THE IMPACT OF CHECK-IN/CHECK-OUT ON STUDENT BEHAVIOR AND SCHOOL CLIMATE

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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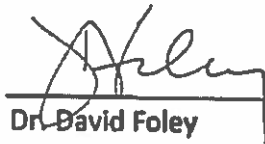California University of Pennsylvania

July 2020

California University of Pennsylvania

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Department of Secondary Education and Administrative Leadership

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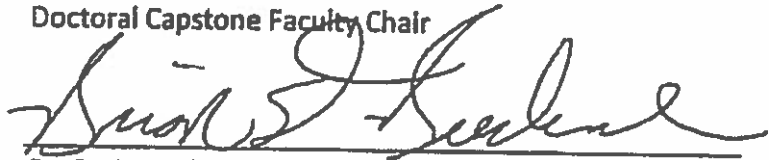
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Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my committee members Dr. David Foley and Dr. Brian Buchan, without whom I would not have been able to complete this project. Dr. Foley, your encouragement throughout the past year has kept me going. Dr. Buchan, your insight and help with so many aspects of the project have been invaluable. Both of your continued guidance has been amazing.

I would also like to thank the Hillview Elementary faculty, staff and students. Your willingness to buy into the PBIS program and help it grow has been tremendous and will continue to help students for years to come.

Finally, I would like to thank my family. To my children, I hope to make you proud and to help build within you the importance of setting goals and working hard. To my parents, thank you for setting such a great example for me growing up and instilling in me the importance of education and continued growth. And to my wife, thank you for supporting me through this journey. Whether it was words of encouragement, some wise counseling, or just a kick in the butt, you were always there for me and provided exactly what I needed at the exact right time!

Abstract

Behavior problems impact student performance and the overall climate of a school building. Current school codes of conduct and discipline programs do little to improve behavior. Schools need a way to put interventions in place to help students who show behavioral difficulty. These interventions need to be supportive rather than punitive. The research questions; 'how do behavioral interventions impact student behavior and school climate in third through fifth grade students?' and 'how do teachers perceive the impact and effectiveness of the intervention?' provide the basis of the study. The purpose of this research study is to determine how Check-in/check-out as a behavioral intervention impacts student behavior and school climate. Student behavior was charted daily to monitor their progress toward goals established at the onset of the program. Students also completed the School Climate Survey (La Salle, McIntosh, & Elaison, 2018) before beginning the intervention and at the conclusion of the study timeframe. Teachers also completed a survey at the conclusion of the intervention to determine its impact from their perspective. The data was analyzed by looking for trends in behavior, trends in climate ratings, and trends in teacher ratings to determine effectiveness. The data showed that the intervention was effective from the teacher's perspective, had inconsistent results between increasing student positive behavior and decreasing negative behavior, and had no positive impact on the school climate rating. Further research is need to determine ways to increase behavioral consistency and to determine other factors contributing to school climate rating.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Over the past several years, a common theme in staff meetings and discussions has been student behavior and the seemingly increasing number of behavior problems we are seeing in classrooms. At the time of this research project, the researcher serves as the Assistant Elementary Principal at Grove City Area School District's Hillview Elementary School serving grades kindergarten through fifth. Teachers have indicated that the overall climate in the building has suffered as well. The discussions have surrounded the idea that school climate and behavior may have a connection and whether changing one factor can change the other. The researcher's educational career began as an emotional support teacher, moved to being a guidance counselor, then to the current role. In each role, behavior and school climate was an increasingly more significant focus.

Grove City Area School District has utilized a school-wide positive behavior intervention and support (PBIS) system for several years, but have not yet provided targeted behavioral interventions. The district currently has a discipline system with consequences for actions based on the student handbook and code of conduct. As data is compiled through the school-wide system, it is becoming evident that the traditional approach to discipline is not consistently effective and has little lasting effect. Now that preliminary data is being gathered through the PBIS program, the next step is to implement specific behavioral and social interventions to improve student behavior and overall climate but in a preventative and positive way. It will also be important to gauge the perception of the effectiveness from the

staff. The interventions which are developed must be able to be implemented in a way that does not detract from instruction and student engagement.

As part of the PBIS system, data has been collected based on office discipline referrals. Students with multiple referrals are candidates for benefitting from interventions. While office referrals provide some evidence of need, they should not be the only means of identification to ensure that students receive the help they may need. Information gathered through Student Assistance Team (SAP) referrals, Response To Intervention and Instruction (RTII) data, parent input, and direct teacher referral, serves as additional safety nets to ensure students can be identified as being in need.

Grove City Area School district has effectively implemented the tier one portion of PBIS. Data is being gathered daily in all grade levels to track where behaviors occur as well as their perceived motivation and involvement of others. The district has developed a tier two problem solving team to plan and implement interventions for students based on the data provided. The tier two team consists of the school principal, assistant principal, guidance counselor, school psychologist, a special educator and a speech/language pathologist. The tier two intervention structure is designed to impact groups of students without taking away from instructional time. One research based, cost effective intervention that will be focused on is the Check-in/Check-out (CICO) intervention. This intervention is a widely utilized tier two intervention that can be implemented with minimal training and no additional staff or costly resources. The tier two problem solving team has been trained by a behavior coach in partnership with the Midwestern Intermediate Unit 4 (MIU4) in Grove City, PA.

Grove City Area School District has piloted a Check-in/Check-out program with individual students that was loosely structured and with no formal progress monitoring. The district is moving to a more structured intervention in which consistent data will be gathered. That data will drive further decision making. In addition to the tier two team trainings, teaching staff has been trained by the tier two team in small groups at grade level and departmental meetings. School support staff was trained as part of an in-service on January 24th, 2020. The goal of the teacher trainings were to inform the teaching staff of the format, protocol and expectations of both teacher and student. The support staff training was aimed at developing a team of check-in/check-out implementers. We will have specific support staff assigned to checking in and checking out students, but it will be equally important to have additional staff ready to fill in as needed. Involving the entire faculty and staff in the training builds capacity for buy in which increases the chances for successful implementation.

As with any school initiative there are costs involved. There has been little research on a direct cost-benefit analysis of the implementation of PBIS. Lindstrom, Johnson & Bradshaw (2016) estimated that the average cost of implementing school-wide PBIS is $12,400 per school, per year. For their study, they recognized that districts typically utilize existing personnel for PBIS implementation by repurposing their roles within the organization. PBIS training costs generally are higher in year one and gradually decrease as the system is built (Swain-Bradway, Lindstrom Johnson, Bradshaw & McIntosh, 2017). Retraining of staff as well as orientation of new staff all constitute costs that will be ongoing year after year.

This cost is relatively low when compared to the potential for sending students to specialized placements out of district. Grove City Area School District, where this study is taking place, has budgeted $384,000 for the 2019-2020 school year for such placements. While the implementation of PBIS may not bring back students currently place out of district, the interventions provided early in a student's education could provide benefits that lead to them not needing outside placement. While it is difficult to predict which students would have needed an outside placement, even keeping one or two additional students in district recoups any cost of PBIS.

A study by Scott and Barrett (2004) looked at the cost savings from the standpoint of lost administrator time combined with lost instructional time. They determined that administrators lost 45 minutes of administrator time due to processing each office referral and the students/teachers lost approximately 20 minutes in instructional time. The total dollar amount saved in year one was $9,106.92 and $10,667.74 in year two (Scott & Barrett, 2004). This substantially offsets the cost of PBIS implementation and does not take into account additional impacts of the program beyond office referrals and lost administrator/instructional time.

Research Questions

How does Check-in/Check-out impact student behavior and school climate in third through fifth grade? The outcome desired with this particular research question is to determine ways to provide the most positive impact on students through behavioral interventions. The research will be used to look at factors that led to the success or lack of

success that the students display. The research will also be used to make hypotheses as to reasons for the successes and challenges, as well as recommendations for moving forward on an even larger scale.

How do the teachers perceive the impact of Check-in/Check-out? The outcome desired with this research question is to determine the perception of the impact of the interventions. The teacher perception will be looked at from the lens of whether the teachers felt the interventions had a positive, negative, or no impact on the students' behavior as well as school climate. It is also essential to gauge the teachers' perceptions of the difficulty of their role in the intervention implementation, as well as any distractions caused by the interventions. Gaining insight from the lens of those who are interacting within the interventions from a day to day perspective will provide useful information for recommendations moving forward.

CHAPTER II

Review of Literature

Introduction

With the implementation of No Child Left Behind and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, an emphasis on student outcomes came into focus, particularly the use of research based scientific methods to achieve those outcomes (Sugai & Horner, 2009). As the focus has shifted to test performance, there have been impacts to other areas in the educational system. The overall culture and climate of a school is affected directly and indirectly. Academic expectations have risen, and with that there has been less focus on behavior and social skills. The early grades set the academic and behavioral foundations for student success. Finding the balance between academics and behavior continues to be a focus for teachers, administrators and families alike. That balance, or lack of it, impacts the climate of the school.

As we explore school climate and student behavior, it becomes increasingly important to investigate ways that schools have begun to approach teaching and influencing student behavioral expectations. One way that schools have been using to impact student behavior is through Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports also known as PBIS. In a broad sense, PBIS is a three-tiered system of supports and interventions aimed at increasing positive student behavior (Sugai & Horner, 2009). Tier one is aimed at the entire school community, tier two addresses small group interventions and tier three is primarily for individualized interventions. While the overarching form and framework of PBIS is similar from school to school, the means

of implementation can vary greatly (Sugai & Horner, 2009). The main focus is to be on school-wide behavioral programs being preventative rather than punitive (Todd, Campbell, Meyer & Horner, 2008; Sugai & Horner, 2009). This study will investigate behavior, reinforcement and prevention and how they interact and/or coexist.

