circumstances that may lead to other stakeholders in the community and district to become involved in the disciplinary process, such as law enforcement, social services, and the courts. Some of these infractions, such as, physical assault on a student or staff member, bringing weapons to school, and criminal activity, to name a few may need collaborative decision-making from other stakeholders. These stakeholders may include, but not be limited to, District Superintendent, Exceptional Children's department, police department, as well as, district lawyers. These stakeholders are very important to the disciplinary process when students are referred for long term suspension, expulsion, or if they are protected under IDEA and require a manifestation meeting if the removal from school is more than ten days. It is imperative

through the disciplinary process that student rights are observed and are not encroached upon based on implicit biases by teachers or administrators.

Over the years I have witnessed the process being misunderstood by teachers especially in regard to students with disabilities. They are misinformed or lack knowledge on the disciplinary process for students with disabilities. They will cry out for students to be suspended without understanding the guidelines governing said suspensions. They become upset when it does not occur. For these misunderstanding and for teachers to be proficient with the guidelines, other stakeholders, such as the exceptional children department, must apprise teachers of the importance of these documents, as well as the importance of following them. To reiterate, it is important for there to be a spirit of collaboration with all stakeholders throughout the district, to ensure disciplinary processes are ethical, moral, and equitable.

Conclusion

Understandably, building administrators have a lot of responsibility. They are not only bogged down with disciplinary issues they are also responsible for the maintenance, operation and overall well-being of the school. This can sometimes become a monumental task depending upon the workforce ad assistance that is in place. In some cases, the number of administrators on staff can be dictated by the number of students enrolled. When there are only two administrators, the assistant principal is usually the one who handles many of the discipline issues. For my research I am proposing implementing a policy where all K-5 schools employ a Dean of Students no matter the number of students enrolled, to assist the assistant principal with day to discipline and teacher support throughout the building.

CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION

Introduction

The issues addressed throughout this study, was whether Cascade Elementary implemented Positive Behavior Intervention Support with fidelity. As reiterated throughout my research, the theme reflected whether there had been effective professional development, communication, and teacher buy-in when PBIS was initiated and implemented at CES. Without these components, teachers will be ill equipped to use the interventions and strategies that help to curb and modify negative behaviors in classrooms and around the school campus.

Schools are places where children can make friends, learn new information, build relationships and have positive experiences. Yet, many students experience the opposite effects of school. They are bullied, singled out for discipline, and made to feel excluded. Also, "Empirical data have shown the tendency of an individual to engage in deviant behavior is affected by the prevalence of that behavior among their peers" (Ganoa, et. al, 2013 p. 394). Teachers and staff must be able to use classroom management skills to intervene and combat negative behaviors that arise. These negative experiences can impact academic achievement of students.

Academic achievement in the classroom is two-fold. There is engaging academic instruction and there is effective classroom management. Both hinges on one another. According to research conducted by Myers, Freeman, Simenson, and Sugai (2017), engaging academic instruction is the most important when reaching academic achievement. However, ineffective classroom management can hinder the facilitation of academic instruction, just as instruction that is not engaging can cause behavior issues to arise. For the two to work together to achieve positive results, teachers must be taught

best practices, given research based strategies and interventions, as well being supported by the administrators in order to promote academic achievement.

Discussion

The purpose of my program evaluation was to assess the current status of the PBIS program at Cascade Elementary, as well as to find research based evidence and strategies that would help move the implementation from one of compliance to fidelity. The evaluation also helped me to investigate to see if CES had a systematic process, for teachers and staff to employ to implement PBIS with consistency using incentives, collection of data, and data analysis. I believe this program evaluation was important to students, teachers, and parents, and the school based on its ability to bring about a systematic change in behavior, thus changing the climate and culture of the school so learning can take place.

