An Evaluation of Implementation and Teacher Perception on the Effectiveness of Positive Behavior Intervention and Support in an Urban K-8 Setting

A Doctoral Capstone Project

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

Department of Secondary Education and Administrative Leadership

In Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

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July 2021

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my loving mother, Terrie Sayles, who instilled a persistent work ethic in me to work hard and never give up. Her guidance, support, encouragement and ongoing unconditional love and motivation has been the driving force of my success.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank my capstone committee chair, Dr. J. Kevin Lordon, for his ongoing motivation, guidance and support. You have truly made the idea of earning a doctorate believable and attainable with your ongoing coaching and dedication as we walked through the capstone research project process. Thank you.

I also want to thank Dr. Eva J. Allen, my external committee member, for pushing and giving me hope and encouragement to keep moving toward my goal. Thank you for all your kind words, feedback and insight throughout this capstone journey.

Thank you to my colleagues and cohort members that were always there to volunteer and collaborate their thoughts and ideas. Thank you to Jeff Solomon for always being willing to work through ideas and challenges together. I would like to thank my principal, friend, and colleague, Eric Rosenthall, for allowing me the time, space and opportunity to conduct my capstone research study while motivating and encouraging me to make my lifelong dream a reality. Special thanks to my friend and thought partner, Lara Evans. Thanks for always being encouraging and putting up with me during late nights, after school and on Sunday afternoons while also preparing for your own remote learning sessions with your class. It has truly been an honor and a privilege to work, joke, create, problem solve and sympathize with you over the past two years.

Thank you to my mom (Terrie) and stepfather (Rich). My mom raised me with love, respect, and always told me to never give up even when things get tough. Words cannot explain how blessed I am to have a mom like you. You have always been my number one cheerleader and you proved since day one that you will always have my back. I will always strive to make you proud.

Finally, I would like to thank my best friend and loving wife, Katie, my daughter (Kyla), and my son (Brandon). Without your love, support and patience this personal goal would not have been possible. Your willingness to compromise means the world to me. You are my biggest fans and I love you with all I got. Thank you for your ongoing patience and support and for giving me the motivation and inspiration to finish.

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Abstract

This study focuses on an evaluation on teacher perception of the effectiveness of Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) implementation in a K-8 urban setting. Research also examines student academic progress and behavior, teacher perceptions on the effectiveness of PBIS implementation and school climate. This study utilized teacher perceptions and open-ended responses to obtain quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data was obtained from Likert survey questions on PBIS impact on student behavior and discipline, PBIS implementation and teacher perception and PBIS implementation impact on school culture and climate. Qualitative data was obtained from open-ended survey questions on teacher perception of the current implementation of PBIS in our school. Survey data was used to learn how teacher attitudes and perceptions impacted the overall effectiveness of our PBIS system. Data will be used to determine needs to successfully implement our PBIS program and to determine improvements for our future implementation. The data analysis from the teacher perception survey indicated that overall, the teachers feel that the PBIS implementation has been effective. However, teacher's express concerns for implementing PBIS in a remote/hybrid setting. In addition, the teachers wanted to enhance the reward incentives, so they reflected the interest of all grade levels to maintain and sustain student motivation and engagement in the classroom.

CHAPTER 1

Background of the Study

School administration plays an intricate part in creating a safe and welcoming environment for staff and students. Establishing a positive culture and climate is the key to increasing student performance and reducing inappropriate behaviors in class. An effective Positive Behavior Intervention and Support framework along with research-based practices will allow staff and students to maximize their opportunities to increase student achievement while maintaining and sustaining a positive culture and climate.

I have worked in multiple capacities and across all grade bands over my 18-year educational tenure. Over the years, I have worked as a middle school communication teacher, in central office for one year engaging in high school transformation and for the past twelve years as an assistant principal in multiple building (K-5, K-8, High School 6-12 and 9-12) within the same school district. I am currently an assistant principal at Gator Elementary, a K-8 urban school district in Pittsburgh. The school consists of K-8, with a total of 350 students. The school has been implementing PBIS for three years, and the original PBIS team is in place except for two new members. The PBIS district initiative has been in place since the origination at the beginning of the 2018-2019 school year. Before accepting the assistant principal position at Gator Elementary, I was in the same position at a K-5 school for two years, within the same district, with a student population of about 275-300 students. PBIS was implemented at both schools, and I was the administrator in charge of leading the district-wide initiative in these schools.

In 2008, I had been at Gator Elementary as a Reading Coach and Assistant Principal. Ten years ago, this program had not yet been implemented. The benefits of

implementing PBIS and conducting this study in a school I am familiar with are I know the student population and most of the staff. The experiences I gained in other schools around the district have equipped me with multiple perspectives and a variety of ways to implement PBIS. I am also able to determine the needs at Gator Elementary to better implement the PBIS rewards system. As the assistant principal, I oversee the PBIS work, but I did not create the program being implemented. Therefore, this study will allow me to gain insight on teachers' perception and satisfaction to improve implementation. In my role as an assistant principal, I observed that students responded better when behaviors were dealt with a positive approach rather than a punitive approach. I was more successful in supporting students and helping them change their behaviors when applying positive intervention strategies. So, I feel strongly that the PBIS framework supports school culture and climate increasing positive behaviors and academic achievement as we prepare our students for college, career, and life readiness. It is important to me that the implementation of PBIS is effective and supports the overall mission and vision of Gator Elementary.

Working in a K-8 school presents different challenges when it comes to planning with teachers for appropriate activities and rewards. The behaviors and levels of disruption are different between the different grade levels across the K-8 configuration. The behavior in the elementary is less serious than the behaviors that are presented in the intermediate and middle school grades. Most teachers struggle with decreasing the challenging negative behaviors that middle school students exhibit, and therefore, expect the consequences for disruptive behaviors to be more severe. Teachers expect the students to be held accountable for behaviors, and they want to write a discipline referral

and submit it to the office for administration. Some teachers lack the management skills or do not want to deal with problem behaviors, and they feel they should not have to waste time with discipline. Dealing with discipline and student behaviors is an excellent way to build relationships. In a perfect world, the teacher would consistently teach expected behaviors, and students would be rewarded or acknowledged for following the expectations, which would result in less disruptions in class.

The agreed upon school-wide expectations need to be clear and consistent for students to follow. Having consistent expectations created by staff and students will allow all stakeholders to own and buy into the process. Students need to be explicitly taught what is expected of them with ongoing reinforcements and reminders and rewarded for their compliance to the expectations. You cannot expect a student to learn the expected behaviors the first time. Students need to practice and see models of appropriate behaviors from peers before they totally understand how to behave in class and follow the identified school-wide expectations. However, the traditional punitive approaches to addressing discipline has proven to be ineffective when it comes to curbing or eliminating disruptive behaviors. The new approach to building relationships and changing behaviors is creating a positive and supportive environment for students. Students need to feel like they belong and trust that the adults have a genuine sense of care and respect to change the overall culture and climate of a school.

Identification of the Capstone Focus

The focus of this capstone research study is to analyze the benefits of the PBIS implementation while providing ways to improve the overall effectiveness and consistency among teachers and staff. The researcher will conduct interviews using open

ended question along with administering a survey to evaluate and analyze the teachers' perceptions and satisfaction on the current PBIS implementation. The researcher will also collect discipline data such as office referrals, student suspensions and academic assessments to determine the connection between academics and behavior and how PBIS impacts student discipline and performance data. PBIS data will also be analyzed to determine the effectiveness of the Gator Buck reward system and evaluate if the current incentive and rewards are changing student behavior and academics.

Research Questions

The following focus questions will be used to guide this study:

1. How does the implementation of PBIS impact student discipline referrals?
2. How do teachers perceive the implementation and effectiveness of PBIS?
3. How can teacher perception of PBIS create a positive culture within the school while guiding and supporting future implementation of PBIS?

The initial data will be collected through a survey given in September of the current school year where we are now in a remote setting. The data collected will be from the previous two years of PBIS implementation. The researcher will consider the feedback and suggestions from teachers and staff survey responses. Optional PBIS meetings will occur monthly to get ongoing feedback and ideas for incorporating and enhancing PBIS in the remote setting as well as for future return to in-person learning. Topics to be discussed are teaching expectations in the remote setting, how to distribute Gator Bucks and how to design virtual rewards to purchase and distribute. In addition, members of the PBIS team will meet monthly to review teacher feedback, analyze discipline data and modify our PBIS framework for implementation. We will also discuss how behavioral

issues and discipline referrals look in a remote setting and troubleshoot ways to address behaviors exclusive to online learning.

Expected Outcomes

An effective PBIS framework can have short- and long-term benefits for building a positive school environment while increasing culture and climate. The information obtained from this study will allow the researcher to have a deeper understanding of the teachers' perceptions and satisfaction of the PBIS reward system in our school. This will allow us to enhance the overall effectiveness of PBIS implementation to improve student behavior and academic success. The benefits of this research-based program will allow the students and staff to establish a positive and safe environment to accelerate learning.

Due to the school district going into a full remote setting indefinitely modifications were made to build relationship and establish expectations in the virtual environment that would transfer seamlessly to hybrid and in-person learning. The PBIS team reviewed the PBIS rewards app and determined the effectiveness and feasibility of utilizing the app remotely. Upon the review, they wrote a proposal to secure funding to purchase the PBIS rewards app. The PBIS team trained the staff on how to implement the PBIS paperless reward program. Again, teachers and staff were provided opportunities to give feedback and ask questions regarding how to implement remotely, reward and get prizes to students. Based on discussions a PBIS Rewards FAQ was distributed periodically via email to all staff.

Fiscal Implication

The fiscal implication of this capstone research project result in minimal effects to our site-based school budget. The positive effects of the program will outweigh the

financial impact that PBIS may have on the school budget. Many of the rewards and incentives that are offered in the school store will come from donations, fundraisers, community-based business, and the school PTO. The school also will find ways to fund the program using the site-based budget to sustain and maintain the PBIS framework. The school will also fund additional professional development opportunities to ensure the staff is well trained preparing them with the skills and knowledge to implement PBIS with fidelity.

Summary

Chapter I introduces the impact that the Positive Behavior Intervention and Support framework has on increasing student achievement while maintaining and sustaining a positive culture and climate. Peer reviewed journals are reviewed and examined in the Literature Review in Chapter II. Chapter III will explain the methodology used in the study, which includes the teacher perception survey that evaluated the overall teacher satisfaction on the PBIS implementation of the framework. A data analysis and findings will be presented in Chapter IV. The final conclusions of the study are discussed and recommendations for future practice and research are considered and offered in Chapter V.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

Schools are a safe place that provides a platform for students, families, educators and members of the community an opportunity to teach, learn and grow. The school environment provides positive adult and peer interaction while promoting various opportunities for ongoing academic and social achievement during all social exchanges (Sugai et al., 2000). Effective discipline if often a major focus for administrators who are responsible for creating a safe and positive school climate (Emery & Coiro, 1995). Trends in discipline are constantly evolving and schools and districts are moving away from a punitive to a proactive approach to discipline (Skiba & Peterson, 2000).

Traditional Discipline

Traditional approaches to managing student behavior are punitive and reactive, focusing on short-term solutions. Because a child is disciplined after the problem behavior occurs, little is done to teach appropriate behaviors or prevent the students from repeating problem behaviors. Schools tend to adopt a “get tough” approach to implementing discipline procedures when they lack effective practices or cannot decrease problem behaviors (Skiba & Peterson, 1999).

Discipline problems such as alcohol, drugs, and bullying flooded the schools in the late 1990s and started to gain national attention (Sugai & Horner, 2002). However, traditional and punitive discipline methods respond to recurring behavior problems with increasingly severe consequences, hoping that it will teach students that their behavior is unacceptable, and assuming they will eventually self-correct and behave appropriately. Subsequently, these punitive approaches have only resulted in students being excluded

from instruction due to suspension or expulsion and shown increases in violence and destructive behaviors (Sugai & Horne, 2006). According to McCord (1995) and Shores et al. (1993) evidence indicates students with challenging behaviors are not likely to respond appropriately to the punitive consequences and the behaviors are more likely to increase in intensity and frequency.

By 1993 traditional punitive practices such as “zero tolerance” were developed to address severe behaviors and challenging students in schools and continued over the next two decades. According to Skiba and Peterson (1999) “zero tolerance” procedures were modeled after state and federal drug enforcement policies from the 1980s and punished all inappropriate behaviors regardless of severity. Additionally, during the late 1980’s, communities were phasing out the early zero tolerance drug programs, but public schools were beginning to adopt zero tolerance policies to address and manage disruptive behaviors. However, zero tolerance approaches over the past decades are characterized by such actions as restricting school access, ban on hats, immediate suspension for disrupting school, and increased use of law enforcement.

Taking on a zero-tolerance approach to addressing discipline has not ensured safe and orderly schools or decreased challenging behaviors in our schools. It has only provided limited short-term solutions to a long-term problem, and omits a very important component of creating safe, effective learning environments. Discipline methods cannot continue to only address students after disruptive behavior but needs to become a proactive priority to decrease problem behaviors by explicitly teaching appropriate behavior alongside reading, math and science curricula (Horner & Sugai, 2000).

Many of the disruptive behaviors in the schools began to push researchers and policy makers to start the process to find new solutions to prevent or eliminate these problem behaviors in schools. As Skiba and Peterson (2000) said, traditional methods of discipline such as zero tolerance, punitive punishment, and others were not effective. In addition, there was no evidence-based research proving the effectiveness of these traditional punitive methods on students. As Horner and Sugai (2000) noted, systems not using positive approaches to behavior supports caused increases in problem behaviors. Costenbader and Markson (1998) also stated that exclusion and punishment for problem behaviors do not have long term effects. Some of these exclusionary practices can cause problem behaviors to escalate. In the 1990s researchers shifted from the traditional approach to discipline to PBIS, a more positive and proactive approach to addressing problem behaviors. As early as 1998, schools acknowledged the need to implement instruction of appropriate behavior through school-wide positive behavior systems for all students in order to create safe environments. The school-wide positive behavior support approach is not new, but necessary to address school-based discipline needs of today (Horner & Sugai, 2000). This research shows the inconsistencies on what problem behaviors may or may not be or what is perceived as problem behaviors.

What is PBIS?

The teaching profession is exciting, but very challenging and overwhelming at times. Especially when you are asked to take on additional duties, while maintain your rigorous instruction, dealing with a variety of academic and behavior challenges, building relationships with all students and supporting and managing student behaviors. Having these additional duties and expectations have forced some teachers to leave the education

field because of their limited training and preparation, which leads to their frustrations with behavior management (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Tenure and non-tenure teachers need to be equipped with a foundation of best practices that are researched based that will support them in maintaining a safe and orderly classroom. Researchers have spent decades establishing best practices that will allow teachers to build and sustain positive, consistent and safe classroom environments (Simonsen & Myers, 2015, p. 3).

In order to address suspension, referrals and increasing challenging behaviors schools began to implement more proactive approaches to discipline including the Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports framework (PBIS). Sprague and Horner (2006) indicated a schoolwide system for positive behavior support is needed because problem behavior is an obstacle to effective learning in schools and because traditional "get tough" approaches have proven ineffective in changing challenging behaviors. PBIS was designed to increase academic and behavior outcomes for all students using a framework that implements a continuum of evidence-based interventions (Sugai et al., 2000). This "response-to-intervention" utilizes a continuum approach that emphasizes research-based behavioral practices organized into a multi-tiered system of support (Sugai & Horner, 2009).

Schoolwide PBIS work under the assumption that behavior can be modeled and taught making desired behavior more relevant and problem behavior less relevant. Behavior supports that describe, teach and reward appropriate behaviors works towards establishing a positive social culture (Sprague & Horner, 2006). According to Turnbull (2002) PBIS is a positive discipline plan designed to include the whole school in a

proactive approach to reducing challenging behaviors and establishing positive behavioral outcomes. According to Sprague and Horner (2006) PBIS further analyzes behavior for those students who need greater behavior support to develop more individualized behavior support. PBIS promotes explicitly teaching socially appropriate behaviors using strategies such as defining, modeling, supporting and teaching expectations to create a positive environment (Scott et al., 2002).

Taylor-Greene et al. (2002) stated PBIS prevents problem behaviors by creating strategies that aimed at developing appropriate behaviors. PBIS examines the underlying causes of behaviors rather than punishing a child without teaching the expected behavior as is common in the traditional approach to discipline (Newcomer & Lewis, 2010). In addition, Newcomer and Lewis (2010) stated PBIS removes the focus from punitive discipline and gears the focus to determining the cause of the behavior. In addition, school staff can utilize data systems to gather decision making data that helps enhance the school (Sprague & Horner, 2006).

History of PBIS

During the 1980s researchers started to look for alternative approaches to traditional discipline when dealing with students with behavioral disorders (Gresham, 1991; Sugai & Horner, 1999; Walker et al., (1996). Researchers at the University of Oregon focused their energy on positive behavior support strategies that were directed toward prevention, research-based practices, explicit social skills instruction, and school-wide systems (Biglan, 1995; Colvin et al., 1993; Horner et al., 2010; Lewis & Sugai, 1999; Mayer, 1995; Sugai & Horner, 2002). The history of PBIS is predicated on the

work designed for public health and prevention science, which has taught us to invest in prevention for all students (Caplan, 1964; Walker et al., 1996).

In the 1990s, schools were granted assistance for evidence-based practices for improving support for students with behavioral disorders as part of the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Act of 1997. The success of researchers at the University of Oregon allowed them to successfully earn the opportunity to develop the PBIS Center where they established a partnership with the Universities of Oregon, Kansas, Kentucky, Missouri, and South Florida (Sugai et al., 2000). In the late 1990s, George Sugai and Rob Horner developed what is now Positive Behavior Interventions and Strategies (PBIS). According to Stonemeier (2016) Horner stated that PBIS emerged from two lines of work: positive behavior support efforts that focused on the quality of life of students, family and community; and the work of [G.] Roy Mayer, [Anthony] Biglan and others were doing that emphasized producing systematic changes by extending individual interventions to entire classrooms and the social culture of the whole school to make it an effective learning environment. In that process George Sugai, [Edward J.] Kame'enui, [Geoffrey T.] Colvin and others combined the best knowledge of good instruction, good behavioral design, and good classroom management to create the core features of social interactions to build an effective school (Stonemeier, 2016).

In the 2000s, as an alternative to traditional discipline practices such as detention, suspension and expulsion schools began implementing PBIS programs (Sugai & Horner, 2006). The PBIS framework has been shaped with support from technical assistance and direct professional development provided to over 16,000 schools through the National Technical Assistance Center on PBIS (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012).

Characteristics

PBIS is a prevention framework for organizing evidence-based academic and behavioral practices within your school and classroom for individual and groups of students (Sugai et al., 2000; Sugai et al., 2010). PBIS is not a managed curriculum or a "packaged" approach to addressing problem behaviors. PBIS is a proactive problem-solving approach (Lewis et al., 2010) that highlights:

a. Provides a continuum level of support for all students.
b. Evaluates the implementation and outcomes of the identified supports.
c. Uses data to guide decision making on how to improve or sustain implementation.
d. Identifies additional interventions for students and staff that require more support.
e. Provides and monitors supports to promote success.

Hannigan and Hauser (2015) stated that the four core elements of PBIS (Figure 1) are designed to support students based on needs and how they respond to the different interventions. There are four essential elements of PBIS: data, outcomes, practices and systems (as cited in Hannigan & Hauser, 2015). As explained by the Center on PBIS (2021) the PBIS system is designed for data to be the driving force to decision making. The data ensures that observable and measurable outcomes are identified and applied to the decision-making process. Schools select evidence and research-based obtainable practices that model and teach the expected behavior. The systems of PBIS guide and support the implementation of the identified practices such as establishing teaming structures and routines for on-going data-based problem solving. These four identified elements are guided by six key principals: consistently developed scientifically based

behavior and academic interventions and supports; data used for decision making and problem solving; an environment created for preventing problem behaviors; teaching and encouraging prosocial behaviors regularly; implementing research-based practices with fidelity; and consistently monitoring student performance and progress (Center on PBIS, 2021).

Figure 1

Four PBS Elements (pbis.org, 2019)

The foundation of class wide PBIS has three distinct tiers of support (Table 1). Tier 1 is known as the primary prevention, which provides behavior and academic supports and identifies targeted interventions. Tier 2 is a secondary prevention, which provides individualized supports for at risk individuals with developing challenges. Tier 3 is designed to provide more intensive supports for individuals with chronic or significant needs who may not respond to Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventions (Sugai & Horner, 2006; Walker et al., 1996).

Table 1

PBIS Core Elements (Horner et al., 2010)

Prevention Tier	Core Elements
PBIS Primary Tier (Tier 1)	**Behavior expectations defined** **Behavioral expectations taught** **Reward system for appropriate behavior** **Continuum of consequences for problem behavior**

	Ongoing data collection and use for decision making (Horner, Sugai, & Anderson, 2010)
PBIS Secondary Tier (Tier 2)	**Universal screening** **Progress monitoring for at-risk students** **System for increasing structure and predictability** **System for increasing contingent adult feedback** **System for linking academic and behavioral performance** **System for increasing home and school communication** **Collect data and use for decision making (Horner et al., 2010)**
PBIS Tertiary Tier (Tier 3)	**Functional behavioral assessment** **Team-based comprehension assessment** **Linking of academic and behavior support** **Individual intervention based on assessment information focusing on: (a) prevention of problem contexts, (b) instruction on functionally equivalent skills, and instruction on desired performance skills, © strategies for placing problem behavior on extinction, (d) strategies for enhancing contingence reward of desired behavior, and (e) use of negative or safety consequences if needed.** **Collect data and use for decision making (Horner et al., 2010)**

PBIS Framework

PBIS is a systems approach based on behavior that focuses on enhancing behavioral outcomes for all children by decreasing the effectiveness, efficiency and relevance of problem behavior and increasing desired behavior. It uses research-based practices to improve the capacity of schools, families, and communities. (Sugai et al., 2000).

The following principles assist in the prevention of problem behavior: (a) describing and teaching basic behavioral expectations; (b) approving and awarding appropriate behavior, and (c) building a regular continuation of outcomes for problem behavior. The focus is on creating a positive environment where expectations of behavior for students are explicitly taught, consistently rewarded, and monitored and observed (Sprague & Horner, 2006).

Horner et al. (2004) explained the Seven Key Features of Schoolwide Positive Behavior Support as:

(a) 3-5 expectations (b) teaching the expectations with formal lesson (c) acknowledgement systems (d) redirecting inappropriate behaviors (e) gather and collect date to guide decision making (f) Identify core leadership team to help initiate the work. (g) Elicit district-level support PBS has been used as an approach that allows schools to describe and activate these systems and processes in the last several years. PBS has been among the notable policies and applications in state schools in the last 7 years (Walker, Cheney, Stage, Blum, & Horner, 2005).

Over 4,000 schools in the United States are now applying for SWPBIS, and it is expected that the number of these schools will increase by 100% in the near future (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2005). According to the report of the Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2005), almost 5,000 schools in 40 states have embraced an approach in order to positively and proactively deal with how all students in a school behave where SWPBS is used, and it is defined as "a wide range of fundamental and specified processes that aim to achieve significant social and academic consequences besides impeding problem behavior with all of the students" (Sugai et al., 2010). Overall, 47 states claim that they are at some level of application (Spaulding et al., 2008). More than 9,000 U.S. schools are now implementing SWPBIS in order to decrease disruptive behavior problems by applying the principles of behavior, social learning, and organizational behavior (Bradshaw et al., 2010). It is known that at least 25,000 schools in the United States are now applying SWPBIS (Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, 2021), and over 14,000 schools across the US have been educated in SWPBIS known to not only decrease

behavior problems but also to foster a positive school atmosphere (Debnam, Pas, & Bradshaw, 2012). Although the number of schools applying SWPBIS is increasing each year, Sugai et al. (2000) especially emphasized some important components of SWPBIS such as the description, embracement, and maintained use of procedures, systems, data-based decision making, and processes for successful applications in schools.

Theoretical Frameworks

Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports is emerging into a framework designed to be implemented into school settings across the country. This multi-tiered and proactive approach is designed to positively impact learning for desired outcomes (August et al., 2018). Effective implementation of strategies for behavior in schools and classrooms can depend on the teachers' ability and openness to model and observe behaviors in the classroom environment (Groenendijk et al., 2013). This statement is supported by Albert Bandura's Social Learning and Social Cognitive Theory.