The research will focus on a specific tier 2 intervention. There are a wide variety of tier two and tertiary interventions and they range widely in complexity and effectiveness. One common type of tier 2 intervention is Check-in/Check-out or CICO. CICO is an intervention in which a student checks in with a staff member to start their day and review their goals for the day. The teachers rate the student's success toward those goals in classroom settings throughout the day. The student checks out by reviewing their point total with a staff member at the end of the day (Todd et. al., 2008). An important component of tier 2 interventions is the way in which students are identified as needing the service (Crone, Hawken & Horner, 2010). Literature will be reviewed to assess the usage of office referrals and screening for identification purposes. When determining the need for intervention as well as planning the intervention, data gathering and progress monitoring are essential to track student success as well as planning for increasing or decreasing the supports (Crone et. al. 2010).

This study will investigate various interventions within the Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) system. Specifically the study will address the effectiveness of the intervention to improve student behavior, as well as their impact on the climate within the grade level in which they are implemented. When the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act was implemented, an increased focus was placed on improving individual student behaviors

with positive reinforcement (IDEA 2001).   This was a change from approaches that included

exclusionary practices, corporal punishment and other means of dealing with students who

showed behavioral difficulties (Sigler & Aamidor, 2005). The change to PBIS created a system

where schools needed to consider antecedents specific to the student, the student's disability

and the situation to determine how to best provide support. The from punitive to positive was

to provide supports to increase the desired behaviors rather than stop negative behaviors.

School Climate

School safety has been a concern for many years, and concerns continually grow each

time a tragedy occurs in a school setting. The concern over student misbehavior and discipline

problems have been a top concern for school and community personnel (Sugai & Horner,

2002). This growing concern has led to policy development at the national, state and local

levels. A common example of this is a zero-tolerance policy when dealing with school violence.

Specific sets of policies are created in response to extreme behaviors and garner much public

attention. Policies related to schools safety and climate are often developed in hopes to

produce certain levels of performance, achievement and behavior by students while in school

(Sheras & Bradshaw, 2016). Students who present behavioral difficulties that disrupt other

students and teachers grow up more likely to be involved in the criminal justice system or

mental health system (Sprague, Walker, Golly, White, Myers & Shannon, 2001).

For many years, personnel in schools have applied very generalized approaches to

discipline or very extreme responses to behaviors that include suspensions, expulsions and

other exclusionary tactics (Sprague et. al., 2001). Punishment stops the unwanted behavior,

but does very little to teach the students a better way to behave (Maag, 2001). The focus of punishment is often far too directed at behavior in the moment, rather than focusing on the causes, environment and changing systemsD (Sprague et. al., 2001). Wang and Degol indicate that a positive school climate can potentially reduce behavior problems within the school (2016). School community and safety features are often the focus of research related to school climate (Wang & Degol, 2016). In order to help build a positive school climate, students must be provided with safe and caring environments (Wang, Berry & Swearer, 2013).

The National School Climate Council (NSCC, 2012) defines school climate as the quality and character of school life. It is the values and expectations with the school that support students and staff to help them to feel socially, emotionally and physically safe (NSCC, 2012). Although a definitive definition of school climate can be difficult to obtain research indicates that school climate is changeable and can certainly be a target for intervention and growth (Wang et. al., 2013).

The research on school climate defines it in four specific ways which impact every feature of the environment as well as the students' development (Wang & Degol, 2016):

- Academic climate focuses on the overall quality of the academics with regard to curriculum, instruction and teacher training and development. Within the academic domain are the three dimensions: leadership, teaching and learning and professional development.

- Community climate is centered around the interpersonal relationships within the school. Community climate has the dimensions: quality of interpersonal relationships, connectedness, respect for diversity, and community partnerships.

- Safety surrounds the physical and emotional safety provided within the school as well as fair, effective and consistent discipline practices. The domains in safety are: physical safety, emotional safety, and order and discipline.

- Institutional environment is the organizational and structural features of the school. This includes the tangible qualities of a school from the appearance of the school to the maintenance and sensory quality of the structure itself.

There are also elements that are impactful when developing a positive and sustainable school climate. The National School Climate Council indicates that school climate must promote student development and preparedness to meet the challenges they will face in the future (NSCC, 2012). The elements of a sustainable and positive climate are:

- Norms, values and expectations that support people feeling socially, emotionally and physically safe.

- Members of the school are engaged and respected.

- Educators who model and nurture an attitude that emphasizes the benefits and satisfaction that can be gained from learning.

- Members of the school community who contribute to the operations of the school and the care of its physical environment (NSCC, 2012).

Regardless of the definition and components within the climate, there is an impact on the students that results from the climate of the school. A positive school climate reduces behavior problems (Wang & Degol, 2016). Additional research shows that a better academic climate leads to a better behavior climate and that those two individual features are very much interwoven (Wang & Degol, 2016). One of the most reliable predictors of a student's success in school, as well as later in life, surrounds their connectedness, positive outlook on the future and sense of well-being (Warner & Heindel, 2017). Caldarella et. al. (2011) suggest that PBIS may improve school climate by reducing behavior problems, increasing instructional time in the classroom for both students and teachers, and improve the overall school experience for all that are involved (Caldarella, Shatzer, Ryan, Gray, Kristy, Young, Richard, 2011). The synthesis of this information shows that climate, achievement and behavior are inter-related and can be impacted by utilizing the aspects of PBIS.

A necessary step in improving school climate is to measure areas of strength and weakness within the climate itself (Cohen, 2006). School climate is measured using perceptions of the people involved with the school. The OSEP Technical Assistance Center provides a School Climate Survey as part of the School-Wide Information System (SWIS) suite of evaluative tools for PBIS (LaSalle, McIntosh & Elaison, 2018). The purpose of this or any other school climate assessments is to investigate the perceptions of students, teachers, administration, faculty and family. Available assessments survey students and personnel directly in a brief way to determine areas that may need improvement (LaSalle et. al., 2018). School Climate Surveys

and PBIS work hand in hand in that PBIS is designed to focus on areas that are identified in the survey as needing improvement.

Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS)

Schools are looking beyond individual students and into developing ways to increase desirable behaviors of all students in all settings. School-wide positive behavior support, often referred to as Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), is a system of practices to establish and grow school culture but to provide access to behavioral interventions for all students (School-wide Positive, 2004). PBIS operates within the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) as well as the Response to intervention (RtI) or Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtII) formats but is focused on behavior. PBIS is a framework which integrates data, systems and practices that impact students both in and outside of the classroom within the school (Sugai & Horner, 2009; Positive Behavior, 2019).

RtI is used as a multi-tiered approach where student(s) progress is watched closely to determine how they are responding to instruction. Intervention decisions using more, less, or even special education supports are made based on the progress being monitored (Sugai & Horner, 2009). Coleman, Roth & West (2009) indicate that RtI is preventative and evidence based. The RtI system enables the students to progress by providing sound curriculum to all students in tier one. More focused instruction is provided in tier two for students identified through universal screenings to be not learning as expected. Students are provided intensive instruction and intervention in the tier three setting as indicated by a lack of progress in tier two (Coleman et. al., 2009).

PBIS begins by focusing on the school or building as a whole and builds a continuum of procedures and practices to meet the needs of its students. PBIS has several components that are consistent regardless of where it is implemented and the age level of the students. These components include:

- Having a common behavioral expectations.

- Instruction about the desired behaviors, consistent and collaborative positive reinforcement.

- Having wide varieties of consequences that do not continue the reinforcement of the problem behaviors.

- The use of data to provide information on the overall system, the students who need intervention and their progress within the interventions (Sugai & Horner, 2009).

The basis of PBIS is based on established, behavioral and biomedical sciences which have the following principles:

- Behavior is learned and can be taught.

- Behavior is lawful and predictable.

- Behavioral occurrences are affected by environmental factors that interact with biophysical characteristics of the individual.

- Understanding the relation between physiology factors and environmental variables is a critical feature when supporting students with behavioral, social, emotional, and mental health issues.

- Assessing and manipulating environmental factors can predictably affect occurrences of behavior.

- Data collection and use for active decision making are important for continuous intervention, program and system support (Sugai & Horner, 2009).

As Figure 1 shows, the systems, data and processes all work separately and in conjunction with each other to provide the supports necessary (School-wide positive, 2004). While there may be at times a singular focus with PBIS with regard to specific needs, the over-arching focus is broad and impacts behavior, achievement and decision making. PBIS is a preventative solution that can assist in manipulating teaching and learning, as well as the environments in which they occur, to encourage appropriate behavior and extinguish behaviors that are unwanted (School-wide positive, 2004).

Figure 1

PBIS Comprehensive Focus

(School-Wide Positive, 2004)

There are three tiers of interventions in PBIS (Positive Behavior, 2019 & Sugai & Lewis 2009). The three levels are Primary or Tier one, Secondary or Tier two, and Tertiary or Tier three. The tiers are fluid in nature with students moving between tiers as needs are indicated through data collection. The tier refers to the type of service that the student receives. Thus a student would be referred to as receiving tier two services and would not be referred to as a tier two student (Sugai & Horner, 2009). The population of students in every school vary based on a myriad of factors, yet the key components of PBIS at any location need to remain the same. For PBIS to operate within an Multi-tiered System or Supports (MTSS) or Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtII) format practices must be based on evidence proven successful with similar populations within a similar context (OSEP, 2015). There must be a tiered continuum that spans from universal supports to individual student needs based on data

that is used to screen and monitor progress. Resources of both time and money must be dedicated for fidelity of implementation (OSEP, 2015).