This evaluation process has addressed my purpose, by allowing me use research based literature, data gathering techniques, such as, teacher and administrator surveys, teacher and administrator interviews, and a PBIS focus group. This literature provided information that support teachers in their efforts to gain control of the classroom, thus promoting an environment for all students to be able to learn with little to no distractions. The data gathering techniques helped to determine where and how the deficits and the strengths impacted the program. The process also allowed me to draw from "my" experience of using PBIS. I have used it as an intervention in my classroom, been a part of the initial implementation process, as well as, being an active member of the PBIS committee. In conjunction with the aforementioned, I used Wagner's 4C's "As IS" and "To Be" to make an organizational plan that would serve as a blueprint to guide the transformation process.

Leadership Lessons

While conducting this evaluation there were several leadership lessons learned. However, I believe the most important lesson I learned was to be an intentional leader. One of the qualities of an intentional leader is having the ability to get people to take inventory of their strengths and weaknesses and work with them to develop systematic approaches that will assist with improving both (Page, 2011). As I compiled my research results, I realized it was this type of leadership CES was missing. Even though the leadership team at CES wanted the best for their students and staff, I believe their lack of mindfulness, hope, and compassion (Boyatzis 2005) lead to dissonance among the staff. As PBIS was a district initiative, CES leadership lacked vision, and a plan to drive the program.

As an aspiring leader, I believe to be intentional, you must be aware of the state of mind of the students, staff, and parents that can affect the climate and culture of the school. Being aware of this coincides with effective communication. Which allows for collaboration, collegial inquiry, and shared values and goals. Lack of communication impacts awareness of the importance of programs, promotes resistance to change, and limits the amount of effort on the part of the staff. Which causes the dissonance that can defeat change efforts and hinder the growth process.

For PBIS to be successful at CES the administrative team and teachers must work collectively and be intentional in their efforts to improve the conditions, culture, and climate. Only by these efforts can the school move forward towards marked improvement. Also, it will create an atmosphere of cultural responsiveness, positive relationships, and an academically and behaviorally sound environment to sustain positive behaviors among students and staff.

One of the most inspirational and powerful quotes I have posted in my classroom and have repeated to my students often is "You must be the change you wish to see in the world" (Ghandi, n.d.). I believe this to be power because of its power to make people to take a step back and ponder what positive change they would like to see and how can they be the catalyst for this change. I believe as leaders we must model positive actions and speech daily. We also must reaffirm our commitment to helping students, with each person we meet, who can impact the life of a child.

Behavior in school is a growing problem. Yet, I believe, being open to cultural responsiveness and allowing ourselves to acknowledge our implicit biases without fear of ridicule will open doors to communicate about issues that have been taboo in the past. Once we can embrace open communication and the aspect of change, I believe that each person can begin to see themselves as a change agent and "Be the change you wish to see in the world" (Ghandi, n.d.).

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Appendix A: Informed Consent Survey

Adult Participant Survey.

My name is Nicollette Harris, and I am a doctoral student at National Louis University, Tampa, Florida. I am asking for your consent to voluntarily participate in my dissertation project. The study is entitled: A Proposed Evaluation Project of "Positive Behavior Intervention Support".

My project will address the process of PBIS and how it impacts those involved at your school. I will use the data I collect to understand the process and changes that may need to be made regarding PBIS at your school. I would like to survey you in regard to your thoughts on the implementation of the PBIS program at your school.

You may participate in this study by signing this consent form indicating that you understand the purpose of the study and agree to participate in a printed survey that I will give to you, to be completed and returned using specific instructions I will include at the end of the survey. It should take approximately 30 minutes for you to complete the survey. All information collected in the survey reflects your experience and opinion regarding the PBIS program in your school.

Your participation is voluntary, and you may discontinue your participation at any time. I will keep the identity of you, the school, the district, and all participants confidential, as it will not be attached to the data which will only be reported in aggregate or number form and no individual will be identified. I Only I will have access to all the survey data, which I will keep in a locked cabinet at my home or on a password protected hard drive for up to 5 years after the completion of this study, at which time I will shred all survey data. Participation in this study does not involve any physical or emotional risk beyond that of everyday life. While you are likely to not have any direct benefit from being in this research study, you're taking part in this study may contribute to our better understanding of the implementation process of PBIS at your school and what changes, if any, need to be made.