Social Cognitive Theory

Bandura (1977) states that the importance of social learning theory is observing and modeling the behaviors, attitudes and emotional reaction of others. In the 1960s and 70s Albert Bandura and his colleagues were highly recognized for their observational learning and social psychology research and now considered experts in the psychology and behavior science field (Bandura & McDonald, 1963; Bandura et al., 1961). Furthermore, Bandura indicates that if people had to rely solely on their own actions to inform their behaviors learning would be tedious and perilous. However, after observing others they can evaluate the positive and negative consequences of their actions. Children learn behaviors from others, which is confirmed from the Bobo doll experiment (bobo-

doll.html) (Bandura et al., 1961). Bandura also stated that children focus on the models, and they imitate the behavior they observe.

Bandura's primary research focused on children modeling violent and aggressive behaviors of adults (Bandura et al., 1961). Bandura's Bobo doll experiment included using a five-foot inflatable doll he referred to as Bobo. Bandura researched modeling behavior, particularly children's modeling of adults' aggressive and violent behaviors (Bandura et al., 1961). Based on the experiment, the aggressive behaviors of the children were determined by the consequences of the teacher's behaviors. The one experiment involved the teacher engaging in aggressive interaction with the doll, punching, hitting and throwing the doll, while the children observed. The children had two different responses based on the teacher behavior. When the teacher received a consequence for her inappropriate behavior the children refrained from acting like the teacher. However, when the behavior was encouraged or ignored and no consequence was initiated the children repeated the same behaviors as the teacher, which included kicking, punching and yelling at the doll (Bandura et al., 1961). This study shows the effects of modeling others and the impact that consequences have on student behavior.

Social Learning Theory

In addition, social learning theory explains human behaviors as a mutual interaction between cognitive, behavioral and environmental influences (Bandura, 1977). Bandura (1977) believes that humans are processors of information who think about the relationship between their consequences and their behavior. Social learning theory has been applied considerably to the understanding of aggression (Bandura, 1977) and psychological disorders, particularly in modifications of behavior (Bandura, 1969). This

is also the theoretical foundation, which is used in training programs for the behavior modeling techniques.

The social learning theory (SLT) decides if a behavior will be imitated or not and taking the thought processes into account while acknowledging the role that they play. In addition, SLT recognizes the role of mediational processes while providing a more comprehensive explanation of human learning. Bandura (1977) claims that observation in isolation may not be enough to ensure maximum learning; a person's motivation and mental capacity will also impact learning.

In addition, Bandura concurred with the behavioral theorists that external reinforcement shapes learning. Furthermore, he acknowledged that learning is not always a result of external reinforcement, but intrinsic reinforcement as well. Some behaviorists may argue that learning may lead to permanent behavioral change. Bandura believes that observational learning can occur without new learning being demonstrated by the learner. Furthermore, you may not learn what you observe, imitate or model (Bandura, 1977). Bandura continued his work on the concept of self- efficacy and a person's belief in their ability to succeed in a particular situation (Bandura, 1977).

Self-Efficacy Theory

Self-efficacy theory is influenced by the interactions between one's personal thoughts and the specific task of their engagement. Human action and success are dependent on the depth of the individual's interaction (Bandura 1986, 1997). Evidence from empirical research has been shown to determine the effectiveness that self-efficacy has on student achievement (Bandura 1997; Chemens et al., 2001; Eastin & LaRose, 2000; Khorrami-Arani, 2001; Maimunah Ismail et al. 2005). According to Suraya et al.

(2009) and Bandura (1994) individuals with low self-efficacy may think of task demands as threatening, which may cause them to set low expectations for themselves. Pintrich and Schrauben (1992) and Zimmerman (1986) claim that students that can initiate their study activities with self-efficacy and develop self-learning strategies are more likely to succeed. The causal effects of self-efficacy and the impact that it has on student achievement seems to be the important issue raised by educational research. The causality effect of self-belief for researchers is the focus as they work to figure out the connection between one's self-confidence or effort and skill as it relates to academic success (Muhammed, 2011). Some researchers have explored the relationship between efficacy and the confidence of the students to enroll in specific career choices in math or science. Brown et al. 1989 stated that mathematical self-efficacy for college level students determines their math course selection and major interest more than previous academic success (Brown et al., 1989; Bores-Rangel et al., 1990; Pajares & Miller, 1995).

Researchers also explored the connection between efficacy and psychological constructs to analyze the impact between self-efficacy and the academic performance of the students (Pajares & Kranzler, 1994, Pajares & Miller, 1995; Pajares & Johnson, 1996; Joo & Choi, 2000; Wood & Bandura, 1989). The study of The Pygmalion Effect (as cited by Rosenthal & Jacobsen, 1968) was conducted to show that a person's belief and high expectation from another could lead to an increase in performance. Rosenthal defined the Pygmalion effect as "the phenomenon whereby one person's expectation for another person's behavior comes to serve as a self-fulfilling prophecy." Based on the work and observations of Rosenthal & Jacobson (1968), student performance is strongly

determined by the influence and belief of the teacher. Rosenthal & Babad (1985) added that expected behaviors are likely to occur when we expect others to behave a certain way. The study of the Pygmalion Effect involved students taking a test which was designed to identify students that were the "growth spurters," or those that were projected to perform higher academically. Teachers were given the names of the students who showed potential. Subsequently, these students showed significant gains as compared to their classmates when tested again at the end of the year. Rosenthal & Jacobsen (1968) reported that, the "spurters" were randomly selected, and the only difference between the students were the belief of the teacher. Consequently, this study shows how the belief and expectation of the teacher can affect the student's performance in class (Rosenthal & Jacobsen 1968).

Goddard et al. (2004) stated that collective efficacy is defined as the teachers' shared beliefs, which includes their combined ability to yield student success. Goddard (2001) continues to say that a teacher's collective efficacy, which varies from school to school, has a major effect on students' behavior and academic performance. According to Goddard & Goddard (2001) and Goddard et al. (2004) collective and self-efficacy vary across groups but are closely related in regard to its impact on student behavior and academic achievement. Goddard and Goddard (2001) and Goddard et al. (2004) stated that collective efficacy has a more profound role in the school, based on the different variables that exist around demographics and social-economic status. Bandura (1997) believes collective efficacy is important because many challenges in life require people to work together to problem solve and positive outcomes are effectively determined through collective efforts rather than by individuals. In addition, Bandura (1997) indicated that

choices and actions of individuals to meet challenges and attain a desired goal is influenced by the perception of joint capability.

Goddard et al. (2000) expressed those mutual beliefs of efficacy in a school will affect the teacher's behavior and perceived self-efficacy and subsequently shape the school's culture and climate. The greater the collective efficacy of the school, the more teachers will conform and persevere in their educational efforts (Goddard, 2001). Most of the studies on efficacy in schools focus on the student/teacher relationships and the impact it has on student academics (Goddard & Goddard, 2001). The results of the studies indicate that student learning and academic success is determined by the teachers' beliefs in their own instructional efficacy (Ross, 1992; Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). Bandura (1993) revealed that school level achievement is positively related to teacher collective efficacy. Goddard, 2002; Goddard & Goddard, 2001; Goddard et al. 2004; Goddard & LoGerfo, 2007; Goddard & Skrla, 2006 supported Bandura's conclusion that there were differences among student level achievement and the collective efficacy perceptions. Subsequently, research between the problem behaviors of students and the teacher collective efficacy has not been investigated.

Why use PBIS?

Over 9,000 schools across the Unites States are utilizing PBIS to decrease disruptive behaviors by applying the behavior principals (Bradshaw et al., 2010). According to the Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (2021) over 25,000 United States schools have shown that PBIS not only curbs or eliminates problem behaviors and creates a positive environment for schools. PBIS implementation has been linked to reduced rates of office referrals, increased student attendance, high performance

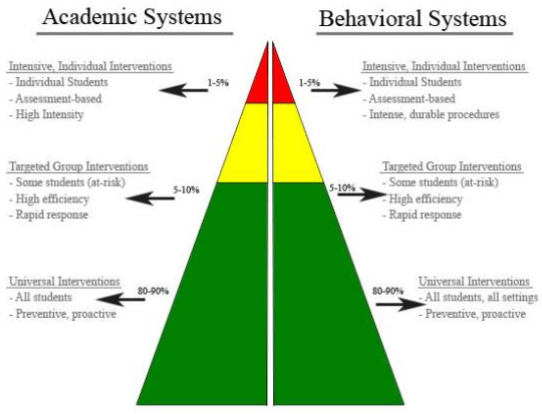
on test, fewer referrals from students in special education classes and overall changes to schools' culture and climate (Bradshaw et al., 2010; Lassen et al., 2006).

Behavior and Academics

PBIS was designed to improve teachers' use of evidence based, proactive, and positive practices to help support the challenging behaviors of all students (Sutherland & Osward, 2005). A Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) emphasizing three tiers of prevention on an increasing continuum of support using evidence-based practices (Figure 2) aligns academic, behavioral, social and emotional support to improve outcomes for all students (Center on PBIS, 2021). According to Sutherland and Osward (2005) the teacher's management of behaviors is influenced by the reinforcement of student behaviors. However, Sutherland and Osward (2005) also believe that teachers are unaware of their influence on student behaviors, and how their own behavior effects the behavior of students. Clunies-Ross et al. (2008) similarly stated that the problem behaviors stem from classroom management, ineffective instruction and punitive discipline practices, which validates the schools' approach to dealing with behavior problems.

Figure 2

Multi-tiered Continuum of School-wide Instructional & Positive Behavior



According to the American Academy of Pediatrics Council on School Health (2013) argued that punitive responses to problem behaviors of students such as suspension, expulsion, detention or referring students to the office are not effective solutions for curbing or eliminating the behaviors. Furthermore, Nelson & Roberts (2000) added that less severe strategies like verbal reprimands and removal of reinforcing activities after the inappropriate behaviors occur, may have a more positive effect on the disruptive behavior.

School-wide Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) is a systems approach to improving and managing the behavior of all students and to provide a safe, positive and productive environment for learning. Oliver et al. (2011) believes that positive reinforcement continues to show positive effects on student conduct. Moreover, positively stated rules have helped to increase student on-task behavior and readiness to comply with the school rules (Gable et al., 2009). This research confirms the need to implement a more positive system for increasing and encouraging appropriate behaviors. Eber et al. (2009) reported a study analyzing the effects of PBIS from 2002 to 2006 in over 100 elementary schools where PBIS improved social skills and decreased the time needed for student behaviors. In addition, Muscott et al. (2008) identified a study of 22 New Hampshire schools that reported data that showed 73% of the schools decreased suspensions and office referrals after two years of implementation.

Although there is significant data that shows PBIS implementation reduces suspensions and office referrals, there has also been a positive effect on the academic performance as well. The effectiveness of PBIS has been determined by the academic achievement of the schools that implement PBIS compared to the school not

implementing PBIS. According to Muscott et al. (2008) a study of the New Hampshire schools found that 73% of the PBIS schools that have implemented PBIS for at least 2 years have increased in math on the standardized test. Horner et al. (2004) identified a study conducted in Illinois, which found 62% of the third grade in a PBIS implemented school met the Illinois State testing standard. Only 47% of the students met the target in the schools that did not implement PBIS (Horner et al., 2004).

Culture and Climate

Although school climate and culture are used interchangeably, they are separate terms, which almost always overlap and influence one another. School climate is generally referred as the attitude and school culture is the personality. However, it is impossible to talk about one without the other. Freiberg (1999) describes school climate as the heart and soul of the school, which can either motivate teachers and students to interact or reject and disengage. The climate is the outcome of the school-wide norms and values, which allows people to interact and relate to one another within an established system. According to the National School Climate Center (2007) school climate consists of safety, relationships, teaching and learning and the environment. These areas are designed to shape how students feel about the school and the impact that it has on learning and student development (National School Climate, 2007).

Deal and Peterson (1998) defines school culture as “norms, values, beliefs, traditions, and rituals built up over time.” The culture of the school is always at work, assisting or impeding learning. School culture controls every decision made or action taken within the school, from the management style of the administrator to the ways a

teacher communicates with the students.

Establishing a healthy and positive culture and climate is the foundation for creating an environment for quality and effective instruction. Dufour and Eaker (1998) states that we need to recognize the importance of culture and climate in the schools before addressing the reform efforts to improve student achievement.

> A sustainable, positive school climate fosters youth development and learning necessary for a productive, contributive, and satisfying life in a democratic society. This climate includes norms, values, and expectations that support people feeling socially, emotionally and physically safe. People are engaged and respected. Students, families and educators work together to develop, live, and contribute to a shared school vision. Educators model and nurture an attitude that emphasizes the benefits of, and satisfaction from, learning. Each person contributes to the operations of the school as well as the care of the physical environment. (The National School Climate Council, 2007, p.4)

Gregory et al. (2010) reported that the enforcement of rules and consistent implementation are key factors that shape and impact perceptions on how safe people feel in school. Studies show a direct correlation between support and structure and how they connect with a decrease in the suspension rates and bullying (Eliot et al., 2010; Gregory et al., 2011).

Research has also shown that better structured school with fair discipline practices produce positive student-teacher interaction with less problem behaviors (Gregory & Cornell, 2009; Power et al., 1989; Wang et al., 2010). Jia et al. (2009) added that the perceptions of teacher-student and student-student were positively associated with self-esteem and grades and negatively impacted by depression. Hamre and Pianta (2001) further stated that negative teacher-student interactions in kindergarten indicated the likelihood of behavior and academic problems in later grades. Skinner and Belmont (1993) concurred saying that teacher interactions impact student behaviors and emotional

engagement in class. In addition, students will engage and behave appropriately when teachers positively support and interact with the students (Skinner & Belmont, 1993).

Effective implementation of PBIS

Establishing a PBIS core leadership team is the key to coordinating the systems approach to PBIS. Adopting an approach based on teams is necessary to ensure sustainability, fidelity implementation to maximize student behavior and academic outcomes (Office of Special Education Programs [OSEP] Center on PBIS, 2004; Sadler, 2000; Sugai et al., 2000; Taylor-Greene et al., 1997). According to Sugai and Horner (2006) the PBIS leadership team should include staff who have policy and program decision-making capabilities across all behavior related areas of content. In addition, the representation of the PBIS team should reflect all areas within the building with the focus on preventing disruptive behaviors and teaching appropriate behaviors (Sugai and Horner, 2006). Sugai and Horner (2006) identifies the responsibilities of the PBIS team to include these six important building areas:

a. Practices and systems to institutionalize PBIS
b. Sustaining long-term solutions for funding and resources
c. Support for maintaining and prioritizing opportunities for expansion
d. Facilitate, train and coach during school level implementation
e. Train in house to reduce outside trainers
f. Ongoing evaluation to monitor the effectiveness of the implementation (Sugai & Horner, 2006, p.261)

Sugai and Horner, (2006) stated that PBIS leadership teams are designed to guide the integration process to determine groups needed to support overall outcomes. In addition, the leadership team is responsible for creating an action plan that guides the

systems and practices of PBIS implementation (Sugai & Horner, 2006). Regular reviews of behavioral and academic student data along with staff self-assessment documents will determine the PBIS activities and timelines (Sugai & Horner, 2006). According to OSEP Center of PBIS, (2004) the PBIS Team should conduct annual self-assessments to increase the efficiency of the plan and determine structures and resources that need to be modified or adjusted.

Staff Buy-In

Studies show the importance of staff buy-in to the implementation and sustainability of evidence-based practices in schools (Foreman et al., 2009; Langley et al., 2010). According to Pinkelman et al. (2015) staff buy-in was the most frequently identified enabler and barrier in tiers of sustainability of PBIS. In addition, the participants agreed that staff buy-in was a key contributing factor for PBIS sustainability, but the lack of staff buy-in created significant barriers (Pinkelman et al., 2015). According to McIntosh et al. (2014) staff buy-in was the second most frequently identified enabler and fourth identified barrier. Andreou et al. (2014), added that school personnel may be more supportive once they experienced the positive outcomes of the practice. Pinkelman (2015) concurred by saying that staff are likely to support PBIS practice once they experience the benefits of the program (Pinkelman et al., 2015). Baker et al. (2004) noted the varying differences in opinions of implementation with new staff and those experienced with the interventions.

The more experienced staff were more positive while the new staff were more exposed to the training concerns, which resulted in negative opinions about the intervention (Baker et al., 2004). The second most frequently identified enabler was the

importance of administrator support in the sustainability and implementation of interventions in education (Forman et al., 2009; Kincaid et al., 2007; Langley et al., 2010). According to McIntosh et al. (2014) this was the most cited theme, which indicated the importance from the initial implementation to the sustainability. The lack of administrator support is the greatest predictor of neglect even in schools with an effective PBIS system (Nese et al., 2015).

Explicitly teaching expectations

According to Martella et al. (2012) we should make specific considerations when establishing behavior expectations in the classroom. The list of expectations identified need to be general and utilized throughout the school community (Martella et al., 2012). Three to five expectations should be developed with students input to ensure commitment and ownership to the agreed upon expectations. Martella et al. (2012) state that the teacher should discuss the importance of the expectations with the students. The identified expectations should be positive to show students what to do and made simple for students to remember (Martella et al., 2012). Once the expectations are identified they must be taught explicitly taught daily. Developing a teaching matrix is an effective way to manage and organize teaching the school-wide and classroom expectations (Martella et al., 2012; Myers et al., 2017). Learning the expectations for behavior is no different than learning other skills (Martella et al., 2012). Myers et al. (2017) stated that effective teachers use explicit examples and provide opportunities for students to practice and receive feedback during instruction. Teachers need to utilize praise when a student answers a question correctly in class. Praise should be used when students demonstrate appropriate behaviors and occur regularly while students are learning academic and

behavior skills for the first time (Martella et al., 2012). Behavior specific praise has shown to increase positive behaviors while decreasing problem behaviors (Myers et al. 2017). Many of the behavior problems can be proactively prevented if we identify expectations, teach them explicitly and reinforce negative behaviors with a positive approach for correcting inappropriate behaviors (Martella et al., 2012).

Professional Development

Professional development is a prerequisite for sustaining and maintaining PBIS implementation. In addition, training, consultation, and coaching across all levels of the three-tiered continuum in conjunction with the systems of support and student data must be consistent (Bambara et al., 2009; Forman et al., 2009; Hume & McIntosh, 2013; Mathews et al., 2014; McIntosh et al., 2014). New teachers complain about the inconsistencies with teacher education programs and not being prepared to manage classroom behaviors (Atici, 2007; McKenzie et al., 2011; NCTQ, 2013; O'Neill & Stephenson, 2014). According to Beaman et al. (2007); Oliver and Reschly (2007); Sullivan et al. (2014) new teachers are overwhelmed and frustrated by the disruptive behaviors of the students. Consequently, without appropriate PBIS training, new teachers are more likely to take a reactive approach to address the disruptive behaviors of the students (Oliver & Reschly, 2007). Teacher education program training for behavior management is overshadowed by theory and rhetoric and does not include the evidence-based approach PBIS practices (Banks, 2003; O'Neill & Stephenson, 2014). Moreover, researchers found that a lack of ongoing technical support provided after the initial training can jeopardize the overall effectiveness of the sustained implementation and professional development (Coffey & Horner, 2012; Forman et al., 2009; Hume &

McIntosh, 2013; Mathews et al., 2014). Technical support in the ongoing process of consultation and coaching is key for streamlining implementation to ensure positive behavior intervention and support is weaved into the school culture and climate (Foreman et al., 2009; Mathews et al., 2014).

System for supporting students

Over the years, schools have increased their efforts to integrate academic and behavior interventions into one system (Hawken et al., 2008; Stewart et al., 2007). The Rti and MTSS focus has shifted to combine both academic and behavior systems into one school-wide intervention and support system for all students. The researchers have found that there are RTI systems designed to address the behavior and academic needs of the students (Vaughn & Fuchs, 2003) In addition, the PBIS was included in the systems of support, which is also focused on teaching all students, providing ongoing support for students that are not responding and provide action planning by the established PBIS leadership team (Horner et al., 2004). These support systems are all designed to utilize a problem solve protocol for identifying and addressing challenges (Tilly, 2008). In addition, they use evidence-based practices while reviewing the data to monitor progress, evaluate and determine the effectiveness of the program development.

Token Economy

Token economy systems have a major influence on behavior and academic engagement in classroom settings. Token economies are designed to address behaviors of individual students, but also used to accommodate groups of students as well (Nelson, 2010). According to Marais and Meier (2010) Misbehavior and class disruption is part of every teacher's teaching experience. Providing the teachers with tools and strategies to

manage class disruption effectively is the key to providing a positive and safe environment (Marais & Meier, 2010). The token economy is a more proactive, and positive way to address problem behaviors in class (O'Leary & Drabman, 1971). In addition, a token economy is designed to increase class participation while addressing disruptive classroom behaviors. Martella et al. (2012) also stated that changing the classroom environment acts as an intervention for at risk children experiencing problem behaviors. As a result, Boniecki and Moore (2003) reported that token economies have many benefits and prevents problem behaviors from developing.

Filcheck and McNeil (2004) suggested that teachers should teach academic readiness and social skills while managing behaviors in class. In addition, a behavior management system for class should be simple and easy for the teacher to implement without disrupting the class (Filcheck & McNeil, 2004). Tiano et al. (2005) added that teachers could promote a positive environment in class by providing rewards and incentives for those appropriate behaviors. A study by Zlomke and Zlomke (2003) showed that a token economy paired with self-monitoring can improve student behaviors.

Data-Based decision making

Research has suggested that data-based decision-making can contribute to increase student learning and achievement (Schildkamp, 2019). Data-driven decision making is a systematic collection, analysis, and application of data from many sources in order to address the learning needs and increase the overall performance of the student (Marsh et al., 2006). Dunn et al. (2013) added that the teachers' responsibility is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the student based on the learning objectives to design a future plan for instruction. According to Fullan and Steigelbauer (1991); Massell

(1998); Schmoker (2000) the focus is on improving schools by establish accountability using data to develop, guide and sustain improvement to accelerate student learning. According to Flannery et al. (2010) the most effective PBIS implementation strategy is providing teachers and staff with ongoing data to determine the overall effectiveness of the program. Sugai and Horner (2009) added that the ongoing collection of data needs to be analyzed and regularly shared with teachers, so they can determine the level of support needed for students to be successful. Lewis and Sugai (1999) supported the need to use assessment data to identify and initiate effective interventions for behavior and academics. Safran and Oswald (2003) agreed that assessment data is the foundation for planning and initiating PBIS in schools. Data-based decision making is an essential component in preparing and training teachers how to analyze and inform classroom instruction. The data needs to be accessible, and teachers need to be informed on what to do with the data and how to respond once they have the results (Schildkamp, 2019).

Summary

Nearly 18,000 primary and secondary schools across 49 states are currently implementing Positive Behavior Intervention and Support systems. This is approximately 18% of all schools in the nation, which is an 80% increase from 2008 up until now (Spaulding et al., 2008). The schools that implement Positive Behavior Intervention and Support effectively are reporting a decrease in disruptive behaviors, improved teacher perceptions on school climate and improved academic performance (Skiba & Sprague, 2008).

As a result of this study, the benefits of a Positive Behavior Intervention and Support system were evaluated to determine the overall effectiveness of the school PBIS

implementation, the teacher perception survey and the number of referrals (Appendix B) obtained from the PBIS dashboard office referral report. The elements that were analyzed in this study are: PBIS impact on student behavior, Teacher behavior on PBIS implementation and Culture and Climate. These elements and referral reports were analyzed to determine the overall effectiveness of PBIS from the first year of implementation until now. This data is analyzed to determine the overall effectiveness of the PBIS framework and the importance of increasing school culture and climate while decreasing office referrals. Increasing positive relationships and reducing referrals will increase instructional time, build student-teacher relationships while creating a positive environment for all students.

The results of this study may help student and staff improve the culture and climate to support academic success. PBIS has shown success with increasing student behaviors, academic performance, and attendance while build student's self-efficacy. The PBIS protocol has taught students how to take a proactive approach to dealing with situations by modeling and responding to appropriate behaviors with rewards and incentives. Although, the original PBIS plan was designed to support students with disabilities it has manifested to support the needs of all students. The system is most effective when you have buy-in from all teachers and staff who are committed and willing to take on a proactive approach to managing student behaviors. This positive and proactive system will allow staff and students an opportunity to maximize instructional time, while minimize student disruptive behaviors to accelerate academic success in all schools. Chapter III will explain the methodology used in the study, which includes the

teacher perception survey that evaluated the overall teacher satisfaction on the PBIS implementation of the framework.