Students receive supports in a basic preventative manner while in the universal, tier one setting. As data indicates needs, students move up the tiers receiving more intensive interventions beginning with targeted smaller groups followed by individual interventions. Data is used at each level to determine who would benefit from each level of intervention, as well as when they are ready to move to more or less intensive settings. There are not specific limits placed on the amounts of students in each tier at any given time; however the picture referenced below shows the generally accepted percentage that should be the goal at each level to provide the most effective system (OSEP, 2015).

Figure 2

Continuum of Support
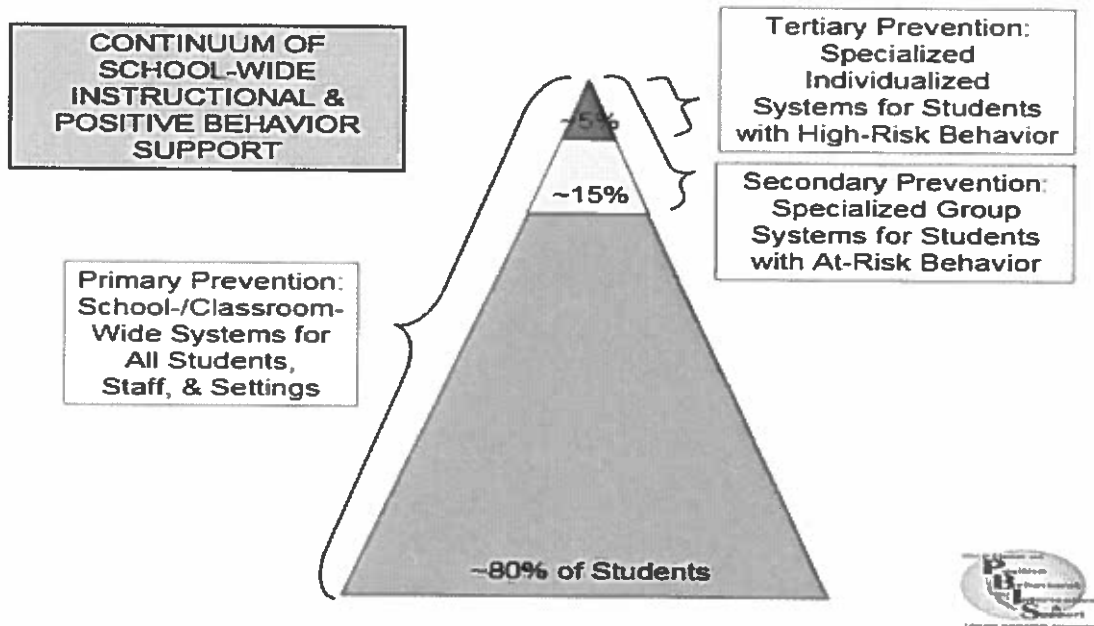
(School-wide Positive, 2004)

In this diagram, the Primary Prevention or tier one includes preventative measures put in place for all students. Secondary Prevention or tier two is represented by yellow and Tertiery Prevention, or tier three is red. All students continue to receive tier one services in all settings even when they are receiving interventions at tier two or three (School-wide Positive, 2004). When applied to a given population, if the percentages become too high in a given tier, problems are likely to be identified in another tier. For instance, if there is significantly more than 15% of the student population in tier two, then the indication would be that more focus is needed in the primary prevention areas. Similarly if there are significantly more than 5% of the

population indicating need for tier 3 services, then focus needs to be turned toward further developing a more focused primary and secondary intervention format.

PBIS intends to focus on a small number of highly effective, research-based interventions. These interventions need to be applicable in a wide range of settings for a wide range of students. The interventions themselves will be operated within five general school-based areas:

- School-wide.

- Classroom.

- Non-classroom.

- Family.

- Individual student (Sugai & Horner, 2009).

PBIS helps to build a system of continual change that creates a school environment in which problem-solving skills are expected, taught and reinforced. The system enhances the quality of the school environment through the reduction of problem behaviors in a research based manner (Horner & Sugai, 2004).

Tier One or Primary Supports. Tier One Interventions are universal and impact all students in all settings (Sugai, n.d). The theory driving these universal interventions is that as a student's behavior improves, their engagement and focus will also improve with it. Improvement in engagement and focus will lead to improvement in classroom academic performance (Horner et. al. 2009). These interventions are provided in a preventative manner across the entire school. The focus begins with three to five core behavioral expectations that span throughout

all settings. These expectations are taught and presented in a highly engaging, differentiated manner meeting the needs of all students (Nocera, E., Whitbread, K., & Nocera, G., 2014; School-wide Positive, 2004). The expectations are universally accepted as best behavioral practice for student success both in and out of the classroom.

Tier one interventions are preventative and proactive while at the same time data driven. Interventions range from location specific instructional lessons to rewards and prizes for behavior. All adults within the school assist in the delivery of the universal interventions and reinforcement (Horner, Sugai & Anderson, 2010). There are consistent features to the implementation of the tier one interventions, beginning with a core team. The core team can consist of a wide variety of adults in the school setting, as well as administrative support and even potential community connections (School-wide Positive 2004; OSEP, 2015; Horner et. al., 2010). The systems for the faculty and staff include annual orientation and review, clear policies focused on social behavior and the use of universal screeners. Ultimately, the staff is familiar with and utilizes the data available to determine the effectiveness of the school-wide interventions (Crone et. al., 2010).

Student focused tier one interventions involve rewards and other positive reinforcement for desired behaviors. Consistent feedback is given by school staff to students with regard to their behavior (School-wide Positive, 2004; Horner et. al., 2010). There are consistent, consequences for minor rules infractions. Proactive and consistent classroom management strategies are utilized throughout the school to maintain the expectations set forth. Classroom management strategies put students in the position to be successful. There

are means of gathering data to determine where things went wrong as well as data to show patterns of misbehavior in locations, times of day, days of the week or any other pattern that may present (Horner et. al., 2010.)

Tier one universal interventions require implementation with fidelity. PBIS focused professional development trainings immerse the staff in the desired protocol. Noltemeyer, Palmer, James and Petrasek (2019) indicate that schools that implemented PBIS tier one interventions with greater fidelity yielded more positive student outcomes. This proves that schools need to review their implementation protocol often as well as completing regular fidelity checks (Noltemeyer et. al., 2019).

Tier Two Interventions. Tier two interventions are designed for those students who are not responding to tier one services or are otherwise determined to be at risk for further behavior difficulties. Schools are lacking time and manpower to create individual behavior plans (Crone, Hawkin & Horner 2010). With approximately 15-20% of students needing more support than school-wide interventions, there needs to be efficient ways to reach the smaller pockets of the population (Crone, et. al.,2010). While tier two can be as simple as additional verbal prompts or additional praise of behavior, there are often students that require more structured, in-depth interventions that span a smaller range of students than the tier one services (Fairbanks, Simonson, and Sugai, 2008). The goals of tier two are to use research based interventions that have a contextual fit, are data driven, are provided via early identification and are likely to result in a positive impact on recurring behaviors (Rodriguez, Loman & Borgmeier, 2016).

Tier two interventions should include several over-arching elements to such as re-teaching of expectations, prompting, practice, acknowledgement of appropriate behavior, and feedback regarding progress (Anderson & Borgmeier, 2010). The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) indicates that there are six key features that need to be evident in an effective tier two behavior interventions system. To some extent the following items need to be present:

- A similar implementation across all students.

- Continuous availability and quick access to the intervention.

- All staff are trained on how to make a referral, and if appropriate how to implement the intervention.

- The intervention is consistent with school-wide expectations.

- The intervention is flexible based on functional assessment.

- Data are used continuously to monitor progress (School-wide Positive, 2004).

Common, more in-depth interventions are referred to as the Behavior Education Program (BEP) which includes Check in-Check out (CICO). Other common interventions are social skills instruction and peer/adult mentoring such as check and connect which is a variation of CICO (Fairbanks, Simonson and Sugai, 2008.). The use of data is a common theme throughout each of the tiers. Tier two intervention systems that do not have built-in data systems will have periodic data collections at the end of defined periods. The data that indicates that a student needs the intervention also serves as a means to be able to group the students who are displaying similar behaviors or behaviors that are occurring in similar areas or

with similar intensity. Most of the interventions are quick and easy to implement and most require materials that are already available in schools such as manpower or physical materials. (Crone, Hawken & Horner, 2010)

Tier two interventions are designed for students who are regularly taking part in low level, minor problem behaviors. While their behavior is not a direct threat to themselves or others, it is disruptive to their learning and the learning of their peers (Crone, et. al., 2010). Tier two interventions rely heavily on interactions with adults so it is essential to be aware of whether or not that could be potential reinforcement for certain students.

Tier Three Interventions. Tier three interventions are individualized to each student. These individualized interventions are for students who have shown an inability to progress in tier one or two or who have more serious problem behavior that needs to be addressed individually (Crone et. al., 2010). Approximately 5% or less of the student population would likely require tier three supports (School-wide Positive, 2004). The strategies in tier three interventions target behaviors of students who show dangerous, highly disruptive behaviors that create barriers to their learning. These students receive much more intensive interventions that target academic and behavioral improvement. These interventions are used for students with a wide range of abilities, as well as disabilities. The commonalities among the participants is the persistence of the behavior and the evidence that tier one and tier two interventions did not help to show improvement in the targeted areas (OSEP, 2015).