While the results of this study may be published or otherwise reported to scientific bodies, your identity will in no way be revealed. You may request a copy of this completed study by contacting me at [redacted].

In the event you have questions or require additional information, you may contact me at: phone: email [redacted]. If you have any concerns of questions before or during participation that you feel I have not addressed, you may contact my dissertation chair, [redacted] ; or EDL Department Chair [redacted]; or the NLU's Institutional Research Review Board: [redacted], NLU IRRB Chair, [redacted], National Louis University IRRB Board, 122 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60603.

Thank you for your participation.

_____
Participant Name (Please Print)

_____ _____
Participant Signature   Date
Nicollette Harris_____   _____

Appendix B: Informed Consent Interview

Adult Participant Interview

My name is Nicollette Harris, and I am a doctoral student at National Louis University, Tampa, Florida. I am asking for your consent to voluntarily participate in my dissertation project. The study is entitled: A Proposed Evaluation Project of Positive Intervention Behavior Support l The purpose of the study is to understand how PBIS is implemented at your school.

My project will address the process of PBIS and how impacts those involved at This One School. I will use the data I collect to understand the process and changes that may need to be made regarding the PBIS program.

You may participate in this study by signing this consent form indicating that you understand the purpose of the interviews and agree to participate in a 45-minute interview session which will be recorder for accuracy of statements made and validity as well as with possibly up to 5 email exchanges in order clarify any questions I may have regarding your interview data. All information collected in the interviews reflects your experience and opinion as a teacher on the PBIS process.

Your participation is voluntary, and you may discontinue your participation at any time. I will keep the identity of the school and all participants confidential, as it will not be attached to the data, and I will use pseudonyms for all participants. Only I will have access to all the interview tapes and transcripts, and field notes, which I will keep in a locked cabinet at my home or on a password protected hard drive for up to 5 years after the completion of this study, at which time I will shred all interview transcripts, tapes, and notes. Participation in this study does not involve any physical or emotional risk beyond that of everyday life. While you are likely to not have any direct benefit from being in this research study, your taking part in this study may contribute to our better understanding of the implementation process of PBIS at your school and what changes, if any, need to be made.

While the results of this study may be published or otherwise reported to scientific bodies, your identity will in no way be revealed. You may request a copy of this completed study by contacting me at [redacted].

In the event you have questions or require additional information, you may contact me at: phone: email [redacted]. If you have any concerns of questions before or during participation that you feel I have not addressed, you may contact my dissertation chair, [redacted] ; or   EDL Department Chair [redacted]; or the NLU's Institutional Research Review Board: [redacted], NLU IRRB Chair, [redacted], National Louis University IRRB Board, 122 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60603.

Thank you for your participation.

_ _____
Name (Please Print)

_____ _____
Signature   Date
 _Nicollette Harris _____
Researcher Name (Please Print)

_____ _____
Researcher Signature   Date

Appendix C: Informed Consent Focus Group

Adult Participant Focus Group

My name is Nicollette Harris, and I am a doctoral student at National Louis University, Tampa, Florida. I am asking for your consent to voluntarily participate in my dissertation project. The study is entitled: A Proposed Evaluation Project of Positive Intervention Behavior Support. The purpose of the study is to understand how PBIS is implemented at your school.

My project will address the process of PBIS and how impacts those involved at This One School. I will use the data I collect to understand the process and changes that may need to be made regarding the PBIS program.

You may participate in this study by signing this consent form indicating that you understand the purpose of the interviews and agree to participate in a 45-minute interview session which will be recorder for accuracy of statements made and validity as well as with possibly up to 5 email exchanges in order clarify any questions I may have regarding the focus group data. All information collected in the focus group reflects your experience and opinion as a teacher on the PBIS process.