Chapter 3

Methodology

The review of literature makes a strong and research-based case that effective and consistent implementation of a Positive Behavior Intervention and Support framework can have a positive and proactive effect on K-8 schools, especially in the areas of culture, climate and student discipline. The literature review also identifies the barriers and challenges that may occur when the system is ineffectively implemented, and the school engages in negative practice they may sabotage the positive components of the framework. Chapter 3 will identify the overall purpose of this study. It will also identify the setting and participants while articulating the intervention and research plan. In addition, Chapter 3 will include a description of the research design, the methods of the data collection and the tools used to collect the data with a final explanation how the collected data was triangulated.

I would like to highlight that we were in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic while conducting the study and the staff and students were working in a 100% remote learning environment. The data collection and intervention for the study was very limited since all interaction with staff and students was conducted via Microsoft Teams, email, Microsoft Forms, Clever. Gator Elementary ended in-school learning in March and continued with remote learning until the end of the school year. The school district started the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year with a full remote learning model. They attempted to return to school in November 2020 with a specific group of high need students but was forced to shut down when the COVID cases started to rise again. Remote learning resumed and continues to be in place well into the second semester. The

school district proposed another attempt to bring back a small group of students including Pre-K, Kindergarten, regional classrooms, ELLs and a few struggling IEP students but the Board of Education resolved to wait until all teachers were vaccinated. Even though the traditional brick and mortar school setting was not an option, teaching and learning continued in the remote setting.

Although we were forced to work remotely, the data collection and intervention implementation was adjusted, and the study was effectively completed. The staff worked diligently to learn and collaborate during PLC, team meetings and professional development time to plan positive and engaging activities for the students. Even in a remote setting staff maintained their motivation level and buy-in to make sure the adjustments were made to ensure success with our PBIS implementation.

Purpose

The PBIS framework at Gator Elementary School is currently in its third year of implementation with modifications made to the PBIS team when staff changes occurred. The initial PBIS team consisted of an administrative support staff whose sole responsibility was leading the PBIS installation and implementation of the PBIS initiative as part of the district-wide strategic plan. The other members were two primary teachers, a middle school teacher and the school counselor. The team was required to attend the district-wide two-day kickoff of the program, which was held at the school district professional development center. Several schools attended the event, which included 5-6 staff members from each elementary, middle and high school from the school district. All members were expected to commit to both days of training to prepare for turning around the professional development to the staff of Gator Elementary School. The PBIS team

was selected by the school principal, and all shared a positive interest and commitment to supporting the school with the new initiative. The state recognized Gator Elementary for its commitment to implementing PBIS and the staff and students understanding of the Gator expectations. However, the progress and advancement of the program was put on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the efforts to transition the PBIS framework to the remote setting were limited and sometimes forgotten. Student engagement levels decreased, and teachers were looking for strategies and ideas to sustain, maintain and motivate students. Based on the data and the feedback from teachers the PBIS team had to collaborate and work together to recharge the staff and students and provide support to increase student engagement. The largest task was to determine how to transition from the paper tickets in brick and mortar to a virtual Gator Buck paperless reward system.

The three guiding questions used for this research were:

1. How does the implementation of PBIS impact student discipline referrals?
2. How do teachers perceive the implementation and effectiveness of PBIS?
3. How can teacher perception of PBIS create a positive culture within the school while guiding and supporting future implementation of PBIS?

Information from this study will provide the researcher data to examine and improve the overall implementation and effectiveness of PBIS at Gator Elementary and encourage positive behaviors to ensure academic success. The research questions developed for this study were meant to determine the PBIS impact on discipline referrals, teacher perception of PBIS, the effectiveness of PBIS in our school and suggestions for future PBIS implementation in our school. Question 1 was developed to determine the PBIS impact on discipline referrals and directly asks, “How does the implementation of

PBIS impact student discipline referrals?" To determine teacher perception and the effectiveness of PBIS in our school research question 2 askes, "How do teachers perceive the implementation and effectiveness of PBIS?" This question will provide information to determine the need for consistency for positive buy-in and successful implementation of PBIS.

Staff are likely to support PBIS practice once they experience the benefits of the framework (Pinkelman et al., 2015). There are varying differences in opinions of implementation with new staff and those experienced with the interventions (Baker et al., 2004). The final research question, "How can teacher perception of PBIS create a positive culture within the school while guiding and supporting future implementation of PBIS?" was developed to incorporate collaboration in modifying and improving PBIS implementation in our school. This question allows an opportunity for teachers and staff to give feedback and provide insight to enhance the framework. The researcher will work directly with staff to change the culture and climate of Gator Elementary.

Setting and Participants

This study was conducted at the place of employment of the researcher. The setting is in Allegheny County (Gator) Elementary School in Pittsburgh, PA. Gator Elementary School is PreK-8 grade school with a total student population of about 370 students. There are 48 full-time professional staff. Included in this total is one school counselor, a nurse, a speech therapist and a librarian who is split between two K-8 buildings. All teachers and staff are very active and take a vested interest in building relationships with students at all grade levels throughout the day. Excluding the researcher, the other 47 full-time staff members at Gator Elementary including the staff

that are split between schools were invited to participate in the study.

Gator Elementary School has had the PBIS program in place for the past three years. The program is identified as the Gator Expectations. Gator is an acronym that stands for Great Attitude, Attendance, Tolerance, On-Task, and Responsible. Each of these expectations represent a characteristic that Gator Elementary School expects students to follow. The Gator Expectations teach students expected behaviors and provides acknowledgments and rewards for following and complying with the identified expectations. The PBIS team meets monthly to share ideas, analyze data and determine the effectiveness of the PBIS framework.

Gator Elementary has had the same principal since 2006 and the school has a strong community base. Our PTO is very active in the academic and behavioral success of the student population. The current principal is well respected by the community, and he understands the importance of teacher perception and how it impacts the culture and climate of the school environment. The principal believes in challenging the students, but he also acknowledges that students need to be recognized for exhibiting good behaviors which motivates them to create a positive environment for others. Over the past 15 years Gator Elementary has been able to sustain the current staff who have built ongoing relationships with students as they move through the grade levels which subsequently results in a low number of referrals and suspensions.

The PBIS initiative was implemented by the Superintendent in 2018 in response to the increased referrals and suspensions throughout the school district. This district-wide initiative was put in place to reduce the referrals and suspensions throughout the schools. The kickoff for the program involved multiple teams from several schools to

learn the basics for getting the PBIS framework started in each building. The first task was to develop a 3–5-member team that was interested in attending the original PBIS kickoff, which was launched at the professional development center. At the school level the team was established and charged with identifying 3-5 expectations agreed upon by staff, that were used to develop our school-wide behavior matrix. Once the matrix was solidified, we created a schedule for teaching the school-wide expectations using lesson plans.

The most challenging part of implementing PBIS effectively within a K-8 was figuring out a way to offer rewards and incentives that were appropriate for each grade-band. The Gator Store was established, and the points values were in place to identify the different items that were offered. Teachers and other support staff were encouraged to give Gator Bucks to increase student attendance and participation during the months of January and February to acknowledge students for following the Gator expectations. Some teachers followed the appropriate guidelines for distributing Gator points while others over recognized the students causing inflation. The researcher met with a group of teachers to clarify the ways that students could earn Gator Bucks while maintaining an equitable distribution process. Teachers were given the option of implementing an alternative point system where students can earn several points during class. Using this alternative plan would require the teacher to convert those points into Gator Buck in order to maintain the equity within the PBIS framework. The researcher made a recommendation for teachers to only distribute Gator Bucks to students that truly earned and went above and beyond to follow the Gator expectation. Students need to understand

that Gator Bucks will only be given to students that continue to follow the Gator expectations and not recognized solely for complying with expected behaviors.

The PBIS team had to think outside of the box to identify creative ways to motivate the middle school students. The idea of establishing a Gator Extravaganza to help promote and get buy-in from the middle school students served to be a successful strategy. Students were given an opportunity to earn and save up Gator Bucks for a month to prepare for the Winter Gator Extravaganza. Students and teachers were excited, and we noticed an increase in the amount of Gator Bucks that were distributed by teachers and other staff. The PBIS team and researcher also worked directly with the school council to identify rewards and incentives that motivated the middle school students. The PBIS team worked with students from all grade-bands to finalize the plan for incentives to distribute for the monthly homeroom rewards. Students in all grade levels were motivated by these monthly incentives and looked forward to the competition with other homerooms while earning Gator Bucks for following the school expectations.

The Gator Elementary rewards and incentives include the Gator Store, monthly theme rewards, mystery rewards, Gator Extravaganza, Gator Clubs, whole-school, classroom, and individual rewards and incentives that occur throughout the year. The Gator store is offered weekly, and this is an opportunity for students to spend their Gator Bucks to purchase items in a store setting. The monthly theme rewards are based on an identified holiday and gives the homerooms an opportunity to compete to see which class can earn the most Gator Buck collectively to earn a reward. The mystery rewards are spontaneous events that occur during the lunch periods, and all students who currently possess a Gator Buck are eligible to participate. The Gator Extravaganza is a celebration

for all students that have earned at least 10 or more Gator Buck during the year and students are able to purchase different items, which occurs during the winter and spring. The Gator Clubs is a social event where students participate in a small group based on interest. Gator Elementary attempts to offer several rewards and incentives focusing on whole-school, classroom and individual events to allow all students any equal opportunity to earn and participate.

Participants for this study are all teachers, paraprofessionals, and other support staff within Gator Elementary. All 47 staff were asked to voluntarily participate in two different parts of the study. They were first asked to participate in a 29-question survey, created in Microsoft Forms. When the survey was offered to all 47 staff members, they were reminded that engaging in this study was a voluntary commitment and they could withdraw their submission at any time without explanation. Out of the 47 staff members, 30 completed the teacher perception survey. In the second part of the study, staff were asked to participate in responding to four open ended questions. All staff who participated in the survey were also invited to participate in the open-ended questions to help the researcher discover perceptions of the current implementation of the effectiveness of the PBIS school-wide system. Sixty-four percent (30/47) of the staff participated in the study. Four teachers were on leave, and 13 teachers and staff chose not to participate in the study.

Only four out of the 30 participants decided not to respond to the open-ended questions. A participant consent form (Appendix C) was created to satisfy the Institutional Review Board requirements and is included in the capstone paper. This study did not include student participants.

Intervention and Research Plan

The targeted intervention was adjusting and transitioning the Gator Elementary PBIS program to the remote setting. The transition plan was being implemented by the assistant principal and the PBIS Team, which included the school counselor, two regular education teachers and two PSE teachers. The assistant principal and the principal support the PBIS initiative and provided ongoing professional development to ensure transparency during the virtual setting. In the remote setting, the researcher oversaw and was responsible for observing half of the voluntary participants. The focus for adjusting and enhancing the PBIS framework was to increase student attendance and participation while building culture and climate. The intervention process was designed to analyze the impact that PBIS has on referrals and suspensions, identify how teachers perceive the current implementation and effectiveness of PBIS, and determine ways to support future implementation of PBIS. The proposed interventions were designed to create a positive environment while increasing the overall culture and climate of the building. These identified interventions will recognize the importance of culture and climate in the schools before addressing the reform efforts to improve student achievement (Dufour & Eaker, 1998).

Mathews et al. (2014) found that lack of follow-up support after initial training can jeopardize the overall implementation and effectiveness of a framework. This lack of support can also impact the culture and climate of the building. Foreman et al. (2009) further expresses the need for ongoing support to streamline the implementation process to ensure positive behavior intervention and support are weaved into the culture and climate of the school.

The first intervention plan was working with the staff to see what behaviors needed to be addressed in the remote setting. Based on behavioral data sent via email from staff, the researcher noticed most issues revolved around students inappropriately using the chat feature in Teams. Students were writing insulting comments, profanity and sometimes bullying. The staff would screenshot the chat interaction and forward it to the administration causing an increase in referrals. Other negative behaviors included students refusing to turn on their cameras and/or engage during instruction. Students would not unmute or participate in any way to show the teachers they were attending to class. Since students and staff were new teaching remotely and Microsoft Teams and the functionality of its features our team worked to develop expectations and creative ways to address online behaviors.

Transitioning from the traditional paper Gator Buck reward to the paperless system was the second intervention plan. In a remote setting, the paper system was a challenge and presented the PBIS team with barriers that were out of our control. The staff was struggling with finding creative ways to increase attendance, engagement and participation. The team had to act fast to implement a plan that would motivate and engage students in a remote setting. The researcher explored effective ways to implement PBIS rewards virtually since the traditional paper rewards were not viable. The researcher discovered the PBIS app and virtual reward system. The PBIS Rewards system was introduced to the team, staff and parents before finalizing the purchase. The PBIS team met several times to address the staff concerns and the value of using the paperless system to increase student engagement and attendance. The PBIS Team decided that this paperless reward system would benefit students in the remote setting

and provide a smooth transition where it can be continued in the traditional brick and mortar setting. This move to the paperless rewards program showed the staff that the PBIS Team valued their feedback and concerns and was willing to explore options for improvement.

The third intervention was finding ways to prepare and implement the Gator Store while following the CDC guidelines for distribution. The PBIS Team scheduled a voluntary Teams meeting to brainstorm and elicit ideas from staff members on reward items and ways to implement the Gator Store effectively in a virtual environment. Fourteen staff members attended the voluntary session to share ideas, and the PBIS representative captured notes to share with the PBIS Team. The PBIS Team met to discuss all possible options before finalizing a plan for implementing the new virtual Gator Store.

The PBIS program has been in place at Gator Elementary for three years, however it was necessary to make changes to improve the implementation as well as teacher consistency in utilizing the expectations and rewards. During the COVID-19 pandemic the researcher had to make some adjustments in order to implement PBIS in a remote setting while working with staff to increase student engagement, participation and attendance. The virtual, paperless rewards were necessary for remote instruction and will be used in future years as part of improving PBIS implementation within the school. Whether the students continue to learn remotely or return in a hybrid model, the PBIS team will continue to meet monthly via Microsoft Teams and work to support staff individually and collectively.

Research Design, Methods, and Data Collection

The design of this research was a mixed-methods study including both quantitative and qualitative data that was collected and analyzed for determining needs to improve PBIS implementation. The data collection methods used supported the research questions used for this study. All data points supported research question one giving the researcher multiple data points to determine the effectiveness of our PBIS implementation. The qualitative data points were useful in determining teacher perception and feelings towards the PBIS Framework and its implementation. Table 2 shows how the data methods are aligned to the research questions.

Table 2

Data Collection Method and Research Question Alignment

Research Question	Data Collection Method	Instrument
1. How does the implementation of PBIS impact student discipline referrals?	*Power BI Referral Data *PBIS Dashboard *PBIS Paperless Reward * Teacher Perception Survey and Open-Ended Questions	*School district purchased software reports. *Researcher developed Likert Scale Questions *Researcher developed open-ended questions.
2. How do teachers perceive the implementation and effectiveness of PBIS?	* Teacher Perception Survey and Open-Ended Questions	*Researcher developed Likert Scale Questions *Researcher developed open-ended questions.
3. How can teacher perception of PBIS create a positive culture within the school while guiding and supporting future implementation of PBIS?	* Teacher Perception Survey and Open-Ended Questions	*Researcher developed Likert Scale Questions *Researcher developed open-ended questions.

The quantitative data collected from student referrals and the teacher perception survey data (Appendix D) were used to evaluate and analyze teacher perceptions of the effectiveness of the PBIS school-wide framework. Student referral data was recovered

from the school district PBIS dashboard and Power BI database. The PBIS dashboard is used to examine the locations of the different infractions as well as identifying the time, day and nature of the incident. Power BI is a platform designed to compare the previous year data with the current year data to determine trends of the different behaviors. Both platforms allowed the researcher to run multiple reports to collect student discipline data.

For the purpose of this study, the reports collected provided the researcher with office managed and teacher managed referrals and long-term (10 or more days) and short-term suspensions (1-3 days) and expulsions. The office managed referrals are the referrals submitted and forwarded directly to the office for an administrator to review and manage. The teacher managed referral is based on the nature of the infraction, but the teacher is responsible for providing the intervention to curb or eliminate the behavior before it transitions into an office managed referral. In analyzing referral data, the researcher noticed some teachers submitted referrals, regardless of the infraction, to automatically be sent to administration. However, based on the district's code for student behaviors most infractions should be handled by the teachers. Based on the school discipline code, only the serious infractions such as student assault, drugs or weapons should be sent directly to administration. These are the discipline infractions that may or may not lead to magistrate charges, out-of-school suspension or expulsion.

The researcher believed that an effectively implemented use of PBIS expectation and rewards would support teachers in decreasing the minor disruptions before the need to refer to administration. The literature review indicates that token economies are an effective way to help address student behaviors. The token economy is a more proactive, and positive way to address problem behaviors in class (O'Leary & Drabman, 1971).

Another quantitative method used to collect data was how teachers responded to the transition from brick and mortar to the online PBIS Rewards system. Gator Elementary transitioned to the PBIS Rewards system, which included a web-based app that could be downloaded to any device. The PBIS Rewards paperless program is system that allows the PBIS Team to monitor and manage the Gator points/buck that are distributed to the students by different staff members. Like Power Bi, PBIS dashboard and eSchool Plus, the PBIS Rewards system can run various reports to help the PBIS Team collect data. Gator Elementary has a system that allows teachers to issue Gator Bucks as points via an app to students that follow the Gator expectations. Students and parents can both manage the balance of their PBIS Rewards account by utilizing the PBIS Rewards app or the Clever single sign on portal. The researcher and the PBIS Team tracked the Gator points to ensure the system was equitable. The PBIS Team ran reports to monitor teacher use and student total points to determine the effectiveness of the PBIS remote implementation. The data compiled from the paperless Rewards program was important in evaluating the impact that our token economy had on student behaviors. Token economies have many benefits and prevents problem behaviors from developing (Boniecki & Moore, 2003).

Gator Elementary has been in a full remote setting since March 15, 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The school began the 2020-2021 school year in a remote setting and well into the third report period we were still engaging students remotely. The researcher anticipated an increase in student referrals while working in an online environment. However, the student referrals decreased and the only observable infraction occurring was inappropriate use of the chat feature in Teams. Administration collaborated

with the tech department to disable the chat for students who exchanged inappropriate messages. The researcher combined the referral data for remote learning as well as referrals made in the previous year while in the brick and mortar setting to conduct the study. Ultimately, we need to decrease referral when we return to the traditional in school learning.

Before employing any adjustments to the PBIS program, a teacher perception survey was conducted and 30 out of 47 staff members participated. The action research used Likert survey questions and four open-ended feedback questions (Appendix D) to collect quantitative and qualitative data. This data was used to evaluate and analyze teacher perception on the effectiveness of the PBIS school-wide framework. The 29-question Likert survey was designed to gauge how teachers feel about their success with the PBIS implementation and how it effects student behavior and academics. The questions were divided into three sections: PBIS Impact on Student Behavior and Discipline; PBIS Implementation and Teacher Perception; and PBIS Implementation Impact on School Culture and Climate. All staff were also invited to voluntarily participate in the four open ended questions following the survey to elaborate more on their responses. Of the 30 participants responding to the survey, 26 also responded to the open-ended questions with only four choosing not to. (Figure 3)

Figure 3

Sample Survey Questions from Teacher/Staff Perception and Feedback Survey

PBIS Impact on Student Behavior and Discipline (#3 of 28)

3. I believe that PBIS helps decrease student discipline problems and increases positive behavior.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

PBIS Implementation and Teacher Perception (#12 of 28)

12. I consistently reward students using the PBIS reward system.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

PBIS Implementation Impact on School Culture and Climate (#19 of 28)

19. I believe that PBIS has helped improve student learning.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

Note: One question sample from each section of the Teacher/Staff Perception and Feedback Survey

Sample open-ended questions on The Teacher/Staff Perception and Feedback Survey.

30. What barriers or obstacles do you feel hinder the implementation of PBIS?

31. In your opinion, what effect has PBIS had on student behavior and discipline?

The open-ended questions acknowledged that staff may need more training and may experience barriers in implementing the framework as well as giving them the opportunity to make suggestions to improve our PBIS system. They also provided the

researcher with insight on how teachers feel the implementation of PBIS effects student behaviors.

The researcher added a few questions to include the remote learning. This small adjustment was necessary to ensure that the qualitative data collected provided an opportunity for the research questions to be appropriately address the current online setting. This remote learning decision was out of the researcher's control, so the researcher had to adjust some of the questions to reflect the setting during the study. The modifications and adaptations allowed the researcher to continue with the study with minimal changes.

The researcher obtained approval from the California University Institutional Review Board (IRB) (Appendix A) which allowed for initiation of the study. In addition, conduct of this study was approved by the school district's Office of Data Research Assessment and Evaluation. (Appendix B) At the start of the study, the researcher sent a consent form and a link to the Teacher Perception Survey asking staff to volunteer to participate. Participants completed via Microsoft Forms and digitally signed the consent form. Thirty participants completed the survey by the (October 31, 2020), resulting in a 64% completion rate. The survey gave the researcher an overview of the teacher perception on the overall implementation of PBIS. The responses were analyzed to determine satisfaction and identify the overall perception of the PBIS implementation.

The focus of the study was to obtain the teacher perception on the current implementation and effectiveness of the PBIS program. Even though the COVID -19 pandemic forced our school district to close temporarily for the 2020-2021 school year the researcher was still able to collect data to continue the study. The unforeseen

challenges did not change the purpose of the interventions or the measurable outcomes of the study. The researcher was able to adhere to the proposed timeline and did not need to submit a re-approval form with the Institutional Review Board (IRB) or School District Review Board.

The quantitative data collected from the Likert Scale survey (Appendix D) was used to determine the percentage of teachers satisfied and dissatisfied with the current implementation and effectiveness of PBIS. The data collected using the quantitative method included office managed referrals, out-of-school suspensions, expulsions and teacher perception data collected from the surveys. The collected data was retrieved from the previous year in the brick-and-mortar and in the current remote learning environment.

During this study, the paperless PBIS Rewards program at Gator Elementary rewarded and acknowledged students via a reward app where staff recognized students with points referred to as Gator Bucks. The point system was tracked and monitored by the PBIS Team. The data from the PBIS Rewards App provided the team with reports showing which teachers did or did not participate and how often they participated in the school-based reward system. The quantitative data collected showed our percentage of referrals decreased in the remote setting. The quantitative data compiled from the survey provided the researcher with information to answer the second research question, which focused on barriers and obstacles that hinder the implementation of PBIS.

According to Pinkelman et al. (2015) staff buy-in was the most frequently identified enabler and barrier in tiers of sustainability of PBIS. In addition, the participants agreed that staff buy-in was a key contributing factor for PBIS sustainability, but the lack of staff buy-in created significant barriers (Pinkelman et al., 2015).

Moreover, researchers found that a lack of ongoing support provided after the initial training can jeopardize the overall effectiveness of the sustained implementation (Coffey & Horner, 2012; Forman et al., 2009; Hume & McIntosh, 2013; Mathews et al., 2014).

Fiscal Implications

Implementing the PBIS program in the remote or hybrid setting will be a low cost for our school. The teachers and other staff members assist with implementing PBIS, so no additional salaries are needed. The PBIS system is part of the lesson plan and teachers assist with utilizing positive PBIS strategies within the class daily so no additional hours are needed. PBIS is located school-wide and in every class. All staff members have access to the strategies and trainings to successfully implement PBIS effectively throughout the five areas identified on the school-wide matrix. Staff can reward any students at any time throughout the day for following the Gator expectations.

According to Lindstrom, Johnson and Bradshaw (2016) the average cost is $12,400 per school, per year to successfully implement PBIS effectively. This operating cost includes professional development, rewards and activities. In our school we are not allotted a budget line for PBIS although it is requirement. Instead, we must budget out of our site-based monies and/or be creative with fundraising and donations to support the program. Since we had to transition in the remote setting, we decided to purchase the paperless PBIS Rewards program, which added an additional $1,400 to our yearly cost of incentives and rewards. Our largest cost is purchasing rewards and incentives for students to spend their Gator Bucks in a school store. Since we do not have a budget allotted for PBIS, schools must be creative in procuring funds for rewards. Our PTO (Parent Teacher Organization) has been supportive in purchasing some rewards for us. We have also been

able to receive donations from community resources. In addition, some of the rewards are free such as homework and missing assignment passes. PBIS provided a list of suggested reward options to offer in the Gator Store. Many of the reward options are free or low cost, but there are some that require a small cost. We have worked hard to find a way to successfully implement our PBIS program despite a specific budget from the district for PBIS.

An effective PBIS framework results in some cost savings and benefits. Increasing the culture and climate and taking a positive and proactive approach to managing behaviors will reduce the referrals and disruptions in class and loss of instruction. Scott and Barrett (2004) noted that 45 minutes of time were lost by teachers, students and administrators for each referral submitted. They also highlighted that one year of PBIS implementation will result in a cost savings of over $9,100.00 when you decrease problem behaviors. Maintaining and sustaining a positive PBIS framework will allow schools to keep the operating cost to a minimum when the PBIS framework is consistently implemented in the school.