Tier three services are often led by a team that contains members with a wide variety of expertise. It is recommended that the team includes an administrator, behavior representative

and someone with experience collaborating with multiple agencies for support (OSEP, 2015). This team meets regularly to determine what services are needed and how to get the supports in place for student success.

Examples of tier three interventions are wraparound or therapeutic staff support services, special education services, psychopharmacological planning, and individual counseling (Sugai, n.d.). These services can take place in or out of school but a school connection with any tier three program is needed to gauge its effectiveness. The assessments for tier three services and the entry to the programs are usually formal assessments provided by the schools or outside agencies (OSEP, 2015). At the core of PBIS tier three services is a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA). An FBA aims to determine the function, or cause(s) of behaviors. An FBA looks at multiple areas surrounding the behavior in question including any and all antecedents, the environment the behavior occurs in and any consequences or reinforcements that the student may be getting as a result of the behaviors (Sugai, Horner, Dunlap, Hieneman, Lewis, Nelson, Scott, Liaupsin, Sailor, Turnbull, Turnbull, Wickham, Wilcox, Ruef, 2000). The focus is on the events that happen immediately before and after a behavioral episode in order to determine patterns and contexts. As those patterns and contexts are determined, a plan for intervention can be created (Sugai, et. al., 2000)

The result of an FBA is often a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP). A BIP looks at developing replacement behaviors, adjusting instructional routines and arrangements, and continuous monitoring and evaluation. The replacement behavior needs to be considered appropriate for the environment serving the same function as the problem behavior (Sugai et.

al., 2000; Scott, Anderson & Spaulding, 2008). Adjustments in instructional routines or arrangements can be as simple as moving seats or changing the time of day when certain instruction occurs. The continuous monitoring and evaluation are similar to tier two are used to determine effectiveness and the need for adjustment (Sugai et. al., 2000, Crone, et. al., 2010).

Decisions regarding who must be trained in the intervention, who will conduct the intervention and how the outcomes will be monitored must be determined prior to beginning the tier three plan. While it stands to reason that informing the student about the rationale for why the intervention will be beneficial would be good practice at the other intervention levels, it is mandatory for success at the tier three level. Scott et. al. (2008) indicates that if school personnel can think of behavior similarly to academics with regard to the need for remediation and re-teaching, then the strategies become part of teacher best practice (Scott, et. al., 2008). For example, teachers can look at behavior like an academic skill that needs to be re-taught.

Implementation of PBIS

Evanovich & Scott (2016) indicate that there are four critical steps to implementing PBIS. Those steps include; the identification of predictable failures, the development of effective preventative strategies, consistent application and the evaluation of outcomes. They go on to clarify that these steps are not intended to provide all necessary information, instead they act as a framework for implementation with fidelity. These steps are utilized in much the same way at each level of implementation across the three tiers. At each tier, the steps are scaled from the entire school down to individual students. For instance, the implementers would

predict where problem behaviors occur for the entire population in tier I. They would do a similar prediction for individual students based on their particular needs in tier III (Evanovich & Scott, 2016.)

Horner and Sugai (2000) identify several themes that are consistent across all successful settings for PBIS:

- School-wide behavior support procedures were designed by local teams.

- Successful schools rely on clear administrative direction and support.

- Schools identify a small number of behavioral expectations that defined the culture of the school.

- The behavior expectations were taught to all students.

- The display of behavioral expectations was rewarded through an ongoing recognition system.

- Dangerous and disruptive behavior are corrected.

- Problem behaviors were neither ignored nor rewarded.

- Data on student performance was collected continuously and summarized by local teams.

The OSEP Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (2004) discusses the development of PBIS in schools. Implementation of PBIS is a multi-year process. They state that there are nine key components to successful implementation of PBIS consisting of:

- A leadership team.

- Coordination.

- Funding.

- Visibility.

- Political Support.

- Training capacity.

- Coaching capacity.

- Demonstrations.

- Evaluation.

These components need to be present in order for PBIS to succeed (School-wide Positive, 2004). The level of planning and collaboration with all levels of the school community will help keep the schools current in their training and implementation. By involving a wide variety of stakeholders, efforts are maximized by building awareness and combining multiple levels of expertise (George & Kinkaid, 2008).

One of the first essential steps in implementation is the creation of the leadership team. The leadership team serves to train, coach and evaluate activities as they relate to PBIS (School-wide Positive, 2004; OSEP, 2015). The team should be representative of a wide variety of stakeholders ranging from administration, special education, regular education, families, mental health professionals, guidance counselors and/or behavioral coaches. The team should include a PBIS district coordinator who will act as a liaison between the team and other members of the district with regard to budgeting and training (George and Kincaid, 2008).

Many of the resources needed for implementation of PBIS are already available in a school setting (Sugai et. al.,2010). Sugai et. al. (2010) recommend planning your funding efforts

to cover at least three to five years. An annual action plan should clearly indicate the funding

needed for sustainability. Some of the funding should go toward the visibility of the program,

and the progress of implementation, and its successes (School-wide Positive, 2004). The use of

newsletters, presentations at board meetings, as well as consistent student recognition are all

ways to keep the program visible and to increase awareness of the activities happening (George

& Kincaid 2008). The visibility also helps maintain necessary political support. The political

support is needed from the school board and central office of the district. Funding, visibility

and political support work in conjunction with each other and can serve to support each other's

impact (Sugai et. al., 2010).

Training and coaching are linked and need to remain a priority throughout the

implementation of PBIS. The training and coaching include both internal and external training.

The leadership team needs continual training led by a competent PBIS trainer; however, the

reliance on outside training needs to decrease as it moves to internal trainings and refreshers

(Sugai et. al. 2010). The leadership team needs to develop a sustainable training curriculum.

This curriculum should provide information and refreshers with regard to universal, classroom,

targeted group and individual interventions. The curriculum should include information that

can serve as a resource for current team members as well as staff members newly added to the

program (George & Kincaid, 2008). Coaches are often the individuals at a location that have

been through the trainings and has a schedule that allows for their regular availability. Coaches

need regular trainings to remain current on trends and changes to the PBIS system (George &

Kincaid, 2008).

Evaluation of PBIS effectiveness is essential for growth and sustainability. The evaluation considers data regarding behaviors of concern, attendance, referrals and academic achievement. Evaluation also needs to address staff satisfaction within the system itself. The results of the evaluation are important in order to understand the staff perspective on the effectiveness of the program and what elements need addressed (George & Kincaid, 2008). With the information gleaned from the evaluative process, there is a focus on planning for improvement, but also acknowledging outcomes and accomplishments. Celebrations are recommended at least quarterly to help build public relations, provide information and reinforce implementation efforts (School-wide Positive, 2004).

The evaluation of PBIS, much like school climate, occurs through self-assessment. The assessment is intended to measure:

- The extent to which teams are implementing PBIS.
- The impact of PBIS on student outcomes.
- The extent to which the leadership teams action plan is implemented (School-wide Positive, 2004).

The assessment survey looks at four behavior support systems in the areas of school-wide discipline systems, non-classroom management systems, classroom management systems, and systems for individual students having regular behavioral difficulties. The development of an action plan follows the analysis of the data gathered from the evaluative assessment. Action planning based on the results of the self-assessment becomes part of a cycle of improvement

that repeats year after year as the self-assessment is re-administered (School-wide Positive, 2004).

Reinforcement and Behavior

PBIS both in its name and at its core is built around the idea of positive reinforcement for desired behaviors. In order to understand the basic premise, it is important to understand reinforcement as a concept, and particularly positive reinforcement, as a way to modify behavior. There is a difference between positive reinforcement and praising a student. Generally, positive reinforcement is referred to as a method to help children differentiate between which behaviors are appropriate and which are not acceptable (Sigler & Aamidor, 2005). Once the appropriate behavior is identified, it is encouraged through positive reinforcement in an effort to increase that desired and appropriate behavior (Burden, 2003). Most children repeat behaviors to get a desired response or reaction (Sigler and Aamidor, 2005).

Positive reinforcement is particularly important in schools because school is not a natural setting for children. While children are in schools for thirteen or more years, it is not human nature to attend schools. In a classroom and school setting, there are many things that are required of children that go against their wants (Sigler & Aamidor, 2005). The idea of reinforcing the desired behavior, whether it be academic or social, has tremendous merit to shape those behaviors in a way that leads to student success. PBIS being based on positive

reinforcement, provides the framework to positively reinforce behaviors at all levels in an attempt to lead to success in social and academic areas (Sugai & Horner, 2009).

While positive reinforcement increases the chances that a behavior will be repeated, punishment and negative reinforcement decrease the likelihood that the behavior it follows will reoccur in the future (Maag, 2001). For many years, teachers have used either proactive or reactive ways to address student behaviors. The proactive, positive ways served to manipulate the environment and conditions to increase a student's chances of success. The reactive ways involved attempts to stop the behaviors immediately through punishment (Coy & Douglass, 2018). Teachers utilizing reactive behavior management provide a negative or punitive consequence in response to the unwanted behaviors rather than teaching students how to behave in the desired way. In this type of response, the consequence is intended to extinguish or stop the problem behavior. The reactive cycle can lead to increased negative behaviors, decreased achievement, and increased teacher burnout (Clunies-Ross, Little & Kienhuis, 2008). However, society has long seen punishment as an effective and accepted way of controlling its members (Maag, 2001).

Punishment as a means to extinguish behavior is not a new concept and is engrained in many as the only way we know. There is often a misconception that positive reinforcement and punishment are *tangible things* when in reality they are *effects* of behavior. Reinforcement and punishment occur naturally and all behaviors are followed by a consequence of some sort (Maag, 2001). Positive reinforcement of desired behaviors generate positive results and makes for a more conducive learning environment. The positive reinforcement is not to be confused

with a "bribe" for good behavior, rather it is a calculated effort to increase appropriate

academic and social behavior (Akin-Little, Eckert, Lovett & Little, 2004).