Your participation is voluntary, and you may discontinue your participation at any time. I will keep the identity of the school and all participants confidential, as it will not be attached to the data, and I will use pseudonyms for all participants. Only I will have access to all the focus group tapes and transcripts, and field notes, which I will keep in a locked cabinet at my home or on a password protected hard drive for up to 5 years after the completion of this study, at which time I will shred all transcripts, tapes, and notes. Participation in this study does not involve any physical or emotional risk beyond that of everyday life. While you are likely to not have any direct benefit from being in this research study, your taking part in this study may contribute to our better understanding of the implementation process of PBIS at your school and what changes, if any, need to be made.

While the results of this study may be published or otherwise reported to scientific bodies, your identity will in no way be revealed. You may request a copy of this completed study by contacting me at [redacted].

In the event you have questions or require additional information, you may contact me at: phone: email [redacted]. If you have any concerns of questions before or during participation that you feel I have not addressed, you may contact my dissertation chair, [redacted] ; or   EDL Department Chair [redacted]; or the NLU's Institutional Research Review Board: [redacted], NLU IRRB Chair, [redacted], National Louis University IRRB Board, 122 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60603.

Thank you for your participation.

_ _____
Name (Please Print)

_____ _____
Signature   Date
_ Nicollette Harris _____
Researcher Name (Please Print)

_____ _____
Researcher Signature   Date

Appendix D: Informed Consent School Site Administrator

School Site Administrator: Consent to Conduct Research at School Site

My name is Nicollette Harris, a doctoral student at National Louis University, Tampa, Florida. I am asking for your consent for selected staff at your school to voluntarily participate in my dissertation project. The study is entitled: A Proposed Evaluation Project of Positive Behavior Intervention Support

My project will address the process of PBIS and how it impacts those involved at your school. I will use the data I collect to understand the process and changes that may need to be made regarding   PBIS.   I will survey, interview and interview via focus group up to 1 principal, 1 assistant principal, 1guidance counselor and up to 60 teachers in regard to their thoughts on PBIS at your school.

I will give teachers and administrators who volunteer a printed survey to be completed and returned using specific instructions as included, and an Informed Consent form indicating that they understand the purpose of the survey and agree to take the survey. The survey should take approximately 10 to 20 minutes to complete. Also, I will interview 10 new teachers to the campus for approximate 45 minutes each, as well as a focus group of 7 teachers and 1 Guidance Counselor for approximately 45 minutes each. I will audio record the interviews and transcribe the tapes. All information collected in the surveys, interviews, and focus groups reflects their experience and opinion regarding PBIS.

By signing below, you are giving your consent for me to ask for voluntary participation from selected stakeholders to participate in this research study: to complete a survey and to participate in an interview and focus group.

All participation is voluntary and participants may discontinue their participation at any time. I will keep the identity of the school and all participants confidential, as it will not be attached to the data and I will use pseudonyms for all participants. Only I will have access to all surveys, interview tapes and transcripts, and field notes, which I will keep in a locked cabinet at my home or on a password protected hard drive for up to 5 years after the completion of this study, at which time I will shred all data. Participation in this study does not involve any physical or emotional risk beyond that of everyday life. While participants are likely to not have any direct benefit from being in this research study, taking part in this study may contribute to our better understanding of PBIS at your school and what changes, if any, need to be made.

While the results of this study may be published or otherwise reported to scientific bodies, identities will in no way be revealed. Participant and you may request a copy of this completed study by contacting me at [redacted].

In the event you have questions or require additional information, you may contact me at: phone: email [redacted]. If you have any concerns of questions before or during participation that you feel I have not addressed, you may contact my dissertation chair, [redacted] ; or   EDL Department Chair [redacted]; or the NLU's Institutional Research Review Board: [redacted], NLU IRRB Chair, [redacted], National Louis University IRRB Board, 122 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60603.

Thank you for your participation.