Validity

Hendricks (2017) highlights the importance of choosing from several methods that will increase the trustworthiness and validity of your study: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Strategies that increase credibility are triangulation, accurate data recording and member checks, which help obtain accurate facts and focus on making correct interpretations and conclusions. Strategies that increase transferability include ongoing investigation with different participants and providing specific details within the study. These will help with analyzing the results in both brick

and mortar and the remote setting as well as the varying degrees of buy in from individual teachers. Strategies that increase dependability are triangulation, ongoing investigation with different participants and ensure findings are replicable. Accurate data recording, triangulation, member checks provide evidence of confirmability and void of research bias (Hendricks, 2017).

The researcher conducted this action research with participants that volunteered to respond to survey and open-ended questions. These participants all worked within the setting that the study took place, however they did not have a vested interest in the research. The researcher worked with a district external committee member regularly to trouble shoot and untangle ideas while engaging in the study. The researcher ensured the data was accurate through quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative data was collected using the PBIS dashboard, Power BI and the PBIS Rewards App system for reporting. All reports were retrieved with prior authorization and authenticated for accuracy. The researcher collaborated with the PBIS Team to identify potential inaccuracies with the data collected. The Qualitative data collected included the teacher perception survey and open-ended questions. All surveys were completed in Microsoft Forms with all completed responses stored in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet.

All participants were invited to participate in the open-ended questions. The member check strategy was utilized throughout the data collection stage to give participants an opportunity to clarify their thoughts, correct any errors and provide additional information which helped ensure validity of the study. Conducting these ongoing member check opportunities throughout the data collection phase helped to eliminate misrepresentation of the participants. Validation was represented throughout

the process of creating the teacher perception survey and open-ended questions to obtain specific information for the survey.

The researcher provided specific information about the setting, participants and intervention plan. Providing detailed information ensures clarity while maintaining transferability, dependability, and confirmability throughout the study. The study took place in an urban K-8 school with approximately 350 students. All attempts were made to keep biases to a minimum during the study. The researcher used many strategies such as member checks, accurate data recording, triangulation, and providing ongoing investigations with different participants to keep biases at bay from escalating throughout the data collection and analysis process.

Engaging the PBIS team in strategic and thoughtful planning throughout the study was imperative while preparing for the transition from brick and mortar to remote learning. The teacher perception survey and open-ended questions were administered online before the intervention plan was developed. The decision for remote learning was inconsistent and last minute, so the need for the intervention was not known until it became apparent, we would remain in a remote setting. The PBIS team met to determine an intervention that would allow teachers to successfully implement our reward system online. Data from the survey indicated teachers were satisfied with the paper Gator Buck system and reward store so the PBIS team researched an online equivalent paperless program that rewards with points via an app and/or website. The new system could be used the same as the paper system that had been used in brick and mortar which allowed for consistency and sustainability of PBIS successful implementation. As we utilized the intervention feedback suggested it enhanced our PBIS system. Subsequently, the

paperless reward app intervention in the remote setting will result in a seamless transition to brick in mortar.

Quantitative data strongly favors the PBIS implementation. The quantitative data from the teacher perception survey disproportionally shows agreement towards the effect of PBIS on increasing positive student behaviors and learning while decreasing negative behaviors and referrals. However, there is some disagreement that classroom disruptions have decreased. In addition, PBIS Dashboard reflects a decrease in referrals in all grade levels. Quantitative data shows teachers perceive the training received was adequate. The majority are also satisfied with the Gator Expectations. Most staff agree that PBIS positively effects the culture and climate of the school. However, the majority indicate that PBIS implementation was affected by the transition to remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Qualitative data from the open-ended responses reveal that staff would like more consequences and other forms of discipline as well as money for more incentives. It also indicated the concern for implementing PBIS during remote learning and the need for some modifications and adaptations. Triangulation consisted of the teacher perception Likert survey questions and open-ended responses which provided additional information for teacher's satisfaction and implementation.

Summary

The literature review of the PBIS system shows it is an effective intervention to build school climate and culture and change student behaviors positively when used consistently with staff and students. According to the research, discipline referrals will decrease, and academic performance will increase when teachers effectively implement the PBIS system. The researcher's mixed-methods study was designed to improve the

effectiveness and consistency of our implementation. By involving the teachers and staff in the process, the researcher's goal was to give value to their suggestions and ideas in the consideration of our PBIS system and increase the overall effectiveness of PBIS implementation. The collaboration and teamwork to create an effective program will help to build a positive school-wide culture and climate.

The qualitative data used in this study consisted of Likert scale survey questions to capture teacher perceptions and the open-ended questions that allowed for additional feedback and suggestions. The quantitative data consisted of referral data and the data obtained from the PBIS rewards system which will be triangulated to determine the success of the intervention plan. The qualitative and quantitative data showed teachers and staff at Gator Elementary believe our PBIS implementation positively impacts student academics and behavior success. Teachers and staff would like to see better consequences to address the more challenging behaviors existing within the school. The methods used provided sufficient data to analyze the relationship between teacher perceptions and the impact of PBIS implementation on student discipline and academics. A detailed analysis and interpretation of the mixed methods used in the data collection of this study and its results will be described in Chapter IV.

CHAPTER IV

Data Analysis and Results

This chapter analyzes the data from the research examining three areas measuring the effectiveness of the PBIS implementation at Gator Elementary. The three focus areas that guided this research include how the implementation of PBIS impacts student discipline referrals, how teachers perceive the implementation and effectiveness of PBIS, and how teacher perception of PBIS create a positive culture within the school while guiding and supporting future implementation of PBIS. An analysis of multiple sources of data that provided detailed results from the teacher perception survey, the student discipline data, and the results from the teacher open-ended questions will be presented. This chapter will also review the research questions, purpose of the study, provide a detailed description of the population, and identify the methodology of the study.

The purpose of this action research project is to determine the overall impact and effectiveness of the PBIS implementation. The investigation focuses on the positive impact and proactive approach that PBIS has on improving academics and reducing disruptive behaviors in class. Consistent and effective PBIS implementation will have a positive impact on the overall culture and climate of the school.

Research Questions

The following questions were used to guide this research study:

1. How does the implementation of PBIS impact student discipline referrals?
2. How do teachers perceive the implementation and effectiveness of PBIS?
3. How can teacher perception of PBIS create a positive culture within the school while guiding and supporting future implementation of PBIS?

Population

The population for the study consisted of teachers and support staff from kindergarten through eighth grade in the Pittsburgh Public Schools at Gator Elementary. Gator Elementary has 350 students with 48 staff members supporting the school.

The sample population for the study included teachers and staff from kindergarten through 8th grade who volunteered to complete the teacher perception survey for improving the overall effectiveness of the PBIS framework at Gator Elementary.

The entire Gator Elementary staff was invited to participate in the research study. Five teachers were out on COVID-19 leave and three teachers were absent during the time the study was introduced, resulting in 39 staff members receiving the invitation to participate in the study. However, only 30 staff members (77%) volunteered to complete the survey for the study. Nine staff members decided not to accept the invitation and opted not to participate in the research study.

All 30 staff members that volunteered to participate in the study completed an electronic survey that was administered using Microsoft Forms. A consent letter with the link included was sent to their school district email. The teacher perception survey consisted of 28 Likert scale questions along with three open-ended questions. The questions from the teacher perception survey were developed to answer the three focus questions that guide the research study and gain insight into the teachers' perceptions for improving the PBIS implementation. The information obtained from the surveys and the open-ended questions was designed to provide the researcher with data to improve the overall effectiveness of the PBIS framework to minimize behaviors and accelerate academics for all students.

The results of the survey and key findings of this study will be presented in this chapter. A mixed method of qualitative and quantitative data will be analyzed and discussed as they relate to the three identified research questions that guide this research study. This chapter is organized with the following sections: Introduction, Results, Explanation of data sources, Findings, and Summary.

Data Analysis and Results

This research study analyzed the teacher perception and how those perceptions affect the overall implementation and effectiveness of the PBIS framework at Gator Elementary. The success and challenges of the current implementation is referenced and identified in the quantitative and qualitative data provided in this chapter.

Historically, Gator Elementary on a typical school day is pleasant and peaceful as you walk through the hallways during transitional time. When you speak with teachers and other adult staff, they will tell you that, for the most part, our students are wonderful. However, there are a handful of challenging students that need some additional supports. The quantitative data identified in the discipline referrals and the out of school suspension chart align to what teachers share in their description of students. However, teacher-to-student relationships and the student-to-student interactions need to be improved to positively impact the school culture and learning environment. The teachers struggle to develop strong relationships with the students and tend to respond to misbehavior with a referral rather than engaging in a discussion with students. The researcher indicates to

the reader that this data is more useful in determining the overall effectiveness of the PBIS implementation in the school.

Interpretation of Referral and Suspension Data

Suspension and referral data was obtained from the PBIS Dashboard for a three-year period. 2017-2018 is the year prior to implementing the PBIS framework, 2018-2019 was the first full year of PBIS implementation and 2019-2020 was the second year of implementation. The data for 2019-2020 is only recorded through March due to school closures at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 3 shows the total number of referrals by month and year over the past three school year at Gator Elementary. These numbers reflect the referral and suspension data before PBIS implementation (2017-18), during the first year of PBIS implementation (2018-19) and the modified year during COVID-19 when school was forced into a 100% remote setting (2019-20). Gator Elementary is a K-8 configuration with 350 students and 40 professional staff. In 2017-2018, teachers and staff submitted 141 student referrals from September 2017 to June 2018. In 2018-2019 teachers and staff submitted 114 referrals. Referrals continued to decline in 2019-2020 with 62 between Sept. 2019 and March 2020 when were cut short by the COVID-19 pandemic and forced into a remote setting for all staff and students. In the remote setting, all inappropriate use of technology incidents were reported directly to the administration and discipline was determined based on the individual situation. But the downward trend is still evident in 2019-2020 referral data because March 2020 data (62 referrals) was 28 referrals less than the number of referrals by March 2019 (90 referrals). The data reflects a downward trend in referrals in the years PBIS was implemented. PBIS implementation began in 2018 and during the 2019-2020 school year our PBIS implementation was enhanced which had impact on increasing positive student behavior and decreasing referrals. In addition,

Gator Elementary added an assistant principal position for 2019-2020, who worked closely with the PBIS team and staff to increase the school culture and climate by providing a positive environment to help reduce the referrals and suspensions.

Table 3

Average Office Referrals by Month

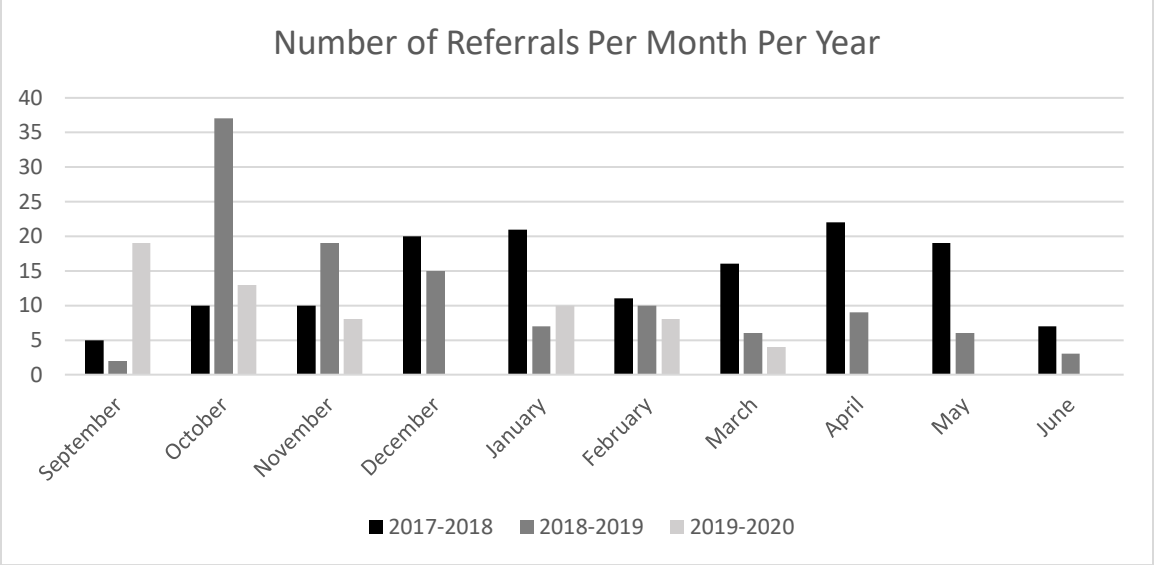


Table 4 shows the out-of-school suspension data trend for 2017-2020. The out-of-school suspension data is identified by unique incidents, total days of suspension, unique students and number of students with multiple suspensions. Unique incidents are the number of incidents that result in suspension(s). One incident may result in multiple student suspensions but will only count once. Total Days suspended is the sum of all suspension days given. Unique students suspended is the count of district students suspended. Students with multiple suspensions are only counted once. Students with multiple suspensions is the count of students who were suspended more than once throughout the school year. The data shows a slight decrease in out of school suspensions from 2017-2020. Although unique incidents decreased, the severity of the infractions

resulted in five long term suspensions causing the total days of suspension to dramatically increase. Four of the unique incidents required ten-days out of school suspension each, while one required a five-day consequence. One student was responsible for two of the long-term suspensions.

Table 4

Out of School Suspension Data

Gator Elementary Out-of-School Suspension Data			
	2017-2018	**2018-2019**	**2019-2020**
Unique Incidents	7	6	5
Total Days Suspended	7	7	45
Unique Students Suspended	5	5	4
Students with Multiple Suspensions	0	1	1

Interpretation of Teacher Perception Survey Data

The perception survey was sent to 39 participants. Thirty participants completed the survey, and all 30 participants provided an electronic signature on the voluntary consent for participation form. All participants were given time during the after-school staff development meeting to complete the voluntary perception survey and open-ended questions. The participants were all provided with an email reminder with a deadline to complete the survey before the link was set to expire. Failure to complete the survey with the signed consent form would forfeit their participation from the survey. Therefore, the data only includes the 30 participants that completed the survey on time and submitted the voluntary consent form to confirm their participation in the study.

The perception survey included two sources of data to provide quantitative and qualitative results. Quantitative data was collected from Likert scale questions, while qualitative data was collected through teacher responses to open-ended questions.

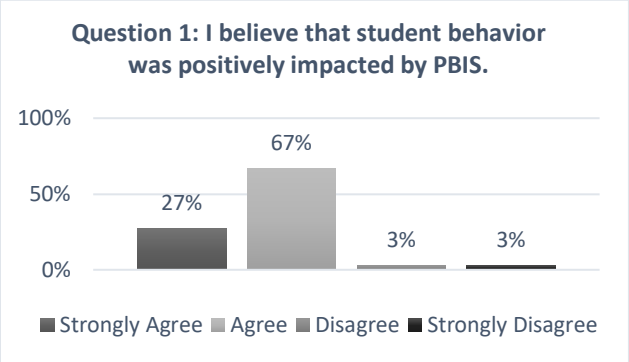
The first 28 questions of the perception survey included the Likert scale questions categorized into three sections guided by the research questions. Participants were provided with 28 questions and were asked to share their level of agreement to each question: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree.

Each Likert scale survey question was analyzed for mean, standard deviation, frequency and percentage. The mean (Appendix E) was calculated to find the average level of agreement scored on each question. The standard deviation (Appendix E) measures the spread of the distribution of responses selected for level of agreement to show how they vary or deviate from the mean. Please see the mean and standard deviation chart (Appendix E). Frequency and percentage were analyzed to determine the rate of each level of agreement chosen for each survey Likert scale question. This data provides information for the researcher to determine common trends in opinions among all staff participants. Figures 4-29 show the frequency and percentage results of each survey question.

Figure 4

Frequency and Percentage of Staff Agreement for Survey Question 1

Question 1: Overall, I believe that student behavior was positively impacted by PBIS.

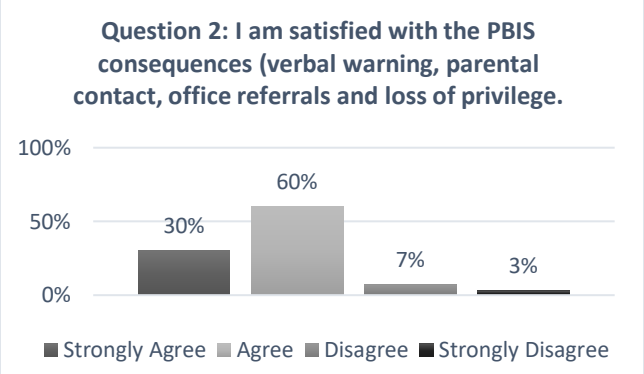


SQ1 Overall, I believe that student behavior was positively impacted by PBIS.			
	Frequency	Relative Frequency	Percentage
4-Strongly Agree	8	0.27	27%
3-Agree	20	0.67	67%
2-Disagree	1	0.03	3%
1-Strongly Disagree	1	0.03	3%
TOTAL	30		

The staff at Gator Elementary indicated on the first question that they believe that student behavior was positively impacted by PBIS (Figure 4). Of the 30 respondents, 27% strongly agreed and 67% agreed that student behavior was positively impacted by PBIS implementation. Only .07% of the participants responded to the first question with strongly disagreed or disagreed.

Figure 5

Frequency and Percentage of Staff Agreement for Survey Question 2



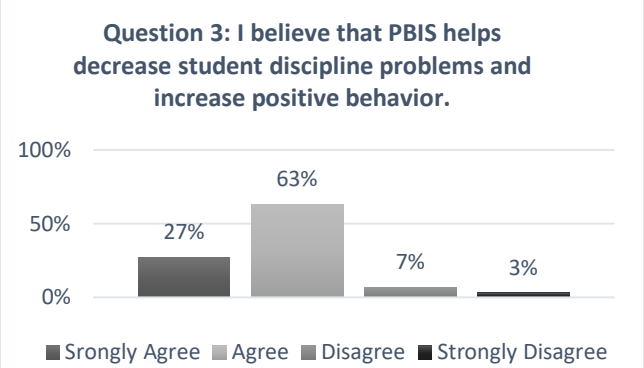
SQ2 I am satisfied with the PBIS consequences (verbal warning, parental contact, office referrals and loss of privilege.			
	Frequency	Relative Frequency	Percentage
4-Strongly Agree	9	0.30	30%
3-Agree	18	0.60	60%
2-Disagree	2	0.03	3%
1-Strongly Disagree	1	0.07	7%
TOTAL	30		

The results of the second survey questions indicated that most of the staff either strongly agreed or agree that they were satisfied with the PBIS consequences. (Figure 5).

Most of the participants had a positive response, 30%, strongly agreed. 60% of the participants agreed. Only 1% of the respondents strongly disagreed and the other .07% disagreed with being satisfied with the PBIS consequences.

Figure 6

Frequency and Percentage of Staff Agreement for Survey Question 3

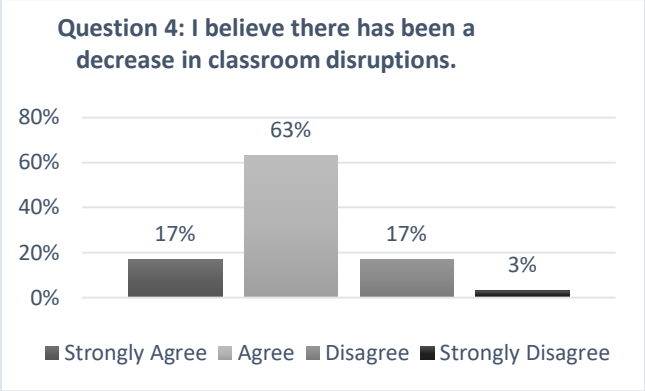


SQ3 I believe that PBIS helps decrease student discipline problems and increase positive behavior.			
	Frequency	Relative Frequency	Percentage
4-Strongly Agree	8	0.27	27%
3-Agree	19	0.63	63%
2-Disagree	2	0.03	3%
1-Strongly Disagree	1	0.07	7%
TOTAL	30		

The staff indicated overall that PBIS helps decrease student behavior, which relates to their knowledge about the interventions that are put in place to promote positive behaviors (Figure 6). This is evident with 93% of the participants selected Strongly agree and agree. Only one participant selected disagree and two participants responded with strongly disagree on PBIS helping to decrease student behaviors. The majority of the staff responded positively with 27% agreeing and 63% strongly agreeing with PBIS improving positive behaviors while decreasing student negative behaviors. Overall, 27 out of 30 participants that completed the survey responded positively about the PBIS impact on student behavior.

Figure 7

Frequency and Percentage of Staff Agreement for Survey Question 4

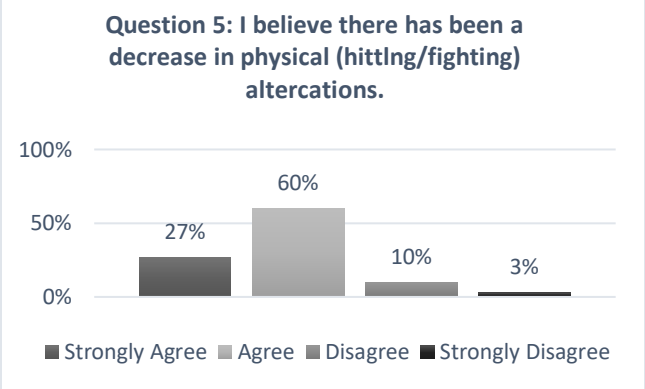


SQ4 I believe there has a been a decrease in classroom disruption.			
	Frequency	Relative Frequency	Percentage
4-Strongly Agree	5	0.17	17%
3-Agree	19	0.63	63%
2-Disagree	5	0.17	17%
1-Strongly Disagree	1	0.03	3%
TOTAL	30		

80% of all staff indicated that there has been a decrease in classroom disruptions (Figure 7). This included the 17% that strongly agreed and 63% agreed, only five participants, 17% disagreed and 3% strongly disagreed with classroom disruption being decreased with the PBIS framework.

Figure 8

Frequency and Percentage of Staff Agreement for Survey Question 5

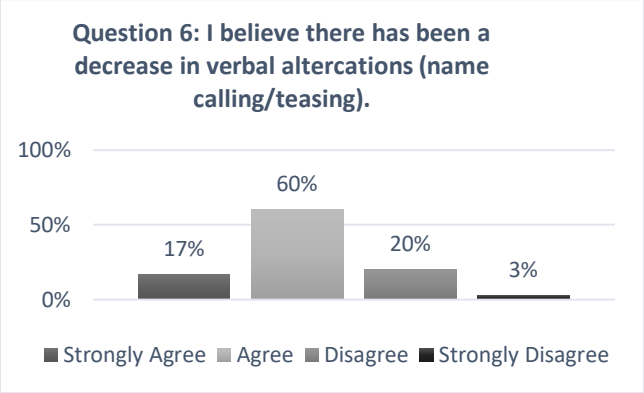


SQ5 I believe there has been a decrease in physical (hitting/fighting) altercations.			
	Frequency	Relative Frequency	Percentage
4-Strongly Agree	8	0.27	27%
3-Agree	18	0.60	60%
2-Disagree	3	0.10	10%
1-Strongly Disagree	1	0.03	3%
TOTAL	30		

Most staff believed that there was a decrease in physical altercations (Figure 8). This was evident in the 27% that stringy agreed and the 60% that agreed to the question. Three participants, 7% disagreed and one participant (3%) disagreed.

Figure 9

Frequency and Percentage of Staff Agreement for Survey Question 6

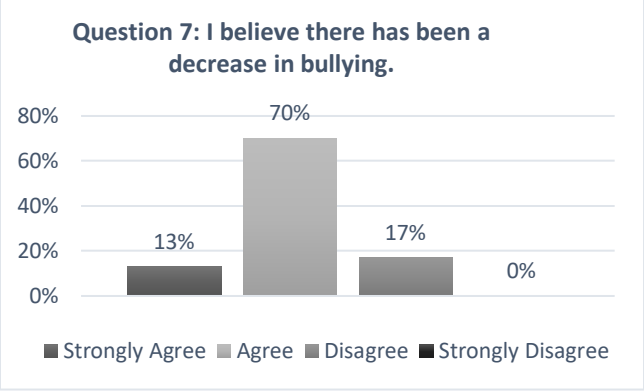


SQ6 I believe there has been a decrease in verbal altercations (name calling/teasing.			
	Frequency	Relative Frequency	Percentage
4-Strongly Agree	5	0.17	17%
3-Agree	18	0.60	60%
2-Disagree	6	0.20	20%
1-Strongly Disagree	1	0.03	3%
TOTAL	30		

Most of the participants answered positively when asked if they believed there was a decrease in verbal altercations (Figure 9). Of the 30 total participants, 17% strongly agreed to the question and 60% agreed. 6% of the participants disagreed while 3% strongly disagreed.