Behavior is often looked at as a problem that needs to be solved rather than a way to

positively impact children and allowing the positive impact to drive the child's behavior.

Managing behavior is about doing what is necessary to impact positive and healthy choices by

our students (Curwin, Mendler & Mendler, 2008). Children's behaviors are a part of everyday

school interactions. Learning how to deal with them in ways that allow for student dignity and

learning is crucial for student positive development (Curwin, et. al., 2008).

As an understanding is gained that positive reinforcement yields positive results, we

need to determine what that looks like on a larger scale. PBIS is a large-scale way to implement

positive and proactive reinforcement. Maag (2001) presents several keys to implementing

positive reinforcement. These five elements are threaded throughout all three tiers of PBIS and

are at the core of its design (Maag, 2001):

- Catch students being good.

- Take small steps to start.

- Have a group management plan.

- Prevent behavior problems.

- Use peer influence favorably.

Check-In/Check-Out (CICO) Tier Two Intervention

It is unlikely that a school system could provide individual plans and support for all students who need extra behavioral assistance. There are not enough resources in a school to provide that level of support (Crone, Hawken, and Horner, 2010). Therefore it is important to find ways to provide supports to groups of students based on the needs identified through the tier I data systems. A popular strategy for addressing and improving student behavior is referred to as Check-in/Check-out (CICO). Much of the literature reviewed uses CICO and the Behavior Education Program (BEP) as synonymous terms, and this researcher will use CICO as the overarching term (Crone, et. al., 2010). CICO is a relatively simple strategy to increase feedback, monitoring and structure for students identified as being at risk in a school setting. The feedback is provided by school personnel by having regular contact with the targeted students (Hawken & Horner, 2003; Todd, Campbell, Meyer & Horner, 2008).

Crone et. al. (2010) state that CICO is based on several main concepts from behavioral research. CICO occurs in the school but also creates collaboration between the school and home through regular communication. The intervention provides additional support for students who may be at risk for developing more serious behavior problems. The main concepts that are the basis of CICO are:

- At-risk students benefit from; a.) clearly defined expectations, b.) frequent feedback, c.) consistency, and d.)positive reinforcement that is contingent on meeting goals.
- Problem behavior and poor academic performance are often linked.

- Behavior support begins with the development of effective adult-student relationships (Crone et. al., 2010.)

According to Hawkin & Horner (2003), the standard system organization of CICO includes five critical components. These components may look different in how they are implemented based on setting, personnel and student; however, each of the components must be in place to ensure success. The five necessary components of CICO are:

- Daily check-in.

- Feedback from classroom teachers at regular intervals throughout the day.

- Daily check-out.

- Data collection with progress monitoring.

- Parent feedback (Hawken & Horner, 2003).

In order for CICO to be implemented effectively, there must be key elements in place. The personnel, student identification system or referral and the process must be established (Crone et. al., 2010).

CICO Personnel. The personnel that are involved in CICO range from school to home. A behavior team is established and functions as part of the PBIS team. Swoszowski (2013) suggests that the relationship between the adults and students in CICO is the most vital component of the system. The adults are not always traditional classroom teachers, rather they are often educational assistants, paraprofessionals or school counselors. Some schools hire personnel solely to provide the CICO interventions (Swoszowski, 2013; Crone et. al., 2010.) The intervention needs to be identified as part of the job description and time needs to be

allotted in that person's schedule to ensure their availability. The CICO coordinator is the person directly responsible for the daily process. The CICO coordinator need to have a supervisor assigned who can oversee the effectiveness of the program and has the authority to make changes as necessary. It will also be necessary to have substitutes ready in the event of personnel absences (Crone et. al., 2010). In addition to school personnel, parents are also part of CICO as well. They receive daily progress notifications based on their child's performance throughout the day (Crone et. al., 2010; Todd et. al., 2008; Smith, Evans – McCleon, Urbanski, & Justice, 2014; Mitchell, Stormont & Gage, 2011).

CICO Student Identification System. The student identification system or referral systems vary based on the type of setting the program will be implanted within and who will implement the program. Crone et. al. (2010) describes three ways that a student can enter the protocol:

- The behavior support team monitors student data variables associated with risk such as truancy, an increase of behavior difficulties through office referrals etc.
- Through a systematic screening of all students using behavioral assessments.
- Through teacher nomination. All schools using CICO utilize at least one of these processes and most use a combination of the three in some way.

A frequent means of identifying students in need is by reviewing data available through office discipline referrals (ODRs) (Mitchell et. al., 2011). The data is analyzed and synthesized through one of many available data information systems. The School-Wide Information System (SWIS) is likely the most frequently used and recommended program (May, Ard, Todd, Horner, Glasgow, Sugai, 2000). The individual teams determine the threshold of ODRs needed to

indicate a need for CICO (Crone et. al., 2010). The amount of ODRs vary from school to school and teacher to teacher, which makes inter-rater reliability a major focus in tier I to ensure clarity in the data gathered through its processes. The tracking of ODRs helps to quickly determine students who are receiving the most referrals and why, when and where they are receiving them. This referral information can also be used as a baseline to compare the effectiveness of the intervention (Crone et. al., 2010).

Brown (2017) discusses that systematic screening of all students can provide a more comprehensive view of students in need but can also be cumbersome and time consuming. Screeners can either be completed by students or the teachers. The Social, Academic, Behavior, and Emotional Rating Scale (SAEBRS) is a brief rating scale that teachers complete about their students social, academic, and emotional behaviors. This screener, or a similar one would be given to all students in tier I and the information would be used to determine further need. It is important for screeners to be used in conjunction with other information to provide comprehensive insight (Brown, 2017).

Teacher or parent nomination is an additional way to enter into CICO. Teachers can be directly solicited for nominations but just as often are asked for their input on students who are indicated in other data sets through either ODRs or screeners. A teacher or parent-initiated referral should be followed by reviewing other available data about the student as well. Ultimately the behavior team makes the determination as to the appropriateness of including a student based on the available information. Any available data needs to be considered by the

team before moving forward to ensure that the planning of the interventions is proper (Crone et. al., 2010).

The process of CICO is based around a daily cycle combined with either a weekly or bi-weekly cycle. CICO needs to be continuously available to students, families and staff as well as have a plan for instruction of the system and skills needed (Todd et. al., 2008). Daily, each student involved in CICO will complete the following steps according to Crone et. al. (2010); Cheney, Lynass, Flower, Waugh, Iwasuk, Mielenz, and Hawken (2010):

- The student arrives at school and checks in with an adult. The student receives their Daily Progress Report (DPR) from the adult. The DPR is a card that consists of a rating scale to be used by the teachers in their settings. The DPR is rated using a Likert scale rating at defined points in the day. The check-in lasts two to three minutes and in this setting the student receives verbal encouragement, reviews expectations, reviews the previous day's information and parent signature, and ensures school materials are gathered and in hand (Figure 3).

- Throughout the day the student carries their DPR from classroom to classroom and gives it to the teacher for completion at designated times.

- The student gets their DPR back from the teacher and receives feedback at the aforementioned designated times. The card has clear expectations and can be used as a prompt for the teachers for positive feedback language.

- At the conclusion of the day, the student meets with the coordinator to determine to what extent the daily point goals were met. This serves as an additional opportunity to

build rapport with the adult while also serving as an opportunity for teachable moments

for future improvements. The student takes a copy of the DPR home.

- The student takes home a copy of their DPR for review by parents/guardians and to be

    signed and returned the following day.

Figure 3

Sample DPR

CHECK IN/CHECK OUT POINT SYSTEM

Points Possible ___
Points Received ___
% of Points ___
Goal Met ___

Name: _____

Date: _____

Amazing = 2
Almost There = 1
Let's Keep Working = 0

Target Behaviors	AM 1	AM 2	PM 1	PM 2
Safe	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2
Respectful	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2
Responsible	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2

Parent Signature: _____

The typical daily goal for most students in CICO is to earn 80% of the total possible

points per day (Crone, et. al., 2010). The students' daily scores are reviewed at the conclusion

of the day and either celebrated for their success or discussed to improve occur when they fail

to meet their goals. The daily point sheets also serve as a running record for progress monitoring (Commisso, Gaier, Kern, Majeika, Van Camp, Wehby & Kelly, 2019).

As with any intervention, a one size fits all approach is not always possible. There are several different variations that can be made to CICO to be more effective for individual students. There are also similar interventions that are similar to CICO but with additional benefits or features. Often changes to the traditional format occur when a student is having continued difficulties while in CICO. The next step would be to complete a formal or informal Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) to determine the function of the behavior (Crone et. al., 2010). The FBA information would be used with the data available to add benefits or make adjustments to the existing program.

Making adaptations to the existing format allows those providing the help to meet the needs of the students while still remaining in the realm of the CICO design and not having to move into more intensive interventions (Commisso et. al., 2019; Crone et. al., 2010). The adjustments can be made before implementation, after a student has shown to be non-responsive. CICO can be adjusted by modifying the point requirements or daily achievement goals for the students or by adding and/or taking away specific components based on needs presented (Commisso et. al., 2019).

A common variation of CICO with additional benefits or adjustments is Check, Connect and Expect. Check, Connect and Expect takes the format of CICO but adds additional opportunities for social problem solving and social skills development through direct instruction. This format provides specific instruction in the areas in which students are

receiving low scores on their DPR or have received a discipline referral while in CICO (Cheney et. al., 2010). While this is a break from the standard format, it allows for individualization and instruction without the need for overall removal from the program.