_____
Principal Name (Please Print)

_____ _____
Principal Signature   Date
 Nicollette Harris _____
Researcher Name (Please Print)
_____ _____
Researcher Signature   Date

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Appendix E: Teacher Interview Email

TO:

From:

cc

Subject: Interview Request

Dear,

I am currently pursuing my Doctoral degree at National Louis University. As part of my program of study I am conducting an Evaluation Proposal on Positive Behavior Intervention Support. I am requesting a meeting with you to explain the purpose of the study and why I am requesting your participation.

You are under no obligation to participate in an interview and if you choose not to accept, you will not experience any negative consequences because of your refusal. If you choose to participate you must do so by signing two written consent forms, which I will explain more to you during our initial meeting and will have available for you to sign.

I look forward to speaking with you regarding your participation in the interview process as well as your input into the overall project.

Sincerely,

Nicolette Harris

Appendix F: Teacher Survey

Dear Teachers

I am currently a doctoral candidate at National Louis University. I am conducting a research study, "A Proposed Program Evaluation of Positive Behavior Intervention Support." I would appreciate if you would take the opportunity to complete the survey on the PBIS program. Your participation is strictly voluntary, and your responses will be anonymous. If you agree to participate please sign the two consent forms and return them to me before completing the survey. After the completion and return of the consent forms, please complete the survey and return it to an envelope located inside the secretary's office.

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Perceptions					
1. Teachers in my school perceive PBIS as an important part of the school's function.					
2. Teachers in my school perceive PBIS as being effective in deterring negative behaviors.					
3. Teachers in my school perceive PBIS as being implemented with fidelity.					
4. Teachers perceive the PBIS committee as being transparent in relaying information to the staff.					
5. Information about PBIS incentive celebrations are relayed in a timely manner.					
6. My school has a set of guidelines to follow regarding PBIS.					
7. The distribution of gator bucks as incentives has set guidelines that all teachers follow.					
8. Positive Behavior is reiterated to students every day.					
9. Teachers in my school have received professional development on PBIS.					
10. Teachers in my school are committed to PBIS.					
11. Administrators support the PBIS program.					
12. Teachers are trained in strategies to use to prevent negative behaviors.					
13. Teachers are made aware of Students who are on tiers 1, 2, or 3 behavior interventions.					
14. Teachers are satisfied with the PBIS program.					

15. Teachers are satisfied with the PBIS committee.					
16. Teachers are satisfied with the level of professional development given.					

Appendix G: Administrator Survey

Positive Behavior Intervention Support Survey

I am currently a doctoral candidate at National Louis University. I am conducting a research study, "A Proposed Program Evaluation of Positive Behavior Intervention Support." I would appreciate if you would take the opportunity to complete the survey on the PBIS program. Your participation is strictly voluntary, and your responses will be anonymous. If you agree to participate please complete the two consent forms and return them to me before completing the survey. After completion of the consent forms. Please complete the survey and return it to an envelope located inside the secretary's office.

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. The PBIS committee in my school meets at least once a month for 30 minutes					
2. The PBIS committee in my school is an integral part in implementing the PBIS program.					
3. Teachers in my school are aware of tier 1, 2, and 3 interventions.					
4. My district provides professional development on PBIS.					
5. My district provides follow-up in-service training on PBIS.					
6. The teachers in my school are committed to the PBIS program.					
7. The distribution of gator bucks among teachers is consistent.					
8. Teachers in my school are made aware of MTSS data regarding student's behavior.					
9. My district has implemented PBIS in all schools across the district.					
10. My district follows National PBIS guidelines.					