Figure 10

Frequency and Percentage of Staff Agreement for Survey Question 7



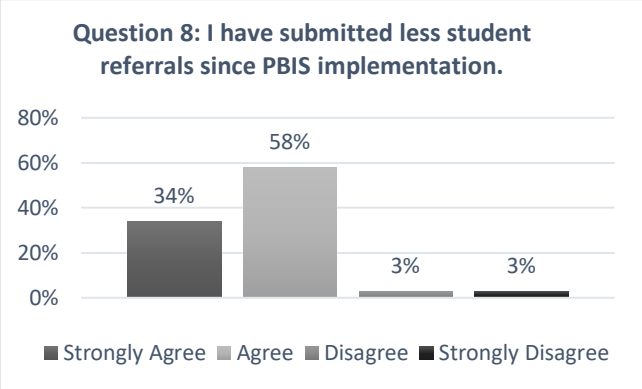
SQ7 I believe there has been a decrease in bullying.			
	Frequency	Relative Frequency	Percentage
4-Strongly Agree	4	0.13	13%
3-Agree	21	0.70	70%
2-Disagree	5	0.17	17%
1-Strongly Disagree	0	0.00	0%
TOTAL	30		

Twenty-nine of the thirty survey participants responded to question eight. Participants were asked to respond with their opinion regarding a decrease in bullying at Gator Elementary. In comparison to other questions, more agreement was found with this question, which related to bullying (Figure 10). Overall, 83% of the staff acknowledged

the decrease in bullying, with 13% strongly agreeing and 70% agreeing. However, five participants, 17% disagreed with the decrease in bullying.

Figure 11

Frequency and Percentage of Staff Agreement for Survey Question 8

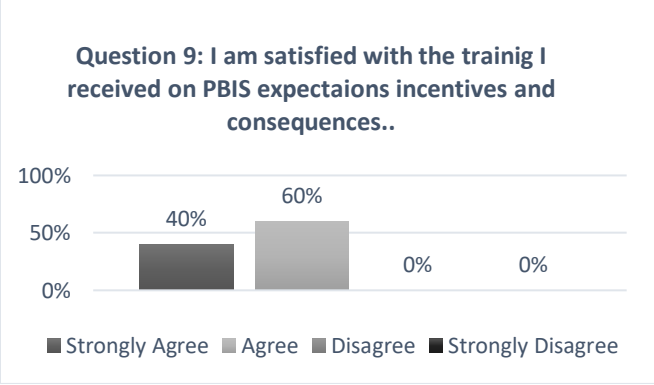


SQ8 I have submitted less student referrals since PBIS implementation.			
	Frequency	Relative Frequency	Percentage
4-Strongly Agree	10	0.34	34%
3-Agree	17	0.58	58%
2-Disagree	1	0.03	3%
1-Strongly Disagree	1	0.03	3%
TOTAL	29		

Twenty-nine of the thirty survey participants responded to question eight. Most participants indicated agreement with the question that they submitted less student referrals since the implementation of PBIS (Figure 11). Of the 29 participants that completed the survey questions, 58%, responded that they agree and 34%, strongly agreed with the statement. 3% of the participants disagreed and 3% strongly disagreed with the statement.

Figure 12

Frequency and Percentage of Staff Agreement for Survey Question 9

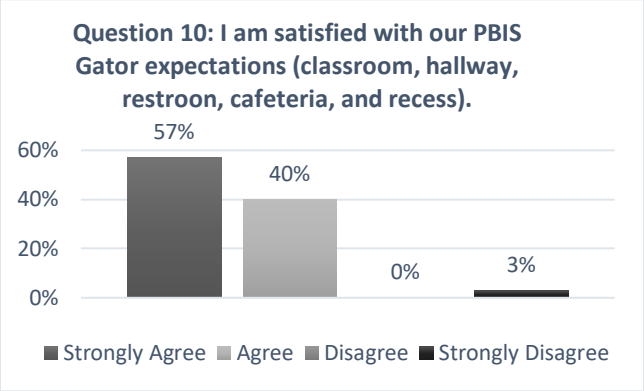


SQ9 I am satisfied with the training I received on PBIS expectations, incentives and consequences.			
	Frequency	Relative Frequency	Percentage
4-Strongly Agree	12	0.40	40%
3-Agree	18	0.60	60%
2-Disagree	0	0.00	0%
1-Strongly Disagree	0	0.00	0%
TOTAL	30		

Twenty-nine out of thirty participants indicated that they were satisfied with the PBIS training received (Figure 12). No participants disagreed with this statement. 83% of the staff responded positively to the question with 70% of the participants agreeing and 13%, strongly agreed with the PBIS training.

Figure 13

Frequency and Percentage of Staff Agreement for Survey Question 10

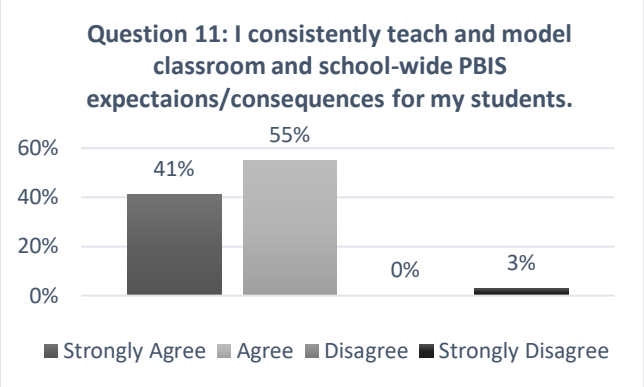


SQ10 I am satisfied with our PBIS Gator **expectations (classroom, hallway, restroom, cafeteria, and recess).**			
	Frequency	Relative Frequency	Percentage
4-Strongly Agree	17	0.57	57%
3-Agree	12	0.40	40%
2-Disagree	0	0.00	0%
1-Strongly Disagree	1	0.03	3%
TOTAL	30		

The participants were asked if they were satisfied with the PBIS Gator expectations in the respective areas throughout the building (Figure 13). Of the 20 respondents, one participant, 3%, responded that they strongly disagreed with the Gator expectations. The other 29 participants responded positively to the satisfaction with the Gator expectations, with 40% agreeing and 57% strongly agreeing with the Gator expectation satisfaction in the areas identified on the school-wide matrix.

Figure 14

Frequency and Percentage of Staff Agreement for Survey Question 11

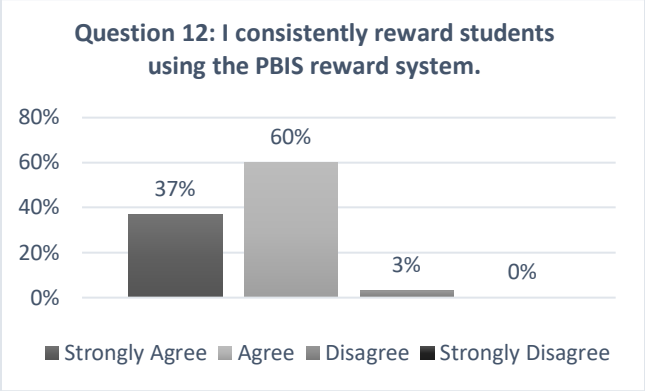


SQ11 I consistently teach and model classroom and school-wide PBIS expectations/consequences for my students.			
	Frequency	Relative Frequency	Percentage
4-Strongly Agree	12	0.41	41%
3-Agree	16	0.55	55%
2-Disagree	0	0.00	0%
1-Strongly Disagree	1	0.03	3%
TOTAL	29		

Twenty-nine of the thirty survey participants responded to question eleven. This question focused on consistently teaching and modeling school-wide expectations as well as employing consequences for students not following the expectations. Most of the participants responded positively when asked if they consistently taught and modeled expectations (Figure 14). One respondent indicated disagreement to teaching the expectations and one participant strongly disagreed with teaching the expectations and issuing consequences for negative behaviors. This represented 3% of the group. The remaining 28 out of 30 participants either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Sixteen respondents, 55%, reported that they agreed to teaching and modeling the expectations, and 12 of the participants, 41%, strongly agreed to teaching and modeling the expectations consistently during class.

Figure 15

Frequency and Percentage of Staff Agreement for Survey Question 12

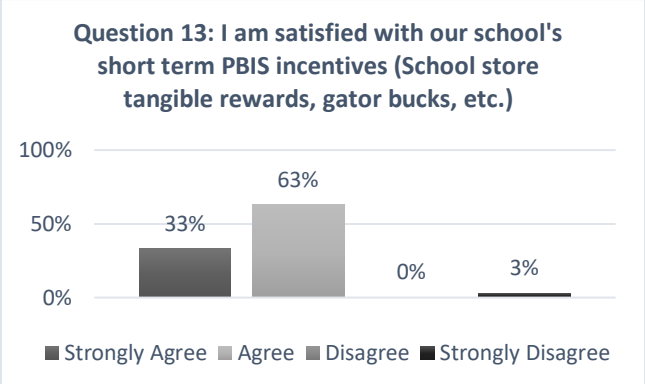


SQ12 I consistently reward students using the PBIS reward system. .			
	Frequency	Relative Frequency	Percentage
4-Strongly Agree	11	0.37	37%
3-Agree	18	0.60	60%
2-Disagree	1	0.03	3%
1-Strongly Disagree	0	0.00	0%
TOTAL	30		

In the area of rewards and incentives, almost 100% of the respondents agreed that they rewarded students consistently using the PBIS rewards system (Figure 15). Only one participant disagreed with using the PBIS rewards system. While 60% of the participants agreed that they utilize the reward system, 37% strongly agreed with consistently using the reward system for rewards and incentives.

Figure 16

Frequency and Percentage of Staff Agreement for Survey Question 13



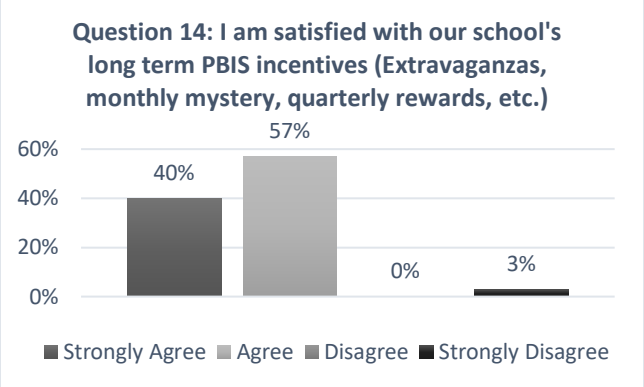
SQ13 I am satisfied with our school's short term PBIS incentives (School store, tangible rewards, gator bucks, etc.)			
	Frequency	Relative Frequency	Percentage
4-Strongly Agree	10	0.33	33%
3-Agree	19	0.63	63%
2-Disagree	0	0.00	0%
1-Strongly Disagree	1	0.03	3%
TOTAL	30		

The teachers seem to be satisfied with the short-term incentives with 29 participants responding positively to being satisfied with the incentive options (Figure 16). One respondent, who is 3% of the participants indicated a strong disagreement to the

short term PBIS incentives offered within the school. The remaining 29 respondents were very positive in their response with the satisfaction for short term incentives. 63% of the participants agreed with the incentives. While 33% of the participants indicated a strong agreement with their satisfaction level for the PBIS incentives for the short term such as the school store and Gator Buck distribution.

Figure 17

Frequency and Percentage of Staff Agreement for Survey Question 14

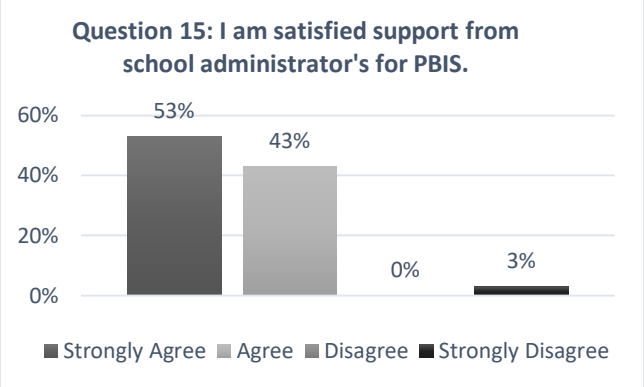


SQ14 I am satisfied with our school's long term PBIS incentives (Extravaganzas, monthly mystery, quarterly rewards, etc.)			
	Frequency	Relative Frequency	Percentage
4-Strongly Agree	12	0.40	40%
3-Agree	17	0.57	57%
2-Disagree	0	0.00	0%
1-Strongly Disagree	1	0.03	3%
TOTAL	30		

The long term PBIS incentive were very similar with the responses from 29 out of 30 of the participants showing agreement with the incentives (Figure 17). One respondent indicated a strong disagreement, which is 3% of the total survey participation. 57% of the respondents agreed with the long-term incentives and 40% of the participants strongly agreed with being satisfied with the PBIS incentives offered for long term rewards and incentives.

Figure 18

Frequency and Percentage of Staff Agreement for Survey Question 15

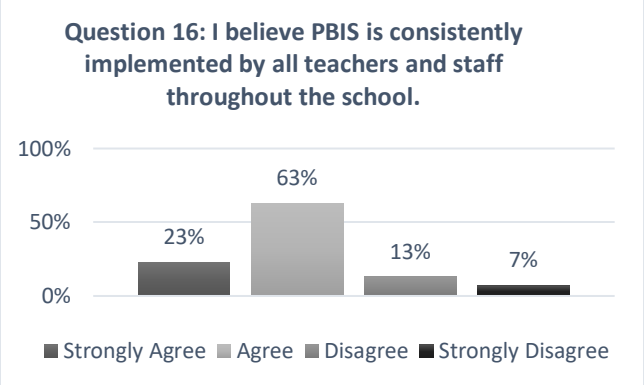


SQ15 I am satisfied with support from school administrator's for PBIS.			
	Frequency	Relative Frequency	Percentage
4-Strongly Agree	16	0.53	53%
3-Agree	13	0.43	43%
2-Disagree	0	0.00	0%
1-Strongly Disagree	1	0.03	3%
TOTAL	30		

Most of the participants are satisfied with the school administrative support for PBIS (Figure 18). While 53% of the participants strongly agreed and 43% agreed. The 3% representing one participant reported a strong disagreement to the administrative support statement. No participants disagreed with this statement.

Figure 19

Frequency and Percentage of Staff Agreement for Survey Question 16



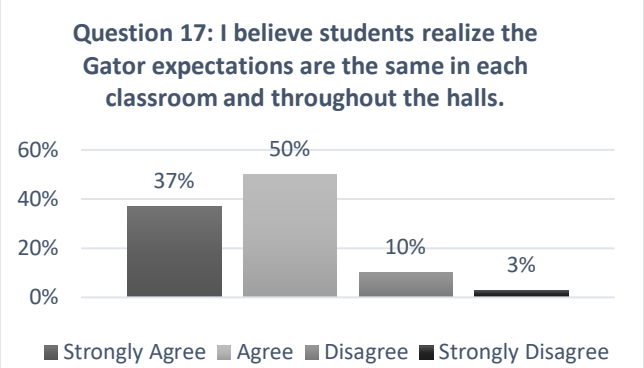
SQ16 I believe PBIS is consistently implemented by all teachers and staff throughout the school.			
	Frequency	Relative Frequency	Percentage
4-Strongly Agree	7	0.23	23%
3-Agree	19	0.63	63%
2-Disagree	4	0.13	13%
1-Strongly Disagree	0	0.00	0%
TOTAL	30		

The respondents believed that PBIS is consistent among all teachers and staff (Figure 19). This is evident in the responses of 4% of the participants disagreed with the statement. No respondents indicated strong disagreement. Many of the participants reported that they believe all teachers and staff implement PBIS consistently, with 63%

agreeing and 23% strongly agreeing with the consistent implementation of PBIS. Overall, only four of the 30 participants that completed the survey disagreed with the PBIS implementation.

Figure 20

Frequency and Percentage of Staff Agreement for Survey Question 17

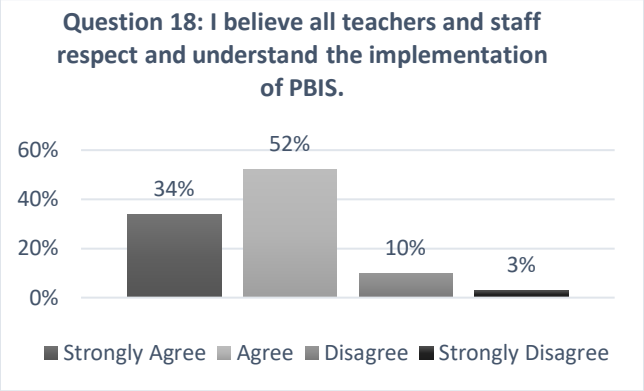


SQ17 I believe students realize the Gator expectations are the same in each classroom and throughout the halls.			
	Frequency	Relative Frequency	Percentage
4-Strongly Agree	11	0.37	37%
3-Agree	15	0.50	50%
2-Disagree	3	0.10	10%
1-Strongly Disagree	1	0.03	3%
TOTAL	30		

Twenty-nine of the thirty survey participants responded to question eighteen. Half of the participants indicated that the students realize the Gator expectations were the same in each classroom (Figure 20). This included the 33% that strongly agreed and 50% that agreed. Only four participants had a negative response to this statement with 3%, indicating disagreement and 3% strongly agreeing with the belief that students understood the similarities among the Great expectations across all classes.

Figure 21

Frequency and Percentage of Staff Agreement for Survey Question 18

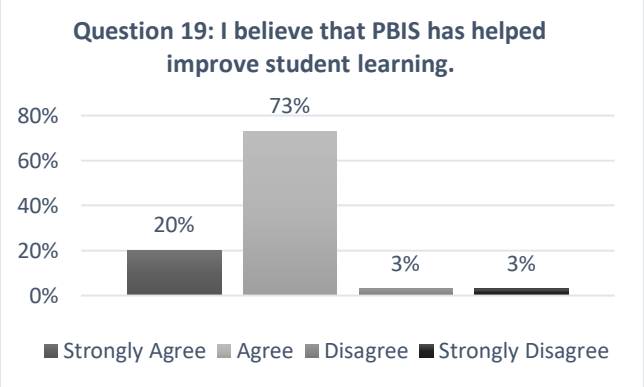


SQ18 I believe all teachers and staff respect and understand the implementation of PBIS.			
	Frequency	Relative Frequency	Percentage
4-Strongly Agree	10	0.34	34%
3-Agree	15	0.52	52%
2-Disagree	3	0.10	10%
1-Strongly Disagree	1	0.03	3%
TOTAL	29		

Most participants believe that all teachers and staff respect and understand the PBIS implementation (Figure 21). This is evident in the 33% that strongly agreed and the 50% that agreed to the question. Four respondents showed disagreement with respecting the PBIS implementation with 10% of the participants indicating disagreement and 3% strongly disagreeing with the respect and understanding toward implementation of PBIS.

Figure 22

Frequency and Percentage of Staff Agreement for Survey Question 19



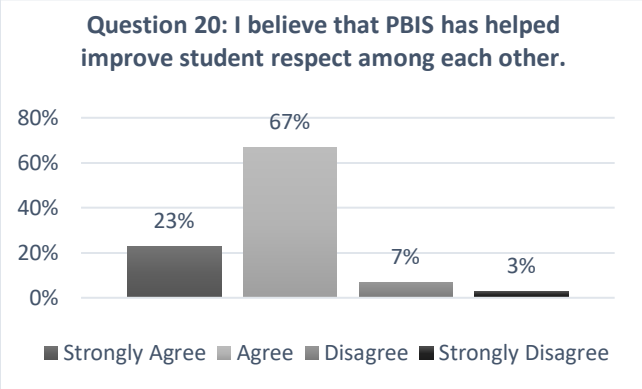
SQ19 I believe that PBIS has helped improve student learning.			
	Frequency	Relative Frequency	Percentage
4-Strongly Agree	6	0.20	20%
3-Agree	22	0.73	73%
2-Disagree	1	0.03	3%
1-Strongly Disagree	1	0.03	3%
TOTAL	30		

Most participants answered positively when asked if they believed that PBIS improved student learning (Figure 22). Of the 30 total participants, 20% strongly agreed

to the statement and 73% agreed that PBIS improved student outcomes. Only two participants, 6% indicated disagreement with the statement.

Figure 23

Frequency and Percentage of Staff Agreement for Survey Question 20

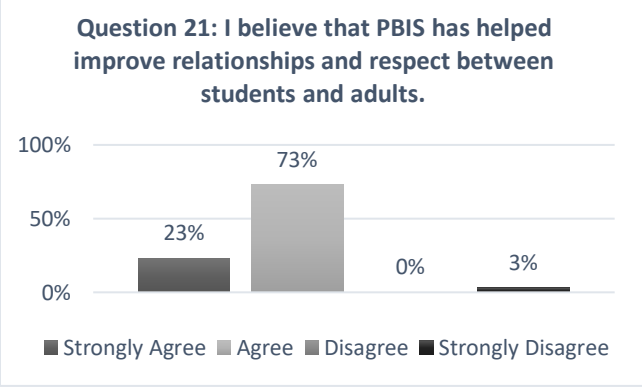


SQ20 I believe that PBIS has helped improve student respect among each other.			
	Frequency	Relative Frequency	Percentage
4-Strongly Agree	7	0.23	23%
3-Agree	20	0.67	67%
2-Disagree	2	0.07	7%
1-Strongly Disagree	1	0.03	3%
TOTAL	30		

Participants were all asked to respond to their belief on PBIS improving students respect toward one another (Figure 23). In comparison to other questions, the respondents have been consistent with the agreement in most of the survey questions. Overall, 90% of the participants believe that PBIS has improved student to student interaction., with 23% strongly agreeing and 67% agreeing. However, 10%, “of which” only three participants disagreed with the statement that PBIS has improved students respect toward each other.

Figure 24

Frequency and Percentage of Staff Agreement for Survey Question 21

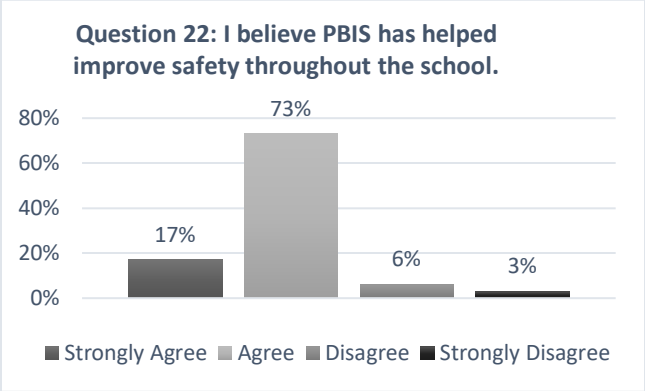


SQ21 I believe that PBIS has helped improve relationships and respect between students and adults.			
	Frequency	Relative Frequency	Percentage
4-Strongly Agree	7	0.23	23%
3-Agree	22	0.73	73%
2-Disagree	0	0.00	0%
1-Strongly Disagree	1	0.03	3%
TOTAL	30		

Several participants indicated agreement with the statement that PBIS improved relationships among students and staff (Figure 24). Almost three-quarters of the participants, 73% responded that they agreed and a little less than a quarter of them, 23% strongly agreed with the statement. No participants disagreed, however one participant indicated that they strongly disagreed with students and staff relationships being improved with the PBIS implementation.

Figure 25

Frequency and Percentage of Staff Agreement for Survey Question 22

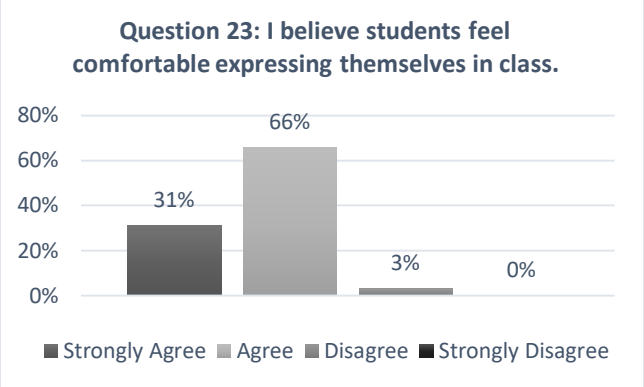


SQ22 I believe PBIS has helped improve safety throughout the school.			
	Frequency	Relative Frequency	Percentage
4-Strongly Agree	5	0.17	17%
3-Agree	22	0.73	73%
2-Disagree	2	0.06	6%
1-Strongly Disagree	1	0.03	3%
TOTAL	30		

Most participants indicated that PBIS improved safety throughout the building (Figure 25). Two participants disagreed, which is 6% and only one participant strongly disagreed with safety being improved with PBIS. The greatest number of participants agreed, at 73% and 17%, strongly agreed.