Another iteration of an adjusted approach is student self-monitoring. This approach focuses on students rating and monitoring their own progress through the intervention. The students go through the CICO process as normal while also rating their own behavior. The students then compare their ratings with the teacher's rating, with the goal of becoming more aware of their own behavior in the multiple settings in which they are rated. When the student is unsuccessful in self-monitoring, individual coaching sessions are provided to provide remediation (Cheney et. al., 2010). This variation is best for students who have difficulty with self-awareness of their own behavior. As they grow in their ability to more closely match their teacher's ratings of them, they become more aware of the perceptions of their behaviors as well as how and when to adjust. This is also often used as a means to phase out of CICO.

Mitchell et. al., (2011) reviewed existing research to determine effectiveness of tier II interventions claiming that there had been much synthesis of tier I and tier III interventions but that the impact of tier II had not been investigated. Their findings showed multiple studies that showed the success of CICO in both the displayed behavior of the students and the perception of the teachers involved in its implementations (Mitchell et. al., 2011). Additional studies concluded that CICO was a time and cost effective way to increase desired social behavior among school students (Smith et. al., 2015).

In order for CICO to be successful in its implementation, there needs to be substantial commitment from staff with a focus on prevention (Crone et. al., 2010). The program is needed for prevention rather than a reaction to behavior. The design is built to be proactive by breaking down barriers to student success. CICO is not meant to be a punishment and should not be expected to solve all behavior problems (Crone et. al., 2010).

Summary

In summary, PBIS has been successful as a multi-tiered, school-wide reinforcement program that includes positive reinforces for desired behaviors. PBIS also provides data for those who are having behavioral difficulties as well as when, where and to what extent those behaviors are occurring. This data is used to funnel students who need additional supports into a tier II program. Check in/Check out is a tier II program that has been shown to be a minimally invasive, cost effective and time efficient means to provide the supports needed. There are variabilities to CICO that can be implemented if the program is showing to not be working for particular students.

In addition, student behavior has a tremendous impact on school climate. School climate is determined by students' levels of feeling safe socially, emotionally and educationally while at school. Behavioral problems impact climate in that it diminishes the feeling of safety in all of those areas. As school climate improves, the feeling of safety improves and with that, student achievement in all categories also will improve.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

Purpose

The purpose of this action research project is to determine the impact of a tier two behavioral intervention, specifically check-in/check-out, on student behavior and school climate. This ex post facto method project will use student survey data, daily progress monitoring data and staff member survey data to determine the overall level the surveys and progress monitoring were impacted. There will be quantitative data in the form of survey and progress monitoring results. Qualitative data will be gathered from the teachers at the conclusion of the study period through open ended survey questions. The use of both quantitative and qualitative data will determine the impact as well assist in planning for future use of the intervention. The investigation centers on the development of a cost-effective and easily implementable way to positively impact student behavior and social skills which will in turn have a positive impact on the overall school climate.

The review of literature indicates that behavior, achievement and climate are inter-related and that PBIS can positively impact them. Maag (2001) indicates that in traditional school discipline, little was done to teach students better ways to behave. PBIS focuses on school-wide instruction of desired student behavior (Sugai & Horner, 2009). When students show they are not responding to instruction and continue to display undesirable behavior, additional interventions become necessary. Crone, Hawken and Horner (2010) indicate that tier two interventions, and specifically check-in/check-out (CICO), can be effective and cost

effective in helping the students who are not responding to system-wide approaches. This study will investigate the impact of check-in/check-out as a behavioral intervention.

The research question "How does Check-in/Check-out (CICO) impact student behavior and climate in third through fifth grade?" will focus on how students' behaviors were impacted while in check-in/check-out. This research question will also assess whether the students' perceptions of school climate was impacted during the intervention. The question of "How do the teachers perceive the impact of the Check-in/Check-out intervention?" focuses on the implementation from the teachers' perspectives. Essentially, we are asking if the program makes a difference on behavior and climate and whether the implementation is practical.

Setting and Participants

This research study will take place at Hillview Elementary School, which is part of the Grove City Area School District in Grove City, Pennsylvania. Grove City is a rural community comprising of 2236 students K-12. According to the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Future Ready PA Index (2018), at Hillview Elementary School, 72.8% of the students meet or exceed proficiency in English/language arts on state-wide assessments. In addition, 66.4% met or exceeded proficiency in math. More than 92% of the students met or exceeded proficiency in science. Approximately 91.3% of the students in Grove City are Caucasian, 2% African American, 1.8% Asian, 2.1% Hispanic, and 2.7% multiracial. Approximately 37.5% of the students are economically disadvantaged. Just over 19% of the student population qualifies for special education services. The male to female student population is nearly 50/50. Hillview Elementary is a building-wide title one school (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2018).

Grades three through five will serve as the population of this study and this includes a total of 438 students. There are six teachers per grade level as well as learning, emotional, autistic, speech, language, and title one support services available. There is also gifted support, which services approximately 4.3% of the students. Each class ranges from 21-25 students. There is one school counselor, who services kindergarten through fifth grade. Administratively, there is a head principal and the principle researcher in this study, who also serves as the assistant principal. Grades three through five were chosen because the students have been in the building for multiple years and are more familiar with the building-level expectations.

Beginning in the 2018-19 school year, Hillview Elementary began departmentalizing in each grade level. In third grade, there are three pairs of partner teachers. One teaches math and science and the other teaches English/language arts and social studies. In fourth and fifth, the instruction is even more departmentalized. Students receive instruction from three teachers, as well as being grouped by ability level. Co-teaching with learning support is available for students demonstrating the most significant need. The teachers in grades three through five have experience ranging from one to 31 years (mean = 12.9 years).

In addition to departmentalizing for academic instruction, Hillview Elementary moved to using standards-based grading and report cards for the 2019-20 school year. For this transition, our faculty worked together in multiple professional development sessions to ensure consistency in scoring and to address inter-rater reliability. The development of staff inter-rater reliability proved beneficial when determining scoring mechanisms for the check-in/check-out program. Teachers had already developed uniform standards based scoring criteria for

academic content. They utilized the same methods to determine student expectations for the check-in/check-out program.

Hillview Elementary has been recognized for fidelity and sustained implementation of its Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) by the MTSS Initiative of the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PATTAN). At Hillview, a model is utilized in which students are provided specific academic interventions based on their needs identified through assessment data. Students who show need for academic intervention are provided support either in the classroom through a push-in intervention or through a small group pull-out intervention. Student progress within the intervention groups is monitored weekly to track the effectiveness of the interventions. There are quarterly MTSS or Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTII) data team meetings where each teacher has an opportunity to provide information regarding student performance and/or concerns. At these meetings, students with behavioral difficulties are also discussed to plan behavioral interventions.

Training for Students, Teachers and Support Personnel

Beginning with the 2018-19 school year, Grove City Elementary re-evaluated the effectiveness of their school-wide positive behavior intervention and support program (PBIS). The program originally began in 2011 but had not been maintained over the following years. By the beginning of the 2018-19 school year, only the school-wide expectations and a few positive reinforcers remained that were still being used across the landscape. The school-wide behavioral expectations are referred to as the Eagle Expectations. The expectations are to be

safe, respectful, and responsible. These school-wide Eagle Expectations are posted in classrooms and prominent areas throughout the school.

A main focus of PBIS is the instruction of desired behaviors. At Hillview Elementary, there are behavioral expectation lessons referred to as "cool tools". These lessons occur at the beginning of the year at various areas throughout the school that have historically been identified as problem areas. The lessons are 5 -10 minutes long and are taught by someone other than the classroom teacher. Cool tools have been made for hallway, recess, restroom, bus hall, cafeteria, and classroom behavior. Members of the PBIS team also created a video of the expected behavior in all locations. The cool tools are re-taught at the mid-way point of the school year. In addition to the planned re-teach, the cool tools can be revisited any time school personnel feels instruction is needed.

The principal's 200 club was added for the 2018-19 school year. The principal's 200 club is a program where students can earn principal's 200 tickets when they are displaying the expected behaviors in the areas identified via the cool tools (Figure 4). Students who receive principal 200 tickets also receive a principal 200 certificate (figure 5). A minimum of 10 tickets are given daily to random staff members. The staff members are then charged with giving the tickets to students displaying appropriate behavior throughout the school. The students who receive tickets earn a certificate and get to put their name on a principal's 200 bingo board. The principal's 200 board is set up similar to a bingo board. When 10 squares in a row in any direction are filled, a bingo is called, and the students in that row earn a special breakfast.

The PBIS tier one team continually looks at problem areas throughout the school. When problem areas are identified, principal 200 tickets are allocated specifically to be used to reward students in those areas. For instance, in January of 2020, the PBIS team identified a high number of problem behaviors being reported in the hallways. The team put on the morning announcements that hallway behavior would be a focus for the remainder of January and gave teachers extra tickets to give that were specific to hallway behavior. The team then tracked the data specific to that behavior and reported progress to the entire staff.