Appendix H: Teacher Interview Protocol

This is interview will be one on one and strictly confidential. It will take approximately 45 minutes. Only I will have accesses to the official transcript of responses given. The interview will take place outside of normal instructional hours as not to interrupt your valuable instructional time with your students.
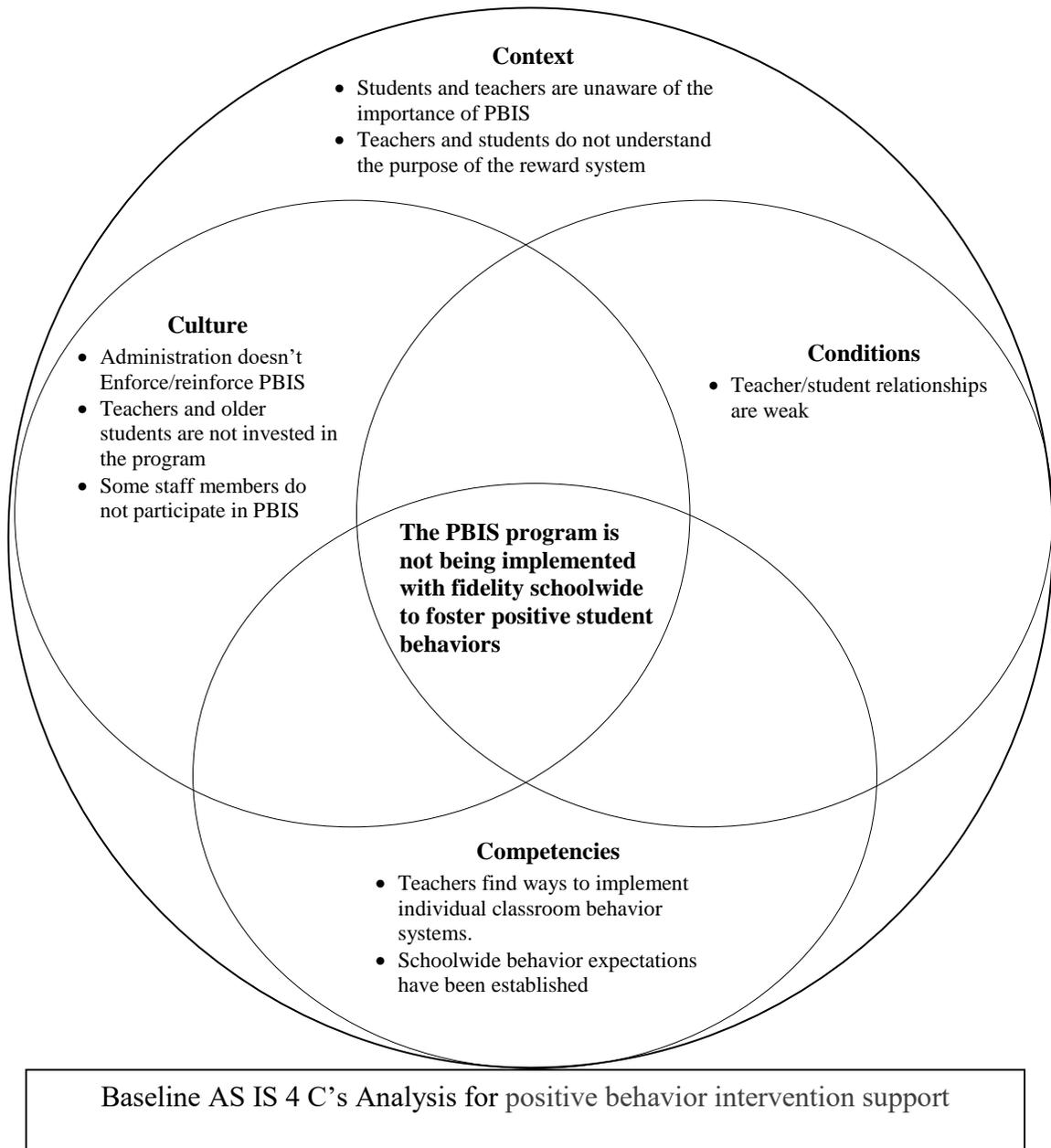
1. What is working well in the PBIS program?