Figure 26

Frequency and Percentage of Staff Agreement for Survey Question 23

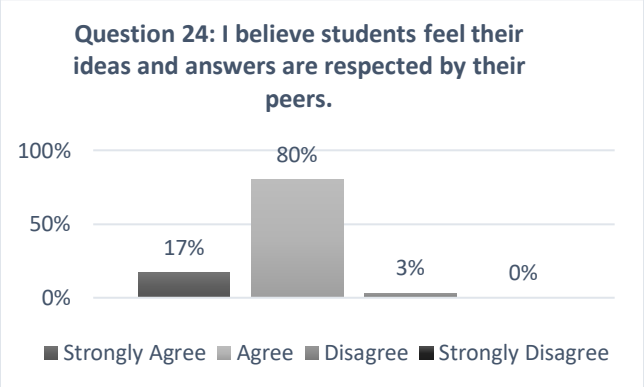


SQ23 I believe students feel comfortable expressing themselves in class			
	Frequency	Relative Frequency	Percentage
4-Strongly Agree	9	0.31	31%
3-Agree	19	0.66	66%
2-Disagree	1	0.03	3%
1-Strongly Disagree	0	0.00	0%
TOTAL	29		

Twenty-nine of the thirty survey participants responded to question twenty-three. Participants were asked if the students feel comfortable expressing themselves in class (Figure 26). Of the 29 participants, one participant, 3%, responded that they disagreed with students being comfortable expressing themselves in class. However, no participants indicated a strong disagreement with the statement. The other 28 participants responded positively to the statement, with 65% agreeing and 31% strongly agreeing with students confidently expressing themselves in class.

Figure 27

Frequency and Percentage of Staff Agreement for Survey Question 24

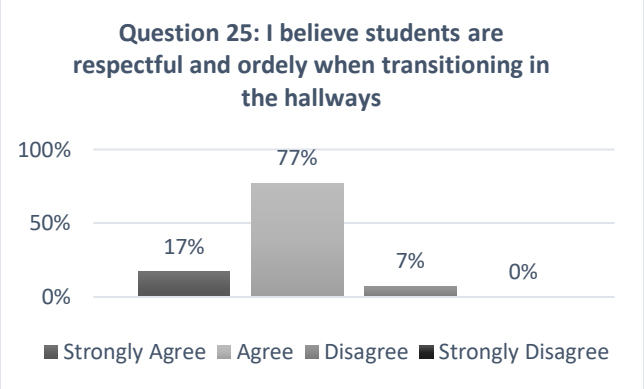


SQ24 I believe students feel their ideas and answers are respected by their peers.			
	Frequency	Relative Frequency	Percentage
4-Strongly Agree	5	0.17	17%
3-Agree	24	0.80	80%
2-Disagree	1	0.03	3%
1-Strongly Disagree	0	0.00	0%
TOTAL	30		

The next question related to student ideas and responses being valued by peers. When asked if the students voices were valued in class overall the participants showed agreement with this statement (Figure 27). No respondent indicated a strong disagreement to student's ideas being valued. In addition, only one participant, which represented 3% of the group, disagreed with the statement of students respecting other student's ideas and opinions. The remaining 29 out of 30 participants showed agreement to the statement. Twenty-three participants, 77%, reported that they agree, and five participants, 17%, strongly agreed that students were respectful to other students' ideas and responses in class.

Figure 28

Frequency and Percentage of Staff Agreement for Survey Question 25

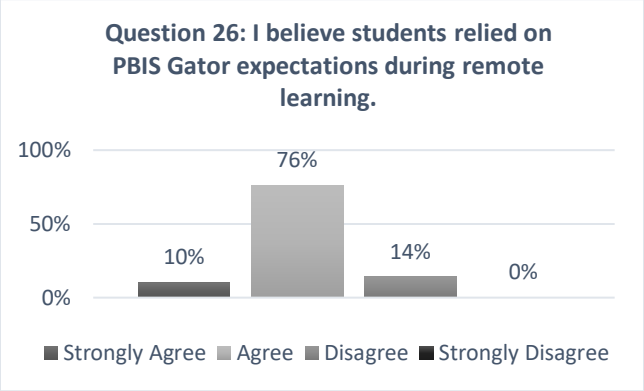


SQ25 I believe students are respectful and orderly when transitioning in the hallways.			
	Frequency	Relative Frequency	Percentage
4-Strongly Agree	5	0.17	17%
3-Agree	23	0.77	77%
2-Disagree	2	0.07	7%
1-Strongly Disagree	0	0.00	0%
TOTAL	30		

In this area of transitioning in the hallways, only 7% of the participants disagreed with students being respectful and orderly during transition (Figure 28). More than three-quarters of the participants, 77%, agreed with the statement and 17% strongly agreed that students were orderly when transitioned through the hallways.

Figure 29

Frequency and Percentage of Staff Agreement for Survey Question 26

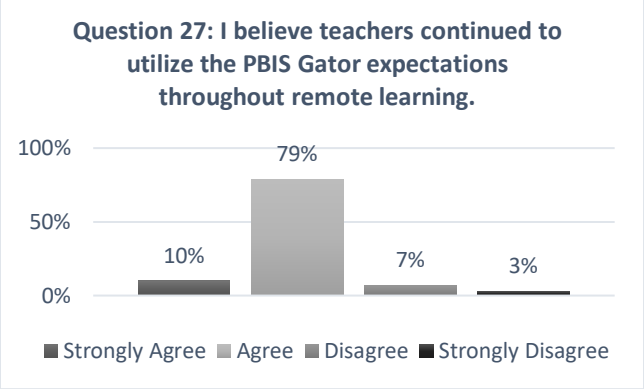


SQ26 I believe students relied on PBIS Gator expectations during remote learning.			
	Frequency	Relative Frequency	Percentage
4-Strongly Agree	3	0.10	10%
3-Agree	22	0.76	76%
2-Disagree	4	0.14	14%
1-Strongly Disagree	0	0.00	0%
TOTAL	29		

Twenty-nine of the thirty survey participants responded to question twenty-six. Many of the participants indicated that students relied on the Gator expectations during remote learning (Figure 29). Four participants, 14%, disagreed with the statement. Just over three-quarters of the staff, 76%, agreed and 10% of the participants strongly agreed with students relying on the PBIS Gator expectations during remote learning.

Figure 30

Frequency and Percentage of Staff Agreement for Survey Question 27



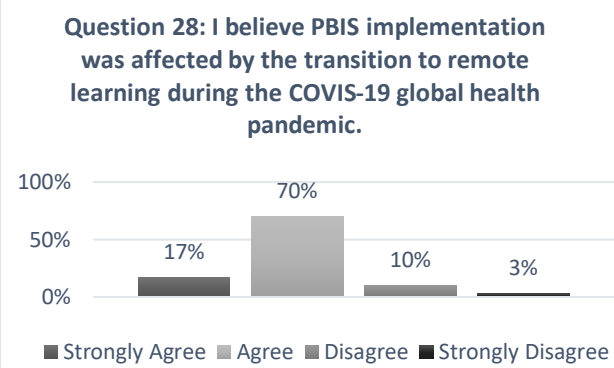
SQ27 I believe teachers continued to utilize the PBIS Gator expectations throughout remote learning.			
	Frequency	Relative Frequency	Percentage
4-Strongly Agree	3	0.10	10%
3-Agree	23	0.79	79%
2-Disagree	2	0.07	7%
1-Strongly Disagree	1	0.03	3%
TOTAL	29		

Twenty-nine of the thirty survey participants responded to question twenty-seven. Most of the participants believed that teachers utilized the Gator expectations throughout the remote learning environment (Figure 30). While 10% of the participants strongly

agreed and 79% agreed that students relied on the Gator expectations during remote learning. In contrast, to the total of 89% that positively responded, two participants, 7%, disagreed and only one participant, 3%, strongly disagreed with the students relying on the expectation while in the remote setting.

Figure 31

Frequency and Percentage of Staff Agreement for Survey Question 28

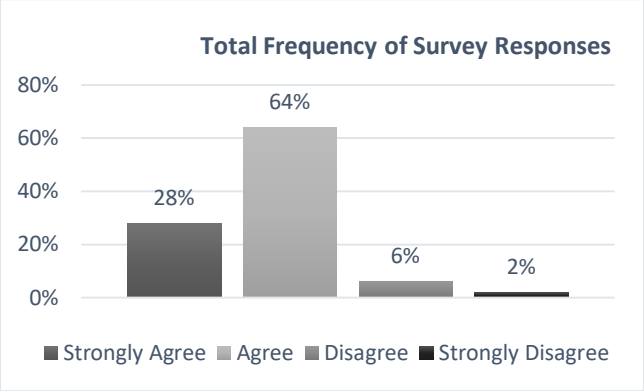


SQ28 I believe PBIS implementation was affected by the transition to remote learning during the COVID-19 global health pandemic.			
	Frequency	Relative Frequency	Percentage
4-Strongly Agree	5	0.17	17%
3-Agree	21	0.70	70%
2-Disagree	3	0.10	10%
1-Strongly Disagree	1	0.03	3%
TOTAL	30		

Most of the participants agreed that the PBIS framework was affected during the transition from brick-and-mortar to the remote setting (Figure 31). This included the 17% that strongly agreed and 70% agreed. Three participants responded in disagreement, which is 10% of the total respondents. Only one participant, 3%, indicated strong disagreement with the PBIS framework being affected during the remote environment.

Figure 32

Frequency and Percentage of Staff Agreement on all Survey Questions



Total Frequency of Survey Responses			
	Frequency	Relative Frequency	Percentage
4-Strongly Agree	230	0.28	28%
3-Agree	530	0.64	64%
2-Disagree	54	0.06	6%
1-Strongly Disagree	20	0.02	2%
TOTAL	834		

Figure 32 shows the results for all 28 questions. Overall, the teacher perception survey reflected a 92% positivity rate with 28% of the participants indicating strong agreement to the statements. While 64% of the participants showed agreement to the survey statements. However, 2% of the total participants indicated strong disagreement to the statements, and 6% indicated disagreement with the overall survey statements.

Interpretation of Open-Ended Survey Question Results

The Teacher Perception and feedback survey included four open-ended questions that allowed the participants to share additional thoughts and elaborate on the effects of our PBIS implementation. The qualitative data was collected and addressed each of the three research questions. The results for each open-ended question were categorized into themes. The data was reviewed, analyzed and separated into common themes.

The responses to these research questions were coded into three thematic categories: Implementation of PBIS based on training/barriers and the impact that PBIS has on student behavior and discipline. The third category asked the participants to provide additional thoughts or concerns about our implementation or suggestions to support future implementation of PBIS. Most responses had overlap in which the

information provided would fall into multiple coded categories. However, all responses were appropriately categorized based on the response.

Eighteen of the participants responded to the question, “What further training do you feel you need to improve school-wide implementation of PBIS?” One teacher wanted training on how to go further with PBIS. Another participant inquired about having a refresher training when we return to in-person instruction. One participant responded about needing more training on the hybrid model expectations.

Another participant reported that remote learning has thrown us a curveball, but the implementation of PBIS is still possible. The participants also stated how they would love to have time to hear what other staff members are doing to promote positive behavior. One participant reported how others could share anecdotally how they use the program and motivate students. Another participant would like training on making sure all staff were on the same page and expressed the importance of updating new staff about the expectations.

One participant expressed interest in learning ways to implement PBIS school-wide while in the remote setting. Another participant would like to see the students who show exceptional behavior get showcased within our school community. The participant also stated that rewards could include a picnic in the park, partner with a buddy during lunch once we are beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. One participant said training might not be necessary, however the participant would like to have a school-wide review. Another participant requested a meeting to come up with new ideas, incentives and ways to implement more effectively. One participant feels that everyone has been trained sufficiently on our school-wide implementation. Another participant would like

additional training on how to implement using remote learning/hybrid and how to keep positive behaviors consistent with middle school. One participant would like training on how to implement the Gator Rewards system and what rewards might be an option for students to earn in a remote or even hybrid setting.

Another participant reported the difficulty with ensuring that all staff is implementing PBIS with the same fidelity. The participant is also interested in learning how we can get all staff to buy in and maintain consistency with PBIS expectations? Another participant is interested in learning how to incorporate PBIS with hybrid and virtual learning environments. One participant wished our reward system was a bit more meaningful to harder to reach kids. Another participant would like training on basic review of expectations of PBIS.

Twenty-three participants responded to this question, “What barriers or obstacles do you feel hinder the implementation of PBIS?” One participant reported that the lack of funds is a huge barrier that hinders the PBIS implementation. Another participant stated that being virtual is a challenge. One participant reported that frustrated teachers is a barrier to the success of PBIS. Another participant stated that sometimes, it is more difficult for older children to feel success with the implementation.

One teacher reported that remote learning and implementation of PBIS could be a challenge because the students are not together. Another participant feels that the expectations are a bit too wordy. One participant believes that if some staff members do not take it as serious as others it can have a negative effect or possibly confuse younger students. Another participant. Another participant reported that school-wide incentives and collaboration during remote learning is a barrier when it comes to PBIS

implementation. The participant also stated that we need buy-in and have video assemblies to show everyone school-wide. The participant also shared that each team should take a month to do them with a common template.

The participant also stated that they feel separate and needs things to demonstrate togetherness. One participant reported that PBIS with remote learning is difficult. The participant also stated that students aren't getting reward like they did in the past. Another participant stated that hybrid is also difficult to award prizes. One participant responded that PBIS can be time consuming, not all teachers implement consistently. The participant also stated that gator bucks can be hard to deal with when you see several classes. One participant feels that remote learning and the lack of virtual incentives presented a challenge with PBIS implementation.

Another participant stated that one obstacle is adults having a true understanding of what PBIS is and opening their minds to buy into it. One participant stated that we need money to implement incentives for PBIS. Another participant responded with the resistance of some to change. One participant stated the consistency and effective implementation within nine grade spans. Another participant stated the need for money for more incentives.

One participant reported that some participants do not teach or follow gator expectations, so students do not see consistency throughout the building. One participant stated that they were not sure how to really implement the PBIS rewards for meeting Gator expectations during remote instruction. Another participant reported the lack of fidelity, consistency, and proficiency of staff members to follow through with the PBIS expectations. The participant also stated the need to keep the staff accountable. One

participant reported the difficulty in a hybrid and virtual learning environment. Another participant stated that remote learning was barrier that hindered the implementation of PBIS.

Twenty-four participants responded to the question, “In your opinion, what effect has PBIS had on student behavior and discipline?” One participant reported that PBIS has improved peer relationships. Another participant reported that students have more motivation to behave appropriately. One participant believed that PBIS taught them clear rules and expectations. Another participant believed that the students like rewards. One participant felt that PBIS has had some positive affect on the students. The participant also stated that PBIS pushes the students to think in a different manner. Another participant believed that PBIS had a positive effect on the students.

The participant also stated that PBIS offers structure and gives the students something to strive for, which we all need. One participant reported how the consistency of the program across grade levels and school locations make the PBIS framework effective. Another participant highlighted the positive aspects of the PBIS, which help to reduce the negative behaviors. One participant reported that PBIS has a clear understanding of the rules and the consistency across classrooms. The participants also stated that teachers who do not implement rules know they have to and gives them a support system. In addition, the participant believes that you can use the chart to discipline, so it becomes less arbitrary or seen as a personal attack versus everyone expected to adhere to the same rules.

One participant reported that primary students enjoyed the Gator rewards. The participant also stated that is it easy to get positive results from the little ones. Another

participant reported that students need positive reinforcements. One participant believed that PBIS helps kids focus on positive behaviors. Another participant reported that for some students it has been an incentive to self-monitor, but for others they believe that other steps need to be taken to support their progress. One participant reported that students respond well to the positive reinforcements.

Another participant reported that PBIS has had a positive effect on student behavior and relationships. One participant stated that we have had such a positive effect on student behavior and discipline. Another participant reported that Gator bucks, the store and gator expectations has had a positive effect on the majority of our students. One participant believed that students needed other forms of discipline. Another participant reported that teaching expectations for behavior makes students aware of their behavior, of appropriate behavior and makes them think things through. One participant stated that most of their classes had limited behavioral problems, but in some of the classes where there where discipline issues, we could have the class work together and remind them what they are working towards.

The participant also stated how some of those behaviors improved with PBIS. In addition, knowing that another class earned a certain reward seemed to motivate other classes to work toward the same reward or something similar. One participant stated that PBIS is a school-wide system. The participant also reported that the common language and expectations create an environment and school culture that is conducive for learning. Another participant believed that PBIS has been a wonderful tool, as a whole school system of promoting positive behavior. The participant also stated that the use of Gator bucks is effective. One participant reported that PBIS was effective for a lot of kids.

However, the participant wondered about the heavy hitters. The participants wondered what can be done with them.

Eleven participants responded to the question," Please add any additional thoughts or concerns about our implementation or suggestions to support future implementation of PBIS." One participant thought PBIS was a great addition to Gator Elementary. Another participant thought a school-wide assembly refresher would be nice when we returned to in-person instruction. One participant expressed interest in having someone breakdown PBIS and its origins would be helpful with getting people to put forth an honest effort to implement PBIS. Another participant would like to develop a strong system for remote learning. One participant stated having a meeting with administration during recess to remind and review the expectations with students, so they see the whole building connection from the top down. Another participant stated the importance of including a separate mental health or behavioral training with mental health or behavioral professionals that supports students and staff. The participant also stated that we need to be willing to admit that PBIS does not work for all students. In addition, the participants reported that teachers can only do so much in the classroom. Therefore, behavioral training needs to occur outside of the classroom when necessary. The participant also stated that allowing consistently disruptive students to control a room needs to stop. One participant reported that the PBIS team will need to change or add the Gator behaviors to reflect hybrid and virtual learning environments. Another participant reported that the younger students of Primary grades were the ones that seemed to respect the rules of PBIS the most.

The qualitative results further supported the need for this research study as teachers shared their individual feedback for ways to improve the current PBIS implementation for future improvement.

Correlation of Data to Research Question 1

Research question 1, "How does the implementation of PBIS impact student discipline referrals?" was supported by open-ended question number three. It asked participants, "What effect has PBIS had on student behavior and discipline?" Of the 30 responses, three themes emerged from the participant responses. These three themes consisted of 80% of the responses from the participants that responded to this open-ended question. The three main themes that emerged from the responses were students liking the rewards, students responding positively to the expectations and consistency and common school-wide expectations. Teachers feel that students behave positively when they like the rewards and incentives for following the expectation. Some responses are listed below.

- Students like rewards
- It is usually positive, at other schools some of the students could care less about the "rewards" so they continued negative behaviors.
- Primary students enjoyed the Gator rewards. It was easy to get positive results from the little ones!
- Students respond well to the positive reinforcements.
- Gator bucks, the store and gator expectations I think had a positive effect on most of our students.

Another prominent theme was students responding positively to expectations. Participants felt that students strive to behave to meet expectations. Some participant responses included in this theme are listed below.

- I feel that students have more motivation to behave appropriately.
- I feel that PBIS has had some positive effect on the students. Also, it is pushing them to think in a different manner.
- Very positive effect! There is a structure and gives the kids something to strive for -- and we ALL need that!
- I believe it helps kids focus on positive behaviors.
- For some students it has been an incentive to self-monitor behavior but for others....I think that other steps need to be taken to support their progress.
- I feel it has had a positive effect on student behavior and relationships.
- We've had such a positive effect on student behavior and discipline.
- I think teaching expectations for behavior makes students aware of their behavior, of appropriate behavior and makes them think things through.

The last theme that emerged was that participants believed that consistency and common expectations has impacted student behavior and discipline. Staff feel that having consistent school-wide expectations and explicitly teacher the expectation daily is the key to reducing student behaviors and discipline. Responses to the open-ended questions included in this theme are listed below.

- Taught them clear rules and expectations.
- I think the consistency of the program across grade levels and school locations (recess, lunchroom, etc.) makes it effective.

- clear understanding of the rules and that they are consistent across classrooms. Teachers who do not implement rules know they have to and gives them a support system. You can use the chart to discipline, so it becomes less arbitrary or seen as a personal attack vs. everyone is expected to adhere to the same rules.
- It is a schoolwide system! The common language and expectations create an environment and school culture that is conducive for learning.
- I believe that PBIS has been a wonderful tool, as a whole school system of promoting positive behavior. I think the use of Gator Bucks is effective.

Correlation of Data to Research Question 2

Research question 2, "How do teachers perceive the implementation and effectiveness of PBIS?" is supported by the first open-ended question. It asked, "What further training do you feel you need to improve school-wide implementation of PBIS?" Three themes emerged from the 30 survey responses. The three themes were implementing PBIS in a remote/hybrid setting, school-wide review and sharing ideas, and rewards and incentives. The first theme that was recorded from the teacher perception open ended survey questions dealt with the need for training to prepare for PBIS implementation in the remote and hybrid learning environment. The most common response was, "Ways to implement PBIS school-wide in a remote/hybrid setting." Additional open-ended responses are included below.

- Establishing hybrid model expectations for the return to in-class learning.

- Remote learning has thrown us a curveball, but the implementation of PBIS is still possible. I would love to have time to hear what other teachers are doing to promote positive behavior.
- Learning ways to implement PBIS school-wide while in the remote setting.
- How to implement using remote learning/hybrid (how to keep positive behavior consistent with middle school.
- It might be nice to have some instruction on how we can implement the GATOR reward system and what rewards might be an option for students to earn in a remote or even hybrid setting.
- How to incorporate PBIS with hybrid and virtual learning environments.
- I wish our reward system was a bit more meaningful to harder to reach kids.

Another theme that surfaced around further training was the need to improve PBIS school-wide implementation is on school-wide review and sharing ideas. Open-ended responses included in this theme are listed below.

- Make sure all staff is on the same page and update new staff with expectations.
- A refresher when we return to in person instruction.
- Teachers could share anecdotally how they use the program and motivate students.
- I don’t know if I would need training, but I would like to do a school-wide review.
- It is difficult to ensure that all teachers and staff are implementing PBIS with the same fidelity. How do we get all staff to buy in and maintain consistency with PBIS expectations?

- Basic Review of expectations of PBIS.

Research question 2, which is also supported by open-ended question number two which asked the participants, “What barriers or obstacles do you feel hinder the implementation of PBIS?” Open-ended question number two assisted with answering RQ2 as well. RQ2 attempts to find answers from the participants on identifying the challenges to help improve current implementation and effectiveness of the PBIS framework. Of the 30 responses, the data collected yielded three themes. The most obvious theme was staff inconsistencies with implementing the PBIS framework. Staff feel that all teachers and staff are very inconsistent among peers when implementing PBIS strategies in the classroom. Having ongoing training and support will help minimize the frustration and confusion with implementation when all staff is on the same page and have the same buy-in level with PBIS. Open-ended responses included in this theme are listed below.

- Frustrated teachers
- If some staff members do not take it as serious as others it can have a negative effect or possibly confuse younger students.
- Can be time consuming, not all teachers implement it consistently, gator bucks can be hard to deal with when you see several classes.
- The obstacle is adults having a true understanding of what PBIS is and opening their minds to buy into it.
- The resistance of some to change.
- consistency / effective implementation within 9 grade spans.

- Some teachers do not teach/follow Gator expectations, so students do not see consistency throughout the building.
- The lack of fidelity, consistency, and proficiency of staff members to follow through with the PBIS expectations. Keeping the staff accountable.

Another theme that surfaced around barriers or obstacles that may hinder the implementation of PBIS is the lack of funding. Staff feel that funding is necessary to sustain and maintain an effective program. Having a special budget line for PBIS will allow for effective planning of rewards and incentive for the entire year. Open-ended responses included in this theme are listed below.

- The lack of funds
- Money to implement incentives
- Money for more incentives

The third theme collected from the open-ended responses involved effective implementation in the remote and hybrid setting. Open-ended responses included in this theme are listed below.