Figure 4

Principal's 200 Ticket
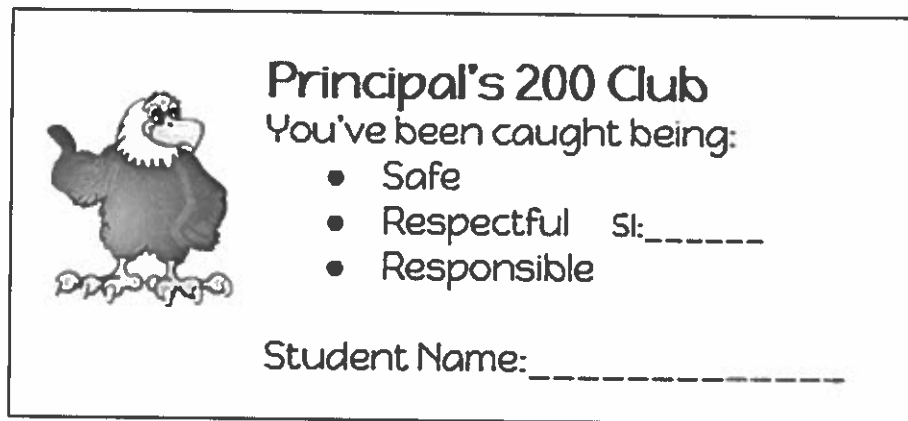
Figure 5

Principal's 200 Certificate
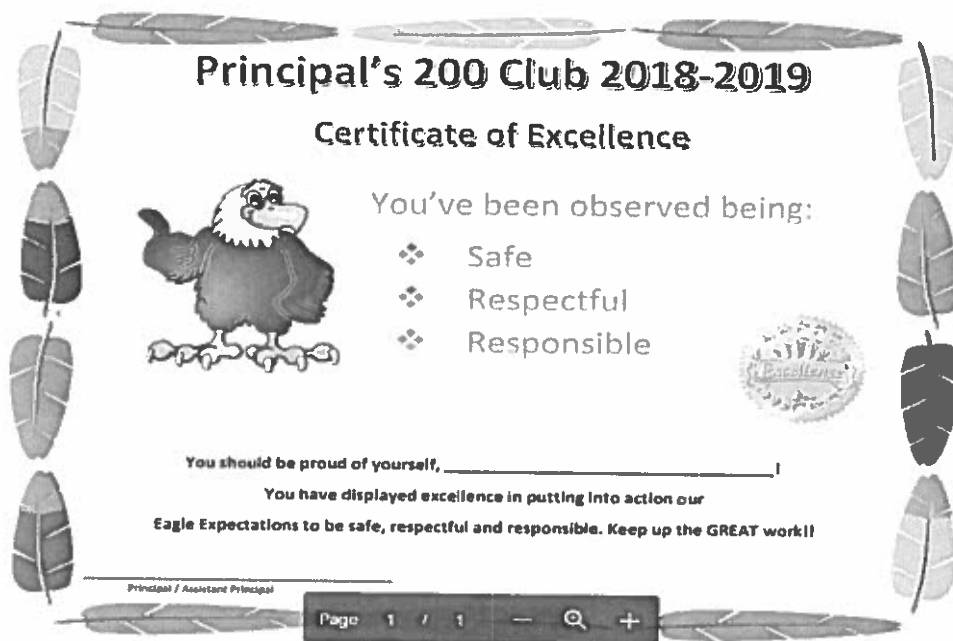
The use of office referral forms was new for the 2018-19 school year. These forms are used to track student behaviors (Figure 6). The office referral form has a number of classroom behavior problem areas identified. If the student has three infractions in a specific area within a month, an office referral is generated. When a student receives an office referral they are sent to the office. The student discusses the offense with the principal or assistant principal and a reflection is written and sent home. An office referral can also lead to additional disciplinary consequences depending on the infraction. The office referral offers an opportunity for interaction between the student and the administrator as well as an opportunity to compile data which could indicate a need for specific intervention.

Figure 6

Office Referral Form

Data about behavioral infractions is tracked through office referrals and put into the

School Wide Information System (SWIS). SWIS is a web-based information system to connect,

summarize, and used student behavior data for decision making (May, Ard, Todd, Horner,

Glasgow, Sugai & Sprague, 2020). SWIS allows for the data to be entered specific to the

location, time, type and motivation of the behavior. This data allows the team to identify

school-wide problem areas. The system also helps to identify individual students who may be

in need of further intervention. Looking from the school-wide perspective allows the team to

look at the problem areas and determine if they are student problems, system problems, or both. If there are system problems, those problems are addressed by changing something about the system. For instance, if there are behavior problems in the hallway, there may be a need for a system change regarding hallway monitoring or traffic patterns. Conversely, if it can be narrowed down to a certain student having difficulty in the hallway, that specific student may be referred for a behavioral intervention.

The 2019-20 school year began with the development of a tier two team. The tier two team created small group interventions for students, based on a variety of needs. The tier two team consists of the principal, assistant principal, school counselor, school psychologist and two special education teachers. Our PBIS tier two team has had two full-day trainings in collaboration with an educational consultant for the Midwestern Intermediate Unit 4. Those trainings focused on the use of behavioral referral data, teacher input, SAP referral data and academic concerns to determine which students are in need of intervention. Those trainings also covered how to form and implement those interventions. One such intervention is check-in/check-out (CICO).

The literature review referred to Hawken & Horner (2003), who stated that the standard system organization of CICO includes five critical components. These components may look different in how they are implemented based on setting, personnel and student; however, each of the components must be in place to ensure success. These five components served as the basis for the CICO format for Grove City Elementary. The five components of CICO are:

- Daily check-in.

- Feedback from classroom teachers at regular intervals throughout the day.

- Daily check-out.

- Data collection with progress monitoring.

- Parent feedback (Hawken & Horner, 2003).

Check-in/check-out is widely-used and research-based and will serve as the primary tier two intervention for Grove City Elementary School. The planning for implementation must be individualized to the specific building. Hillview Elementary School was under a renovation so specific care was needed in planning to ensure the safety and efficiency of the program.

Trainings for teachers and support staff occurred at grade-level meetings and were provided by the tier two team. These trainings target specifics as to implementation within the classroom. Teachers and staff were instructed how to use the Daily Progress Report (DPR) sheet, as well as provided examples of what constitutes each score. A rubric (FIGURE 7) was developed by the tier two team as a reference for the teachers. Consistency in scoring was important to ensure that the data collected is valid. These same grade-level meetings were used to provide instructions to the staff responsible for checking the students in and out. A reference sheet (FIGURE 8) was also developed by the tier two team to provide specific talking points to use during their interactions with the students.

Figures 7 & 8

CICO Rubric Sample

CICO Reference Sheet

What does it mean to be Safe, Respectful, Responsible with Check Check In Check Out

Safe
2 - students have all materials and an attitude ready to learn, students are in proper location, students keep hands to self
1 - student needed 2 or less prompts to have all materials ready to go to be ready for class, keep hands to self
0 - student required more than 2 prompts to have materials ready for class or keep hands to self, student is not in proper location

Respectful
2- students demonstrated respectful language to staff and peers, follows directions the first time, and complies with classroom rules
1 - student needed 2 or less prompts to demonstrate respectful language to staff and peers, follows directions the first time and complies with classroom rules
0 - student required more than 2 prompts to demonstrate respectful language to staff and peers, follows directions the first time, and complies with classroom rules

Responsible
2- students demonstrated the ability to enter and exit the classroom appropriately, walk in the hallways appropriately, utilize classroom materials in an appropriate manner, utilize the restroom facilities appropriately, engaging in classwork for the duration of the lesson
1 - student needed 2 or less prompts to demonstrate the ability to enter and exit the classroom appropriately, walk in the hallways appropriately, utilize classroom materials in an appropriate manner, utilize the restroom facilities appropriately, engaging in classwork for the duration of the lesson
0 - student required more than 2 prompts to demonstrate the ability to enter and exit the classroom appropriately, walk in the hallways appropriately, utilize classroom materials in an appropriate manner, utilize the restroom facilities appropriately, engaging in classwork for the duration of the lesson

Check In Check out Scripting/Reflection

Morning Fresh Start Script
- What is your goal today? How many points do you think you'll be able to earn?
- Is there anything you need from me to help you earn your points today?
- Are you ready to start today? Do you have your homework done?
  - - If homework not done, send to homework help with Shannon

When the student has not earned their point
- Why do you think you didn't earn these points?
- What do you think you need to do next time to earn the points?
- What do you need me to do to help you earn these points for next time?

Students who do not come to Check In Check Out:
- Are earning 0s and their data is not reflecting needs
- Please make every effort to encourage them to go at the end of the day

All students who entered the program were provided a brief orientation prior to beginning. The orientation focuses on what check-in/check-out is and how they can be successful in the program. The orientation also provides an opportunity for the students to ask questions or find answers to any concerns. The students meet all staff members who are involved in the checking in and checking out process. The students were also polled about their interests to help in determining rewards for making their daily and weekly points. At orientation, students are also provided information about how their success can lead to graduation from the program.

There were 17 students who participated in the intervention ranging from grades three through five. Fifteen of the students were boys and two were girls. There were six third graders, eight fourth graders and three fifth graders. Parent/guardian permission was sought for all students in the check-in/check-out program in grades three through five to be part of the study. Those for whom permission was granted were part of the data used for the study. The students were identified through the number of office behavior referrals they had accrued, through MTSS/RTII meeting discussions and corresponding recommendations, or through direct teacher referrals.

Permission forms were sent home to the students' parents. Permission was obtained for the use of student data for the purpose of this study. The forms were signed and returned to the secretary or counselor in order to ensure anonymity of the student to the principal researcher. Once parent permission was obtained, the counselor met with each student and explained the student assent form and had the students sign the form if they were willing to

participate. The signed parent permission and student assent will remain securely on file on the guidance office. Students for whom permission was given were given identifying numbers to keep their names confidential from the principal researcher.