2. What are the strategies put in place to help reinforce positive behavior while deterring the negative behavior?

3. Describe whether you think the program is being implemented with fidelity.

4. What is the process of the PBIS Committee in making decisions about incentives for students?

5. Do you feel the program is supported by the administration?

6. How does leadership support the vision of the PBIS program?

7. What is the role of the PBIS committee?

8. What are the problems regarding the distribution of gator bucks for positive student behavior?

9. What factors positively impact student behaviors

10. Describe the type of professional development you've been given regarding tier 1, 2, and 3 interventions

11. Describe the type of professional development you were given on PBIS at the beginning of the school year.

12. Has your grade level discussed consistent behavior incentives across your grade level? Describe what type of grade level incentives your grade level dispenses.
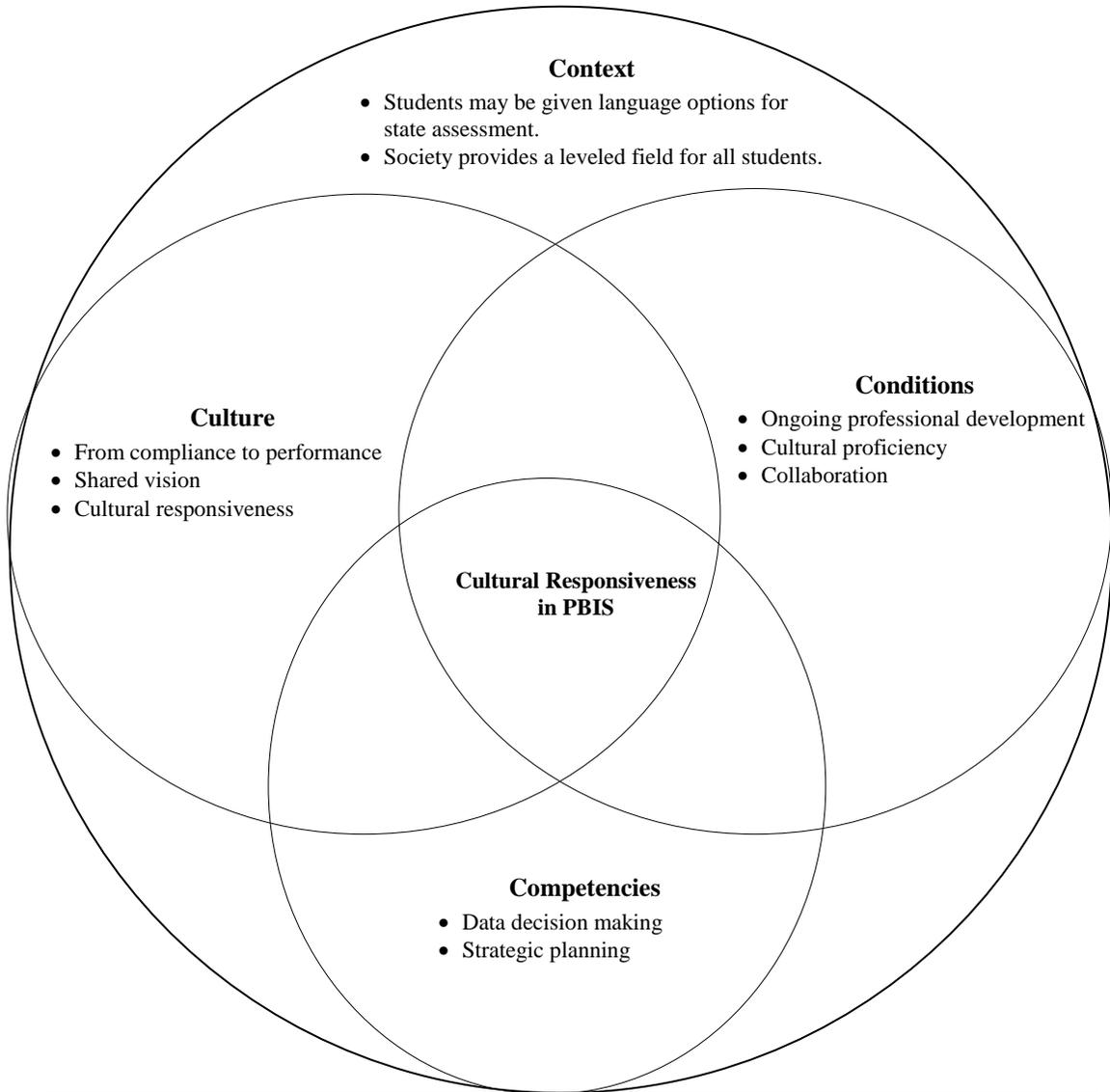
Appendix I: Focus Group Interview Protocol