- Remote learning and implementation of PBIS could be a challenge because the students are not together.
- School wide incentives and collaboration during remote learning. Buy in to have video assemblies to show everyone school wide. Maybe each team should take a month to do them with a common template. Feels separate need things to demonstrate togetherness.
- PBIS with remote learning is difficult. Students aren't getting rewards like they did in the past. Prizes----hybrid is also difficult to award prizes.

- Remote learning and the lack of virtual incentives
- I am not sure how to really implement the PBIS rewards for meeting GATOR expectations during remote instruction.
- Difficulty in a hybrid and virtual learning environment.

Correlation of Data to Research Question 3

Research question 3, "How can teacher perception of PBIS create a positive culture within the school while guiding and supporting teacher implementation of PBIS?" was supported by open-ended question number four. It asked participants, "Please add any additional thoughts or concerns about our implementation or suggestions to support future implementation of PBIS." Of the 30 respondents, three themes emerged from the participant responses. The main theme that surfaced from the open-ended question four was meeting with students and providing a PBIS refresher or monthly meeting. Staff feels that regular scheduled monthly meetings with students and consistent school-wide reviews need to be put into place as we transition from the remote to the hybrid learning environment. Some responses to the open-ended question that are included in this theme are listed below.

- A school-wide assembly refresher would be nice when we return to in person instruction.
- Maybe monthly meeting with you (during recess) to remind students/review so they make connection it is whole building all the time from the top down.
- From my observations, the younger students of Primary Grades were the ones that seemed to most respect the rules of PBIS.

- I my opinion if implemented correctly PBIS is a great tool to help motivate students.

Another prominent theme was implementing a school-wide review and a push for consistency in implementation. Participants felt that all staff need to be consistent with their approach to teaching and implementing PBIS in their classroom. Some participant responses included in this theme are listed below.

- Having someone breakdown PBIS and its origins would be helpful with getting people to put forth an honest effort to implement PBIS.

The last theme that emerged from the open-ended question was that participants expressed the need to adapt the PBIS implementation to the remote and hybrid setting.

Staff feel that having a plan to adapt the PBIS framework into the remote and hybrid learning environment will allow for a positive and more effective implementation. Some responses to the open-ended question that are included in this theme are listed below.

- Developing a strong system for remote learning.
- The PBIS team will need to change or add the Gator behaviors to reflect hybrid and virtual learning environments.

The third theme collected from the open-ended responses involved training around the rewards and incentives. Open-ended responses included in this theme are listed below.

- To look at how we go further with PBIS at Gator Elementary.
- I would like to see the students who show exceptional behavior get showcased within our school community. PTO shout outs or rewards. A reward to have a

picnic in the park…..Partner with a little one for a Buddy Lunch….I know C19 is really preventing a lot of these incentives, but maybe in the future???

- Meetings to come up with new ideas/incentives/implementation.
- I wish our reward system was a bit more meaningful to harder to reach kids.

These four open-ended questions addressed each of the three research questions that guided this research study. In each question, themes were presented on how to improve the overall effectiveness of the PBIS implementation. As with the quantitative data, the qualitative data supports the reality that staff members need supports from their PBIS team to effectively implement the PBIS framework. It also highlights the consistent themes that need to be considered as we collaborate with staff to enhance and improve the overall effectiveness to support future implementation of PBIS.

Discussion

This study utilized a mixed-methods research approach of data collection. The surveys conducted through Microsoft Forms to staff contained a mixture of both quantitative and qualitative questions that were written in parallel with one another. This study included 28 Likert-style questions that provided quantitative data and four open-ended questions that provided qualitative data. Participants responses to Likert-style questions yielded data that was numerically examined through quantitative data analysis. Staff participants' names were converted to a numerical value for data interpretation. Strongly agree converted to a 4, agree to a 3, disagree to a 2 and strongly disagree was given a value of 1. Data analysis yielded percentages of responses to each of the four variables per question. Mean and standard deviation were also calculated. Mean is the average level of agreement. Standard deviation provided the spread of data distribution

from the mean. Qualitative analysis was utilized to examine participant responses to open-ended questions to identify common trends in opinions among all staff participants. Participant responses to open-ended questions were organized into themes that were based on recurring words or phrases. The emergent trends that resulted were further analyzed and grouped according to similarities.

Summary

The data obtained from this study will be analyzed to develop trends and themes based on the information collected from the teacher perception survey to enhance the overall effectiveness of the PBIS implementation at Gator Elementary. Surveys conducted with teachers and other support staff allowed for the collection of data regarding the teacher perceptions of the current implementation of Positive Behavior Support and Intervention with the K-8 school. The goal of this study was to determine the consistency and effectiveness of implementation, to identify areas in need of improvement and how to gain stronger teacher buy-in. In addition, it will help determine any need for more professional development and level of support for teachers to gain a better understanding and efficacy of the PBIS school-wide framework.

Analysis of the collected data indicates that teachers and other support staff responded similarly regarding the research questions that were created to drive this study. It was obvious that most staff believe that more funds are needed to successfully implement the PBIS in a remote setting. In addition, staff members indicated the need for more training to prepare for the remote and hybrid setting. Using electronic surveys, I was able to collect quantitative and qualitative data to gain teacher perceptions and satisfaction to determine strategies and ideas to improve the overall effectiveness of the

PBIS framework in our school. Based on the data collected from the surveys and open-ended questions, the findings will be analyzed to discover positive responses and evaluate perception of our implementation of the effectiveness of the PBIS school-wide framework. The data will also help determine the root cause of why inconsistencies exist and evidence of barriers for consistent implementation. Chapter IV focused on the results from the school discipline data, teacher perception survey and open-ended questions. The purpose was to determine the most effective way to implement PBIS at Gator Elementary. To measure the results of the study multiple data points were analyzed and reported in charts and graphs. The interpretation is corroborated when triangulating the multiple sources of data collected: the PBIS Dashboard discipline data, teacher perception Likert survey questions and the open-ended questions. Results helped the researcher develop answers to the three research questions that guided the study. The results of this study will be further be discussed in Chapter V, along with conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER V

Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter provides a review of the purpose of this study and research questions, followed by conclusion, future directions for research, and a summary. The purpose of this study was to explore the teacher perception to get feedback and suggestions to improve the current PBIS implementation and effectiveness. The research cited in this study supports the idea that such an understanding may offer some insight on best practices and effective research strategies to improve the PBIS framework. This research study was designed to assess teacher perception to promote the use of PBIS to improve the overall implementation and effectiveness of school-wide PBIS. The results of the study will impact positive student behavior and school culture with the goal of accelerating student achievement. Implementation is significantly impacted when teachers contribute to the decision-making process and offer suggestions for improvement. When teachers feel valued and participate in the planning, changes are more likely to occur and take place in the educational setting. We need to focus on improving schools by establishing accountability using data to develop, guide and sustain improvement to accelerate student learning (Fullan & Steigelbauer, 1991; Massell, 1998; Schmoker, 2000).

The researcher examined the following research questions:

Research Question 1 (RQ1): How does the implementation of PBIS impact student discipline referrals?

Research Question 2 (RQ2): How do teachers perceive the implementation and effectiveness of PBIS?

Research Question 3 (RQ3): How can teacher perception of PBIS create a positive culture within the school while guiding and supporting future implementation of PBIS?

Conclusion

The implementation of PBIS needed some improvements to maintain the effectiveness of the framework. The survey results on the overall effectiveness of the PBIS implementation helped the researcher obtain the teacher perceptions and opinion of the school-wide PBIS framework. This feedback helped the researcher improve the overall effectiveness of the PBIS implementation. The feedback from the study allowed the researcher to have a better understanding of the staff's perception on the effectiveness of PBIS. Only 30 staff members participated in the study of 48 total staff in the school, which could be negatively interpreted when reviewing the effectiveness of PBIS. The survey analyzed the participant's perceptions and feedback through survey questions that were categorized into three distinct areas. The four open-ended questions and the Likert style survey addressed each individual research question.

Obtaining the teacher's perceptions and opinion of the school-wide PBIS framework will allow us to improve the overall effectiveness and implementation in order to receive the best outcome for all students. Schools that have implemented PBIS have reduced discipline problems while improving overall academic performance.

Conclusion Statements

The goal of this study was to determine the teacher perception on the overall effectiveness and implementation of Positive Behavior Intervention and Support. (PBIS). Several conclusions were obtained as a result of this research study.

Conclusion 1. School-wide collaboration and refresher of the PBIS framework is needed for teachers to better understand how to effectively implement PBIS in the classroom. Fifty percent of the 26 survey participants expressed the need for a refresher

of the PBIS framework for transparency. Ongoing check-ins and having time during the school day for staff to collaborate with colleagues would benefit the individual and collective implementation. Based on the open-ended questions, staff feel that they need additional time during weekly meetings to share ideas and best PBIS practices.

Based on feedback the researcher suggests staff work in small groups during ESEP time to address specific topics and troubleshoot some solutions before presenting the proposals to the PBIS team. Streamlining the discussions will allow each participant to voice their concerns and give some suggestions for improvement before the decision is reviewed by the PBIS team and submitted to administration for approval. In order to ensure buy-in staff must feel that their voice is heard, and their ideas are considered for PBIS based decisions.

Conclusion 2. Rewards and incentives need to be adjusted. Forty percent of the 26 survey participants believed rewards and incentives need to be adjusted based on grade level. At first, the rewards and incentives were solely determined by the PBIS team and shared out to the staff with dates and times that the school store would be open for students to shop. Most of these shopping times took place during the three lunch periods. The responses from the teacher perception survey also corroborated with the staff survey data highlighting the need to improve the reward and incentive options for all students based on their grade band.

Monthly rewards and incentives were purchased for under $2000 to support the store for students earning gator bucks for following the Gator expectations. In addition, the PBIS team attempted to implement some no-cost incentives and the teachers pushed back especially with the lunch with your favorite teacher. This free incentive just

validates the need for ongoing communication with the staff to get feedback and buy in before implementing the plan. Other incentives such as gift cards and raffles seem to be very popular with most of the middle school students. These big-ticket items that are popular and attract the student interest provide additional cost for the PBIS team due to the high interest and the cost to sustain and maintain this level of prizes.

Based on the survey results, the PBIS team decided to open the big Gator extravaganza events to the whole school and not just for the middle school students. This transition made the Gator Store more desirable for all students, and we increased the selection of items to appeal to students in every grade level. All students, regardless of their grade level were able to find something of interest to give them more motivation to follow the school's expectations to earn Gator Bucks for the store.

The PBIS team has decided to increase the types of rewards and incentive for students. In the paperless reward system teachers give points. The points will be able to be redeemed for activities such as dances, athletic events, assemblies and some field trips. By increasing the kinds of rewards teachers will have the autonomy to reward students as frequently as they deem necessary to promote appropriate behaviors. A calendar will be created with dates for the PBIS Gator Point events so students are motivated to set goals for working towards participation in these events.

Conclusion 3. A need exists for a specific budget for PBIS. Fifty percent of the 26 survey participants noted that PBIS should have a specific budget line. The lack of funding presents a challenge in what is offered in the Gator Store. Relying on donations and finding additional funding from the site-based budget can be challenging when trying to prepare events and activities throughout the year to sustain and maintain the positive

and proactive setting. Staff indicated that having a specific budget line will allow the school to have more flexibility when it comes to planning and preparation for upcoming PBIS sanction events.

The administration will continue to collaborate with the PBIS team to obtain donations from community members, PTO and site-based budget to offset the rising cost of the PBIS rewards. Although the overall operating cost for PBIS is low, having a specific budget line will enhance the reward options. Securing a budget line just for PBIS will provide more opportunities and experiences to acknowledge more students for following the school-wide expectations.

The PBIS team will work with the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) to create specific fundraising events for PBIS. We will establish a calendar of events quarterly to support funding to purchase rewards and incentives for the Gator Store and Gator Extravaganza.

Conclusion 4. Modification and adjustments are necessary to implement PBIS in a remote and hybrid setting. Forty percent of the 26 survey participants indicated the need to modify and adjust the PBIS implementation in a remote/hybrid setting. Eighty-seven percent of the staff feel that PBIS was affected by remote learning and indicated the need for support and guidance on how to implement PBIS while we were in a full remote instructional model. Teachers experienced challenges in engaging and motivating students and wanted a plan to continue PBIS implementation virtually.

The researcher obtained funding from administration to purchase the PBIS paperless reward system which allows teachers to give points via an app or through the website. Students also have access to their account and the online store created within the

school account. Implementing the new paperless reward system was an excellent way to enhance PBIS and made it more efficient as we transitioned from full remote to the hybrid learning model. Subsequently, this system will provide a smooth transition from remote and hybrid back to traditional in person schooling in future years.

Conclusion 5. Strategies are needed for addressing the challenging students who do not respond to Gator Bucks or points. Forty percent of the 26 survey participants expressed the need to provide more interventions for students not responding to the gator Rewards system. Staff indicated that we need consequences or interventions for the students not responding to PBIS Tier 1 Interventions of Gator Expectations. The PBIS Team and administration will work together to solidify a Tier 2 team to assist with addressing the students that may not be responding to the Tier 1 interventions and need additional supports.

Fiscal Implications

Implementing the PBIS program in the remote or hybrid setting will be a low cost for our school. The teachers and other staff members assist with implementing PBIS, so no additional salaries are needed. The PBIS system is part of the lesson plan and teachers assist with utilizing positive PBIS strategies within the class daily so no additional hours are needed. PBIS is located school-wide and in every class. All staff members have access to the strategies and trainings to support and enhance the successful implementation of PBIS. Staff can reward any students at any time throughout the day for following the Gator expectations.

According to Lindstrom et al. (2016) the average cost is $12,400 per school, per year to successfully implement PBIS effectively. This operating cost includes

professional development, rewards and activities. In our school we are not allotted a budget line for PBIS despite it being a requirement. Instead, we must budget out of our site-based monies and/or be creative with fundraising and donations to support the program. Since we had to transition in the remote setting, we decided to purchase the paperless PBIS Rewards program, which added an additional $1,400 to our yearly cost of incentives and rewards. Our largest cost is purchasing rewards and incentives for students to spend their Gator Bucks in a school store. Since we do not have a budget allotted for PBIS, schools must be creative in procuring funds for rewards. Our PTO (Parent Teacher Organization) has been supportive in purchasing some rewards for us. We have also been able to receive donations from community resources. In addition, some of the rewards are free such as homework and missing assignment passes. PBIS provided a list of suggested reward options to offer in the Gator Store. Many of the reward options are free or low cost, but there are some that require a small cost. We have worked hard to find a way to successfully implement our PBIS program despite a lack of a specific budget from the district for PBIS.

An effective implementation of the PBIS framework can result into some cost savings and benefits. Increasing the culture and climate and taking a positive and proactive approach to managing behaviors will reduce the referrals and disruptions in class and loss of instruction. Scott and Barrett (2004) noted that 45 minutes of time was lost by teachers, students and administrators for each referral submitted. They also highlighted that one year of PBIS implementation will result in a cost savings of over $9,100.00 when you decrease problem behaviors. Maintaining and sustaining a positive PBIS framework will allow schools to keep the operating cost to a minimum when the

PBIS framework is consistently implemented in the school.

Limitations

The researcher was faced with unexpected challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the school district's decision for students to remain in a full remote setting. We did not begin an in-person learning until April 6th when students gradually returned to a hybrid model in stages based on need. The researcher was limited during the eight months of remote learning due to the inability to personally interact with staff and students. This made it difficult to observe the student-to-student and teacher-to-student interactions and the development of respect and rapport in the remote setting. Being in a remote setting leaves little opportunity for informal conversations with teachers that would provide information on PBIS implementation. It also limits collaboration for sharing ideas for enhancing the classroom implementation. Students were not able to share their gator buck accomplishments during recess or in the hallway, which eliminates opportunities to promote positive school climate. Highlighting their successes and the verbal praise for meeting expectations is as important to them as the tangible reward.

Population/Sample Population

The population for this study included teachers, support staff, paraprofessionals, a nurse and a speech therapist that worked with students across all grade levels (K-8) at Gator Elementary. Gator Elementary has 350 students in Grades K-8 and 48 staff members. All staff members were invited to participate in the study. Teachers and support staff that were split between two or more building were also invited to participate.

Methodology

Staff participated voluntarily in the teacher perception through the Likert survey and open-ended questions which were guided by three research questions. The participants completed a survey on the current implementation of PBIS created in Microsoft Forms and distributed electronically. The staff indicated their level of agreement on the PBIS impact on student behavior/discipline, school culture and teacher perception on the overall effectiveness of the PBIS implementation. The participants completed the survey and were given open-ended feedback questions to provide more specific details about the effects of the PBIS framework.

A qualitative and quantitative research approach was used, and the researcher increased the validity by triangulating Likert Scale Survey questions, open-ended questions and PBIS Dashboard discipline data. The data was analyzed to determine how to improve our implementation. Each research question will be aligned to the intervention plan combining what the data in the study showed and what was learned in the review of literature. Results will be used to make improvements and changes to our implementation of PBIS. Subsequently, results will be shared at administrative network sessions for implementation in other schools to create ongoing collaboration on improving PBIS district-wide.

Chapter one of this capstone study presented the introduction to the research and the purpose for selecting this topic. Chapter two highlighted the review of literature and how the literature validated the impact that Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) has on school climate and culture. Chapter three concentrated on the methodology components which included the purpose, setting, participants, intervention and research

plan and data collection. Chapter four included the results of all triangulated data sources which also included the results of the intervention with a detailed description and analysis of the collected data. Chapter five included the conclusion, limitations, recommendations and suggestions for future research and a summary of the study results.

Recommendations

The three research questions provided the framework for data collection that identified specific areas based on staff perceptions to improve the effectiveness of the PBIS implementation. The first research question addressed the further training needed to improve the school-wide implementation of PBIS. The second research question focused on the barriers or obstacles that hinder the implementation of PBIS. The third research question concentrated on the effects that PBIS had on student behavior and discipline. Lastly, the fourth research question encouraged all staff to add additional thoughts or concerns about the implementation or suggestions to support future implementation of PBIS. This included the perceptions that staff offered to enhance or improve the current PBIS implementation to accelerate learning and reach academic success.

Based on the results of the data collected from the teacher perception survey, as well as the literature review, an intervention plan for improving the PBIS framework has been developed for the staff at Gator Elementary. The first goal of the intervention plan is working with the staff to see what behaviors needed to be addressed in the remote setting. The second intervention plan is assisting the staff with transitioning from the traditional paper Gator Buck reward to the paperless system. The third intervention is modifying and improving the Gator Reward Store. While in the hybrid learning model, we need to create a safe and efficient way to prepare and implement the Gator Store while following the

CDC guidelines for distribution. In addition, we need to expand the reward options to meet the interests of all grade levels. The adjustments from the intervention plan were based on the staff feedback and will be implemented as we transition into full in-school learning for the upcoming school year.

When responding to the open-ended survey questions, several staff stated the need for additional funding to effectively implement the PBIS framework within the school. Other staff members expressed the need to establish an effective plan to implement PBIS in a remote and hybrid setting as we transition back to in-class learning. Following these recommendations, staff will participate in ongoing professional development sessions on Wednesdays (12:15-3:00pm) or during ESEP (Essential Staff Educational Practices) time on Tuesdays and Thursdays (for 3:00pm-3:30pm) the remainder of the school year. These PD sessions will take place during the current 2021 school year on select dates for the months of April, May and June.

The PBIS professional development sessions will be planned and conducted by the PBIS team. Many participants responded to open-ended questions with feedback regarding school-wide reviews to give staff an opportunity to discuss and share ideas around incentives for all grade levels. Multiple comments were also made that indicated the need to address the inconsistencies of staff implementation and plan fundraisers to offset the lack of funds to support the overall effectiveness and implementation of PBIS. These topics will be addressed during the identified PBIS professional development sessions. The PBIS team will review the feedback from the survey and open-ended questions to determine the level of need and supports for staff to successfully implement PBIS.

Research Question 1

Question one asks, "How does the implementation of PBIS impact student discipline referrals?" The PBIS dashboard discipline referral and suspension data indicate a decrease in student behaviors since the implementation of PBIS. Teachers explicitly taught expectations for all areas in the school. Teachers incorporated the PBIS framework into their daily lessons and reinforced the expectations through role modeling exercises and incentives. Student-teacher relationships improved when teachers explained appropriate behaviors and acknowledged students with Gator Bucks. Student to student interactions became more positive and respectful in classrooms and throughout the school. Subsequently, fewer referrals were submitted to administration.

Research Question 2

Research question 2 asks, "How do teachers perceive the implementation and effectiveness of PBIS?" Results from the teacher perception survey and open-ended questions show some teachers believe in the value of PBIS and the impact it had on increasing positive behavior. They were able to appreciate the benefit of rewarding positive behavior rather than punishing and using traditional efforts to address negative behaviors. Other teachers implemented inconsistently creating mixed messages to the students when they were rewarded positively in one classroom, but not receiving the same result in another. Overall, teachers feel PBIS was positively impacting the school and the students, however, they want to collaborate more to enhance how they implement PBIS. They also want a review of expectations and procedures to ensure all staff are on the same page with effective PBIS implementation.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the teachers and staff lost trust in the PBIS framework since they could not figure out how to implement virtually. I worked with the team to modify the PBIS reward system in the remote learning environment. When Gator Elementary transitioned to full remote there was a lack of engagement and motivation, and teachers were seeking ways to increase student participation. They had limited strategies for engaging students in learning remotely.

The researcher met with all staff to obtain feedback to see why students were disengaged and opting out of their education. Teachers and other staff members informed the researcher that most of the middle school students had their cameras off and they rarely participated in the class discussion unless they were called on and sometimes, they would just not respond or participate even after several prompts. The PBIS worked to get all students back on track and to find a way to increase student engagement and participation in class. The researcher presented the PBIS team with the PBIS Rewards paperless program. The researcher also shared the program with the PTO and both parties were willing to try the new paperless reward system. The hope was to train the teachers to implement the new PBIS Rewards system to increase student engagement. After a few months of implementing the new paperless rewards system both the PTO and the Gator Elementary staff were pleased with the results.

The researcher started to see improvements with student engagement and participation. Teachers' perceptions about the PBIS implementation were revived and the culture and climate started to increase positively in the remote setting. The researcher and PBIS Team will continue to support teachers with the new PBIS Rewards system while working to enhance the overall effectiveness of the PBIS implementation as we transition

from the full remote to the hybrid setting.

Research Question 3

Question three asks, "How can teacher perception of PBIS create a positive culture within the school while guiding and supporting future implementation of PBIS?" The teachers feel Gator rewards impact our school culture and increase student motivation, engagement and participation. It allows the teachers and staff to discuss appropriate behaviors and create a positive rapport with students. Our PBIS implementation positively impacts the school climate when teachers work with students to explicitly teach expectations and students model and learn appropriate behaviors from one another. In the full remote setting teacher's ability to connect with students was lost and they needed to identify a way to positively connect with students to promote the Gator expectations.

During the remote setting we were forced to decide on how we were going to continue to distribute the Gator Bucks in the remote setting. The staff and PBIS team were both presented with a paperless rewards program that satisfied the remote setting with the intention to transition the reward system in the hybrid and eventually in the traditional brick and mortar school setting. Gator Elementary's only option was acknowledging the students with badges from Schoology, which did not align to our Gator Expectations and difficult to transfer into "Gator Bucks" and redeem at a school store. It seemed like an overwhelming task when trying to manage all students across all grade levels. It made the most sense for our school to transition to a paperless reward system, which allowed us to continue our plan with offering the virtual Gator Store for all students K-8.

All students were acknowledged and recognized for following the Gator expectations and given paperless Gator Bucks/points to be used in our Gator extravaganza event. The teachers were all given 30 Gator Bucks/points per day to distribute to any student following the Gator expectations. When students receive a gator buck/point the teacher checks the appropriate expectation box to identify the reason for earning a gator buck. This immediate reward provides an explanation and praise that identify the reason why the student received the tickets. Once the student receives a Gator Buck/point the data is ready for the PBIS team to run the report to how many students received the Gator Bucks/points and why they received the point. The paperless rewards systems have many benefits and features to offer. This reward system is easy for students to use, and the parents and students can monitor the system directly from their cell phone or other devices.

The discipline data was reviewed and analyzed along with the teacher perception survey and open-ended questions to determine the overall effectiveness and suggestions for improving the current implementation for Gator Elementary. Working with the staff to analyze and assess the current PBIS implementation allowed staff an opportunity to engage in the decision-making process while collaborating with colleagues to enhance and improve the PBIS framework. The more we allowed staff to share ideas and offer suggestions ownership of the intervention plan increased as we saw more teachers offer suggestions or praise the new paperless system and additional rewards. By providing these collaborative opportunities throughout the year we improved our efforts to increase the culture and climate at Gator Elementary. The researcher will continue to encourage staff collaboration to maintain consistent and innovative practices and rewards. Fullan

(2000) noted that schools with a collaborative culture do not take on new practices, but they are selective and work to ensure that the innovations implemented closely connect to the established goals the school is addressing. In addition, schools with collaborative cultures actively attack incoherence as they focus on established goals and use resources effectively and efficiently.

Recommendations for Future Research

This capstone study generated many ideas and suggestions for future research. These suggested improvements can be modified and adjusted to implement at Gator Elementary or any other school that is implementing the PBIS framework within the school district. This capstone research study was proposed as a mixed-methods research project that engaged the researcher in reviewing and analyzing both quantitative and qualitative research data.

The recommendation is for Gator Elementary to continue to complete the Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI) two times a year to examine the overall effectiveness of the PBIS implementation of the framework. Sugai and Horner (2010) indicated that ongoing collection of data needs to be analyzed and shared with teachers, so they can determine the supports that students need to be successful. This assessment helps the PBIS team, and the Learning Environment Specialist (LES) determine the level of need and support that the school needs based on component ratings. These ratings are scaled on 0-2 rubric with not implemented being a 0, partially implemented a 1 and full implementation being a 2. The TFI was developed by The Office of Special Programs (OSEP) Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. The purpose of the assessment is to provide an accurate measurement for implementation of the key features

to examine the reliability and efficiency (Algozzine et al., 2019). In addition, the school PBIS Team was asked to conduct interviews using the TFI walkthrough tool to randomly select and interview five teachers and ten students to record their responses to the specific questions to determine their knowledge of the expectations. These assessments are generally done two times per year and shared with the LES for continued support.

During the COVID pandemic the school based PBIS team was asked to complete the TFI walkthrough tool which required two or more PBIS team members to conduct the interviews. The interview consisted of the PBIS team member asking ten students across all grade levels (K-8) questions about the school-wide Gator expectations. In addition, the PBIS team member was required to ask five teachers questions- about the Gator expectations. The PBIS team was asked to assist the LES (Learning Environment Specialist) with the interview process during in-person learning to limit the traffic in each school building and to eliminate any possible COVID-19 exposures.

It is recommended that the PBIS team at Gator Elementary analyze and review the Self-Assessment Survey (SAS), Tier Fidelity Inventory (TFI) assessment and data collected from the Likert Survey and open-ended questions to examine the current implementation and effectiveness of the PBIS framework. The purpose of the annual assessment tools and surveys are to collect and analyze data, identify areas of strength and growth, and then develop action plans for continuous improvement. The PBIS team will use the assessment tools to measure the effectiveness of the school's current implementation to continuously determine what is needed to improve the PBIS implementation for the future.

Skiba and Losen (2016) expressed the importance of seeking effective approaches

to reduce racial disproportionality in school discipline outcomes. Further research is needed to determine how race and socio-economics impact positive PBIS implementation and effectiveness. In this study, staff members were given the Likert style survey and open-ended questions during the COVID-19 pandemic and while students and staff were all working remotely. The measurement of the PBIS implementation while working in-person during the school day may provide a more positive experience to increase the culture and climate of the building. Further studies are needed to determine if PBIS can be used in isolation to directly impact a positive school culture and climate or if we need to implement additional behavioral management initiatives. An enhanced PBIS framework that provides equitable practices to include all grade levels and all students may provide a more positive and proactive environment.

Additional research is needed to explore intervention strategies to increase staff consistency with PBIS. Staff exhibited inconsistencies with distributing the Gator Buck/points equitably in a virtual setting. Finding additional research options for reward and incentive distribution in a remote setting will help with addressing this inconsistency. Enhancing the current Gator Buck/point distribution plan and providing staff with a detailed distribution protocol will eliminate inflation and inequitable practices. In addition, the PBIS team can work closely with the staff members who may need additional support with the paperless Gator Buck/point distribution protocol while modeling the process in the hybrid or remote setting. Safran and Oswald (2003) agreed that assessment data was the foundation for planning and initiating PBIS in schools.

In addition, to more professional training sessions, further research of more intensive training and support may be needed. 2% percent of the staff in this study

requested more support with identifying consequences for students not responding to the Tier 1 PBIS interventions. Offering professional development opportunities to discuss additional intervention strategies for the challenging students will help support the staff with this request. Research should focus on intervention best practices to best support the students who need Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions. These tools will allow the staff to identify the students in need and provide the ongoing supports to help these students succeed. Assessment data is necessary when identifying and initiating effective interventions for behavior and academics (Lewis & Sugai, 1999).

Another area for further research is determining the impact that Positive Behavior Support and Intervention has on race. In addition, research to determine if active participation in the PBIS framework increases attendance and academic performance. Research over time may help determine if students attend school regularly and are engaged in the PBIS process are more successful academically.

Summary

As the assistant principal, most of my research focused on student discipline and the teacher's perception on the overall effectiveness and implementation of PBIS. Choosing the Likert style survey and open-ended questions for this study was a way to obtain staff feedback for improving and enhancing the PBIS implementation. Schools do not often allow staff to share ideas and give feedback to improve a district-wide initiative. This study provided an opportunity for staff to respond to a series of questions based on their experience and training on the PBIS framework. The information acquired will help Gator Elementary improve the current implementation while reducing behaviors and taking a positive and proactive approach to accelerate learning.

This research study has served as an eye opener for future improvements to make our PBIS implementation more effective at Gator Elementary. The data from the Teacher perception Likert survey and responses from the open-ended questions will assist us with making positive and proactive decisions that will ensure long-lasting effects to the future of our PBIS framework. While the paperless reward system was needed in the remote setting, it is an enhancement to our future use of PBIS when we return to traditional five day in-person learning. The continued collaboration and ongoing decisions will yield behavior and academic success for all students at Gator Elementary.

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Appendix A

Institutional Review Board
California University of Pennsylvania
Morgan Hall, 310
250 University Avenue
California, PA 15419
instreviewboard@calu.edu
Melissa Sovak, Ph.D.

Dear Brandon,

Please consider this email as official notification that your proposal titled "An Evaluation of Implementation and Teacher Perception on the Effectiveness of Positive Behavior Intervention and Support in an Urban K-8 Setting (Proposal #19-077) has been approved by the California University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board as submitted.

The effective date of approval is 9/04/20 and the expiration date is 9/03/21. These dates must appear on the consent form.

Please note that Federal Policy requires that you notify the IRB promptly regarding any of the following:

(1) Any additions or changes in procedures you might wish for your study (additions or changes must be approved by the IRB before they are implemented)

(2) Any events that affect the safety or well-being of subjects

(3) Any modifications of your study or other responses that are necessitated by any events reported in (2).

(4) To continue your research beyond the approval expiration date of 9/03/21 you must file additional information to be considered for continuing review. Please contact instreviewboard@calu.edu

Please notify the Board when data collection is complete.

Regards,

Melissa Sovak, PhD.
Chair, Institutional Review Board

Appendix B

Expect great things.

Pittsburgh Public Schools

October 8, 2020

Brandon George
3000 Thomas Jefferson Drive
Jefferson Hills, PA 15025

Dear Mr. George,

The Pittsburgh Public School's Data Governance and Research Review Board has reviewed your request to conduct research in our District. Your study, *An Evaluation of the Implementation and Teacher Perception on the Effectiveness of Positive Behavior Intervention and Support in an Urban K-8 Setting*, has been approved as of October 2020.

Per your proposal, your research will study teacher perceptions of the effectiveness of a school-wide Positive Behavior Intervention system (PBIS.) Your research plan will include a survey designed to gather information from staff at one urban K-8 school on the current culture that exists within the school as it relates to PBIS implementation. Your research will be conducted at Pittsburgh Greenfield K-8.

As a condition of your approval, the following provisions are in place:

- Mr. Eric Rosenthall, Greenfield K-8 principal, will serve as your District point person. Please keep him aware of your activities, especially your plans to recruit school staff.
- Teachers must be made aware that their participation is voluntary. They should know they can skip any survey items, and stop participation at any time.
- Teacher participation cannot interfere with student instructional time.
- Confidentiality of all data must be ensured. In addition, this data cannot be shared nor used for any other purpose other than what is stated in the research proposal and must be destroyed per the terms in the proposal.
- District leadership has the right to review in advance any information that may be shared publically in any documents or presentations. The names of the District, school, and teachers should not be included in any public information.

Any major modifications to the research design, instruments, or approved timeline must be forwarded to the Data and Research Review Board for separate approval. You are also required to keep any identifying information related to all human subjects confidential and safeguarded as outlined in your IRB submission.

Thank you for your interest in working with the Pittsburgh Public Schools.

Sincerely,

Deborah Friss

Deborah Friss

cc: Data and Research Review Board
Mr. Eric Rosenthall

Deborah Friss
Director, Research and Evaluation
Office of Data, Research, Evaluation and Accountability
341 Bellefield Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

dfriss1@pghschools.org
Phone: 412-529-3710

Parent Hotline:
412-529-HELP (4357)
pps.k12.pa.us

Appendix C

Participants Inform Consent Letter

Dear Colleagues,

I am currently pursuing my doctorate in the Education Administration and Leadership Doctoral program at California University of PA. I will be conducting a study for my dissertation on the Teacher Perceptions on the Effectiveness of PBIS Implementation in a K-8 building in hopes of improving the culture and climate to support academic success. To that end, I am hoping you will complete a one-time survey that will provide valuable information on the current culture that exists within the building as it relates to PBIS implementation.

You must be a teacher or staff member working in the building in order to be eligible to participate in the study. Your survey responses will be confidential. Returning the survey gives my consent to use the data. All results will be on a password protected laptop and only seen by me. If you have any questions regarding this study, please email me at bgeorge1@pghschools.org

Participation only requires the completion of the survey, which will take approximately 20 minutes. Please click the survey link below to respond to the survey and open ended questions.

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=mhxxjxzsu023kLsMdxsdzBaifpRWuVZMmXRzp8-Asg9UNlROWTdJTFA2MlhYTEoyUFg1UVA2RDFNOS4u

Your participation in this research study is greatly appreciated and entirely voluntary.

Thank you,

Brandon George, MA Dr. Kevin Lordon

Doctoral Candidate Faculty Sponsor Email: GEO4276@calu.edu Email: lordon@calu.edu

Phone: (412) 292-0176 Phone: (412) 680-3504

California University of PA California University of PA

THIS PROJECT HAS BEEN APPROVED BY THE CALIFORNIA UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS (CAL U PHONE 724-938-4000.)

I have read this form. Any questions I have about participating in this study have been answered. I agree to take part in this study, and I understand that taking part is voluntary. I can withdraw at any time for any reason, without explanation.

My electronic signature below indicates; I agree to participate in this study. By doing so, I am indicating that I have read this form and had my questions answered. I understand that it is my choice to participate and I can withdraw at any time. If a participant withdraws their data will be discarded. Survey responses will only be reviewed by me and will not be shared with any other school or district employees. They will be password protected and secured to protect the participants.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix D

PBIS Teacher/Staff Perception and Feedback Survey

Please consider the 2019-2020 school year when responding to these survey questions. Please read each question and circle the response that closely matches your perception. All responses and information provided will be kept confidential. Thank you in advance for participating in this survey.

PBIS Impact on Student Behavior/Discipline:

1. Overall, I believe that student and staff behavior was positively impacted by PBIS.

   Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

2. I am satisfied with the PBIS consequences (Verbal warning, parental contact, office referrals, loss of privilege).

   Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

3. I believe that PBIS helps decrease student discipline problems and increases positive behavior.

   Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

4. I believe there has been a decrease in classroom disruptions.

   Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

5. I believe there has been a decrease in physical (hitting/fighting) altercations.

   Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

6. I believe there has been a decrease in verbal altercations (name calling/teasing.

   Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

7. I believe there has been a decrease in bullying.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

8. I have submitted less student referrals since PBIS implementation.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

PBIS Implementation and Teacher Perception:

9. I am satisfied with the training I received on PBIS **expectations, incentives and consequences**.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

10. I am satisfied with our PBIS Gator expectations (classroom, hallway, restroom, cafeteria, and recess).

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

11. I consistently teach and model classroom and school-wide PBIS expectations/consequences for my students.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

12. I consistently reward students using the PBIS reward system.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

13. I am satisfied with our school's short term PBIS incentives (School store, tangible rewards, gator bucks, etc.)

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

14. I am satisfied with our school's long term PBIS incentives (Extravaganzas, monthly mystery, quarterly rewards, etc.)

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

15. I am satisfied with support from school administrator's for PBIS.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

16. I believe PBIS is consistently implemented by all teachers and staff throughout the school.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

17. I believe students realize the Gator expectations are the same in each classroom and throughout the halls.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

18. I believe all teachers and staff respect and understand the implementation of PBIS.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

PBIS Implementation Impact /on School Culture and Climate:

19. I believe that PBIS has helped improve student learning.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

20. I believe that PBIS has helped improve student respect among each other.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

21. I believe that PBIS has helped improve relationships and respect between students and adults.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

22. I believe PBIS has helped improve safety throughout the school.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

23. I believe students feel comfortable expressing themselves in class.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

24. I believe students feel their ideas and answers are respected by their peers.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

25. I believe students are respectful and orderly when transitioning in the hallways.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

26. I believe students relied on PBIS Gator expectations during remote learning.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

27. I believe teachers continued to utilize the PBIS Gator expectations throughout remote learning.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

28. I believe PBIS implementation was effected by the transition to remote learning during the COVID-19 global health pandemic.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

Please answer the following questions.

29. What further training do you feel you need to improve school-wide implementation of PBIS?

30. What barriers or obstacles do you feel hinder the implementation of PBIS?

31. In your opinion, what effect has PBIS had on student behavior and discipline?

32. Please add any additional thoughts or concerns about our implementation or suggestions to support future implementation of PBIS.

Thank you for participating in this research study! Your answers will be analyzed and used for future decisions regarding Greenfield School's improvement for PBIS implementation.

Appendix E

Survey Question	Primary		Intermediate		Middle		Support Staff		Whole School	
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation
SQ1	3.3	.49	3.3	.49	3.0	.58	3.1	.93	3.2	.64
SQ2	3.1	.38	3.6	.53	2.9	.69	3.1	.93	3.2	.69
SQ3	3.3	.49	3.4	.53	3.0	.82	2.9	.78	3.1	.67
SQ4	3	.58	3.3	.49	2.7	.76	2.8	.83	2.9	.68
SQ5	2.9	.69	3.4	.53	3.1	.69	3.0	.87	3.1	.70
SQ6	2.9	.69	3.1	.69	2.9	.69	2.8	.83	2.9	.70
SQ7	3	.58	3.1	.69	3.0	.58	2.8	.44	3.0	.55
SQ8	3	1.0	3.3	.76	2.9	.49	3.4	.53	3.3	.68
SQ9	3.3	.49	3.7	.49	3.3	.49	3.1	.50	3.4	.49
SQ10	3.6	.53	3.9	.38	3.3	.49	3.1	1.0	3.5	.67
SQ11	3.3	.49	3.9	.38	3.3	.49	3.0	.93	3.3	.66
SQ12	3.4	.53	3.4	.53	3.1	.69	3.1	.50	3.3	.54
SQ13	3.3	.49	3.4	.53	3.3	.49	3.1	.93	3.3	.63
SQ14	3.3	.49	3.7	.49	3.3	.49	3.1	.93	3.3	.65
SQ15	3.3	.49	3.7	.49	3.4	.53	3.4	1.01	3.5	.67
SQ16	3.1	.38	3.0	.82	3.0	.82	3.2	.44	3.1	.60
SQ17	3.3	.49	3.4	.79	3.0	.82	3.1	.93	3.2	.75
SQ18	3.4	.53	3.3	.76	3.0	.82	3.0	.93	3.2	.75
SQ19	3.1	.69	3.3	.49	3.1	.38	2.9	.78	3.1	.60
SQ20	3.3	.49	3.4	.79	3.0	.58	2.8	.67	3.1	.65
SQ21	3.3	.49	3.4	.53	3.1	.38	2.9	.78	3.2	.58
SQ22	3	.58	3.3	.49	3.0	.58	2.9	.78	3.0	.60
SQ23	3.3	.49	3.6	.54	3.0	.58	3.3	.46	3.3	.52
SQ24	3.3	.52	3.1	.38	3.0	.58	3.1	.33	3.1	.43
SQ25	3.1	.38	3.3	.49	2.9	.69	3.1	.33	3.1	.47
SQ26	3.3	.49	2.9	.38	2.9	.69	2.9	.35	3.0	.49
SQ27	3.3	.49	3.0	0	2.9	.69	2.8	.71	3.0	.56
SQ28	3	.58	3.1	.38	2.9	.69	3.0	.87	3.0	.63

Appendix F

Identifying Information

Brandon George

The Walkthrough Observation: An evaluation of implementation and teacher perception on the effectiveness of Positive Behavior Intervention and Support in an Urban K-8 setting.

Doctoral Capstone Project Committee
Faculty Capstone Committee Advisor: Dr. Kevin Lordon
External Capstone Committee Member: Dr. Eva J. Allen
Anticipated Doctoral Capstone Project Dates: June 2020 to June 2021.

Description of what you plan to research (problem statement).

After being in three schools across all grade-bands K-12, I have observed PBIS implemented differently within the same school district. Since the start of the PBIS district-wide initiative, I have observed varying degrees of teacher buy-in, implementation and knowledge creating barriers to implement with fidelity. The overall effect of PBIS on student behavior and academics show inconsistent results within the same school as well as across different schools. In addition, there was a lack of follow-up in professional development and program improvement.

Description of why this problem needs research.

PBIS is a process for creating safer and more effective schools. It is a systems approach to enhancing the capacity of schools to educate all children by developing research-based, school-wide, and classroom behavior support systems. The process focuses on improving a school's ability to teach and support positive behavior for all students.

After experiencing the implementation of the district-wide PBIS initiative in three different school buildings within the same school district, I have observed inconsistencies and ineffective execution and efficacy of implementation. Teachers are bogged down with many different programs and initiatives as well as receiving only introductory level training which makes it difficult to master, own and buy into the PBIS system, so that it is effectively implemented in the classroom. Obtaining the teacher's perceptions and opinion of the school-wide PBIS framework will allow us to improve the overall effectiveness and implementation in order to receive the best outcome for all students. Schools that have implemented PBIS have reduced discipline problems while improving overall academic performance. According to an article in Education World (2008) by Ellen R. Delisio principals in schools across the country express the success of PBIS in their schools. "The whole climate [of the school] is different," since adopting PBIS, said Principal Andrew Krugly, who has been using PBIS at a K-5 school in Evanston, Illinois, since 2002. Before, more kids were sitting in hallways or outside my office. We had no real system in place to deal with consequences for behavior." In addition, at Conway Middle School in Orlando, Florida in 2002-03, they saw 509 less referrals after the first year of implementing PBIS. After three years, referrals dropped almost 50% (1,621 in 2002-03, 891 in 2004-05). PBIS is designed to improve the effectiveness, efficiency and equity of schools. Effective implementation of the PBIS school-wide system will improve social, emotional and academic outcomes for all students.

Delisio, Ellen R. (2008). PBIS Rules, Rewards Boost School-Wide Behavior and Academics. Education World, pages 1-10. https://www.educationworld.com/a_admin/admin/admin535.shtml

Description of how you plan to go about doing your action research (research method).

Quantitative Research

Surveys will be used to evaluate and analyze teacher perception of the effectiveness of the PBIS school-wide system. Teachers, Principal and all support staff who have implemented our current PBIS system in 2019-2020 will be invited (Appendix C) to complete a Likert Scale survey (Appendix D) in order to capture the perception of the entire school. The survey will be conducted using Microsoft Forms. This survey distribution will begin in September and continue until we reach a certain saturation point to determine the perception of PBIS implementation during the 2019-2020 school-year.

Qualitative Research

Artifacts, feedback questions and researcher observations will be simultaneously examined common themes to allow for adjustments, analysis, and further collection. I will be using the constant comparative method to collect and analyze data involving inductive and comparative procedures to acquire conceptual elements of theory and generate findings (Glaser, 1965). The constant comparative method approach to data analysis allows for flexibility and assist with the development of theory. An open coding system will be used to identify common themes, to analyze, and to examine for emerging themes and discoveries (Glazer, 2008; Khandkar, 2009; Merriam, 1998, 2002; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Seidel, 1998). These methods will also be used to evaluate and analyze teacher perception of the effectiveness of the PBIS school-wide system. Open ended questions (Appendix D) will be asked to the same staff members (teachers, principal, support staff) to elaborate more on their survey responses. The open-ended questions will be asked with the Likert Scale Survey using Microsoft Forms beginning in

September and continuing through October to further determine the perception of PBIS implementation during the 2019-2020 school year.

Administering the Likert Scale survey questions and the open-ended questions to all teachers and staff, allows for multiple perspectives across all grade bands within the school (K-2, 3-5, and 6-8). Responses will be anonymous to protect all participants while eliminating any biases.

Data collected from the surveys and open-ended questions will be analyzed to discover positive and evaluate perception of our implementation of the effectiveness of the PBIS school-wide system. It will help determine the root cause of why inconsistencies exist and evidence of barriers for consistent implementation. The information from the survey will show teacher perception and satisfaction to determine strategies and ideas to improve the overall effectiveness of the PBIS system in our school.

The goal is to identify areas in need of improvement and how to gain stronger teacher buy-in. In addition, it will help determine any need for more professional development and level of support for teachers to gain a better understanding and efficacy of the PBIS school-wide system.

Research Questions

The following focus questions will be used to guide this study.

1.) How does the implementation of PBIS impact student discipline referrals?

2.) How do teachers perceive the implementation and effectiveness of PBIS?

3.) How can teacher perception of PBIS create a positive culture within the school while guiding and supporting future implementation of PBIS.

Explanation of how you plan to collect your data for each of the research questions. (Include attachments of data collection instruments i.e. perception survey and open-ended feedback questions)

To collect data, participants will complete a survey on our current implementation of PBIS created in Microsoft Forms and distributed electronically. The teachers will indicate their level of agreement on the PBIS impact on student behavior/discipline and school culture and teacher perception on the implementation of PBIS. The participants will complete open ended feedback questions that will provide more detail about the effects of our PBIS system.

Develop a timeline for data collection.

DATE	TASK	STAGE
May 2020	**Identify and limit my topic for my action research and examine an area of interest for my research.**	**Planning Stage**
June 2020	**Start gathering information and review any related literature to my topic. Engage in conversations with teachers, counselors, administrators to question them for ideas. Review materials looking for ideas and suggestions to help inform my study.**	**Planning Stage**
July 2020-August 2020	**Develop my research plan based on my topic. Start reviewing literature for action research.**	**Planning Stage**
September 2020	**Send invitation letter to all staff to invite them to participate in the study. Once volunteers are identified I will send out survey and open questions to all participants that volunteered to take the survey. I will allow participants to take the survey until we reach 70% participation. Research and review literature.**	**Acting Stage**
October 2020	**Continue to allow participants to take the survey. Collect and analyze the data that was collected using survey and open ended feedback questions. Draft literature review.**	**Developing Stage Reflecting Stage**
November -December 2020	**Continue to draft Literature Review. Analyze survey data. Continue with Literature Review.**	**Acting Stage**

January 2021- March 2021	**Collect and analyze the data, look for commonalities and patterns of teacher perception.**	**Reflecting Stage**
April – May 2021	**Share and communicate the results of the findings Reflect on the process**	**Reflecting Stage**

Explanation of how you plan to analyze your data

Survey questions will be analyzed to find the frequency and percentage of each survey item. Responses will be reviewed and analyzed to identify common themes in the teacher's perception for the 2019-2020 school year. A numerical code will be given to the responses from the Likert Scale survey questions. Strongly agree will be given the value of 4, Agree will be given the value of 3, Disagree will be given the value of 2, and Strongly disagree will be given the value of 1. The codes will be used to calculate the mean and standard deviation to determine the teachers' collective perceptions. A composite score will be calculated from the 29 survey questions for the overall teacher perception of the effectiveness of PBIS.

Open ended questions will be reviewed by categorizing, sorting and analyzing responses. Each response will be identified by a code, a word or phrase that summarizes the idea. A response can be assigned more than one code if there is more than one idea. To determine key themes and the number of times each code appears will be tallied.

Covid-19 Statement

The project and researcher adhere to all the district's approved COVID-19 procedures. These procedures have been filed and approved at the state level. If any changes are made to the COVID-19 safety procedures, the project will be modified

appropriately to meet all safety requirements. If the study needs to be revised due to COVID-19 restrictions, a request for permission will be submitted to IRB.