Thank you for volunteering to participate in the focus group on Positive Behavior Intervention Support on the School level. The interview will take approximately 45 minutes. All responses will be kept confidential as well as your identity. However, I will take anecdotal notes as well as use a tape recording device to record responses.

1. What is working well in the PBIS program?

2. What are some obstacles that hinder the effectiveness of the PBIS program?

3. What are your suggestions for making the program more effective?

4. What are your suggestions for solving the issue of disruptive students?

5. How will the tier 1.2.and 3, behavior data help drive the committee for reform the PBIS program?

6. What steps or actions will the committee take to help resolve problems with the program?

7. What do you think your administrators' role is in school wide discipline?

8. How can your administrators help with the implementation of PBIS?

9. Do the teachers send mixed messages to students about behaviors that are deemed inappropriate? Explain?

10. How can you, as a committee, assist teachers become more consistent with discipline?

11. As a committee, how will you help sustain the PBIS program the school?

12. What specific assistance would be helpful to you in implementing new practices in PBIS?

Appendix J: AS IS 4C's Analysis

Context
- Students and teachers are unaware of the importance of PBIS
- Teachers and students do not understand the purpose of the reward system

Culture
- Administration doesn't Enforce/reinforce PBIS
- Teachers and older students are not invested in the program
- Some staff members do not participate in PBIS

Conditions
- Teacher/student relationships are weak

The PBIS program is not being implemented with fidelity schoolwide to foster positive student behaviors

Competencies
- Teachers find ways to implement individual classroom behavior systems.
- Schoolwide behavior expectations have been established

Baseline AS IS 4 C's Analysis for positive behavior intervention support

Appendix K: TO BE 4C's Analysis

Context
- Students may be given language options for state assessment.
- Society provides a leveled field for all students.

Conditions
- Ongoing professional development
- Cultural proficiency
- Collaboration

Culture
- From compliance to performance
- Shared vision
- Cultural responsiveness

Cultural Responsiveness in PBIS

Competencies
- Data decision making
- Strategic planning

Vision TO BE 4 C's Analysis for cultural responsiveness aligned with successful PBIS implementation

Appendix L: Strategies and Actions Chart

Goals	Strategies	Actions
Goal 1 Strengthen teachers' knowledge of the PBIS and understand how it provides behavior support	Assess teachers' knowledge and understanding of PBIS Complete a needs assessment	Provide ongoing professional development Administrators attend PLC meetings to discuss PBIS progress
Goal 2 Ensure there are proactive strategies in place to support positive student behaviors in the classroom and around campus	Develop action plan Develop rules and expectations for students	Identify areas where behaviors occur frequently Reiterate rules and expectations to students daily
Goal 3 Ensure teachers are culturally proficient	Provide professional development	Follow-Up meetings PLC's Observations Data Digs
Goal 4 Ensure the distribution of gator bucks is equitable	Develop guidelines for distribution	PBIS committee collaborate with administrators to develop guidelines PLC meeting with teachers to discuss guidelines
Goal 5 Provide staff with support through open communication	Grade level meetings	
Goal 6 Analyze Data	Data wall Data Digs	Provide information in PLC Meeting Faculty meetings