The researcher could access the entire data system but not know which students are part of the study. Because of the dual role of the researcher also acting as assistant principal, it was critical to ensure confidentiality for the students in the study. Student confidentiality throughout the study protected against skewing any data because of interactions between the researcher acting in the role as assistant principal and the students. The students were coded by number ensuring that they would remain confidential to the researcher.

Intervention/Research Plan

At the end of first semester a MTSS/RTII meeting analyzed student progress kindergarten through 5th grade. This meeting identified needs of students who are categorized as having behavioral, academic or social challenges. Prior to the meeting, teachers listed students of concern and whether the concern is academic, behavioral, social or other. The team, including the teacher, evaluated available academic and behavioral data to determine the best course of action. Student referrals for the CICO program were generated from this meeting.

The tier two team looked at office referral data to determine students whose behavior indicated the need for intervention. Students with three or more office referrals through the first semester were considered candidates for CICO. An office referral constitutes three classroom infractions in the same behavioral area in a one-month span. Therefore, students

who had three or more office referrals had at a minimum nine classroom infractions through

the first semester. Several students who met this criterion already had a specific individual

behavior plans in place and were not considered for CICO.

The tier two team also considered Elementary Student Assistant Program (ESAP)

referrals. ESAP is a school-based program and is used to help school personnel identify issues

with behavior and mental health.   ESAP referrals can be made by teachers, counselors, parents,

or students. If a student is referred to the ESAP program, a teacher input form is completed by

the student's classroom teacher, which indicates areas of potential need for that student. An

ESAP referral does not automatically get a student referred to the CICO program; it merely

ensures that CICO is considered as an option for help.

Information from office referrals, ESAP referrals, and teacher referrals were considered

in referring students for CICO. The students who were identified for the check-in/check-out

were given the School Climate Survey: Elementary (La Salle & Meyers, 2014) as a pre-

assessment to determine their current views on school climate. The School Climate Survey:

Elementary will help determine whether the interventions impacted school climate from the

perspective of the students. The School Climate Survey: Elementary is a brief, 11-question

survey that was provided courtesy of the PBISAPPS Program, which warehouses the SWIS data

for the district. The survey was given to students in grades three through five. The same

survey was given at the conclusion of the research study to determine if the student's views of

the overall climate of the school changed as a result of the intervention.

Students began check-in/check-out with a brief orientation which provided their goal percentages for their daily points. The overall goal was 80% to be reached consistently. The orientation meeting occurred in the school library where they met the staff members who will provide the services. The orientation meeting occurred in small groups divided by grade level. The teachers and support staff members were trained to keep the program positive and not use the program for punishment. The check-in process provides a time to set the stage for the day and ensure that the student is prepared before setting out. The check-out process provides reflection on the day where discussions can be had about successes, challenges, and potential ways to improve.

The students began each day by checking in. They were provided a folder with their daily progress report (DPR) inside. Staff provided words of encouragement, reminders of goals, and help with organization. The students take their folder with them to their homeroom class and keep the folder with them throughout the day. For the students' first week, they were given reminders and additional opportunities to get their folders. After the first week in the program, the students lost a point in responsibility if they forget their folder. The student was still sent by their teacher to pick up their folder if they forgot.

The students ended their school day by checking out with the same staff member from the start of the day. At check out, the student and staff member added their point total and compared the total to their expected goal. Students who made their goal, were given a sticker for the day which counted toward earning three out of five days for the weekly prize. Students who did not make their goal, worked with the support staff member to identify areas of

difficulty and briefly plan for improvement the following day. Many CICO programs include a home component that involves taking the DPR home to be signed and returned the next day. The tier two core team elected to not include this component and instead will send monthly progress reports home with the students. The parent contact component will be considered for future iterations of the intervention.

Throughout the first week of the program, scaffolding was built in by using reminders and giving students second chances to check in and pick up folders if the students had forgotten them in transition. There was also a meeting with the staff involved in checking in and out, held at the end of week one to discuss concerns. The main concerns after week one were with efficiency and students having incomplete score cards due to teachers not recording a score. Individual concerns with systematic problems such as a student continually not having scores for a particular time frame were addressed directly with the teacher.

The Daily Progress Report (DPR) has four sections. There were two morning and two afternoon sections. Each section was broken down into the areas of safe, respectful and responsible. Each section was scored as a one, two or three as marked on the DPR. A score of three being success and a one meaning there was significant difficulty in that area. The total points accrued throughout the day indicated whether the students' goals were met. Each individual section score was entered into the SWIS data system. The individual section scoring allowed for analysis of trends in consistently areas of strength or need.

In SWIS, time frames not scored were given a score of "no data," which equates to scoring a zero for the points in that particular timeframe. It was a priority to troubleshoot

issues with incomplete DPRs to ensure that the student's score was an accurate representation of the student's current functioning rather than being skewed by zeros for no data. Students who were absent for the day were simply marked as absent in SWIS and their score was not impacted. Students who were absent for one session would be marked as absent in SWIS for only that time period. Being marked absent for only one time period allowed for accurate overall scoring for the day. The denominator for the total points was automatically adjusted to compensate for less possible points, and students' overall scores would then reflect the portions of the day for which they were present.

The students participated in the CICO program in its original design for four weeks. The students received daily feedback, and at the end of each week, they received rewards if they earned their goal percentage for three or more days in the week. The tier two team monitored student progress throughout the intervention at their bi-weekly meetings. At the conclusion of the first four weeks of the intervention, student data was used to determine if any individual changes were needed.

Students with individual features their weekly goal as meeting expectations three or more days in the week. The team decided that students who had reached their goal between 76 and 89% of the days continued with the original design. Students who were successful 90% of the days or more had their weekly goal increased to reaching their daily goal four out of five days to receive their weekly reward. Over time, those students who are consistently meeting their goal will be phased out of the program (Crone et. al., 2010). The tier two team

determined that phasing out would begin after 6 or more weeks of reaching their goals at 90% or higher.

The tier two team determined that students reached their goals less than 75% of the days or more would be candidates for adding individual features. An individual feature is an additional focus area beyond the three eagle expectations. Individual features provide a focus on an additional and at times singular expectation to narrow the focus of the student. Crone et. al., (2010) indicates that making small adjustments such as adding individual features to the content or process of CICO can improve the usefulness for a wide variety of students. The individual feature was designed based on problem areas identified through the data. Teachers also completed input forms to determine specific areas of need and assist in the planning for those additional areas. The staff members who checked in and checked out the students with individual features referenced the additional features at each check point. The progress of those with individual features was compared with those who continued with the original expectations.

An example of an individual feature would be in the "safe" section of the DPR. A student who was consistently marked low on their DPR in the area of safe, had an input form sent to their teacher. A brief focus meeting for students occurred to review safe expectations and how the DPR was adjusted. Those students would then have specific areas of safety added to their DPR form. The daily check-in person addressed the focus area each morning to start the day. The change to the form simply addresses the target area with more specifics than the

general form. An example is provided in figure 7. Other specific areas can be added as well

while still allowing the student to remain in the general CICO program.

Figure 9

DPR Basic

CHECK IN/CHECK OUT POINT SYSTEM

Points Possible _____
Points Received _____
% of Points _____
Goal Met _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Amazing = 2
Almost There = 1
Let's Keep Working = 0

Target Behaviors	AM 1	AM 2	PM 1	PM 2
Safe	O 1 2	O 1 2	O 1 2	O 1 2
Respectful	O 1 2	O 1 2	O 1 2	O 1 2
Responsible	O 1 2	O 1 2	O 1 2	O 1 2
Total Points				

Figure 10

DPR with Individual Features

CHECK IN/CHECK OUT POINT SYSTEM

Points Possible _____
Points Received _____
% of Points _____
Goal Met _____

Name: _____
Date: _____

Amazing = 2
Almost There = 1
Let's Keep Working = 0

Target Behaviors	AM 1	AM 2	PM 1	PM 2
• Keep hands to self • Keep appropriate personal space	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2
Respectful	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2
Responsible	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2
Total Points				

The teachers who had students in the program were given a survey at the end of eight weeks to assess the teachers' perceptions of the program and the impact it had on students. The goal of this survey was to determine, from the teachers' perspectives, areas of strength, weakness and their overall opinion of the program. The survey also gathered information as to whether the teachers felt the program helped the students' behavior. Qualitative information was also gathered through open-ended questions. The qualitative responses were thematically coded. This information will provide data for this study, which can help improve the overall program and its impact on students.

Methods of Data Collection

Data was collected from multiple sources for this study. Students completed the School Climate Survey: Elementary (La Salle & Meyer, 2014) before and after the study. This survey consisted of 11 questions which the students answered with one of four options including never, sometimes, almost always and always. The survey focused on the students' perception of the building climate. The individual and group scores were compared pre and post intervention.

Data was also collected daily during the check-out process. The DPR was completed daily by the classroom teachers in four segments. The segments were broken into two in the morning and two and the afternoon. The check-out process was an interaction between the student and the check-out staff member. The interaction was a review of the point totals in each section. Successes were celebrated and areas of need were addressed with positive planning for the next day with the student.

That daily data was entered into SWIS by the staff member who assisted in the CICO process each day. The daily progress monitoring data allowed the researcher to view student progress each day. Crone et. al., (2010) states that one of the most powerful components of CICO is the ability to use daily data to make decisions. Daily progress monitoring allowed for determination of information beyond just the overall percentage of points earned.

The final method of data collection was a teacher survey, which was completed by the teachers of the students who participated in the study. The survey was based on the BEP Acceptability Questionnaire – Teacher Version (Crone et. al., 2010). The survey consisted of 11 questions scored on a Likert scale (1 - strongly agree, 2 - agree, 3 – undecided, 4 – disagree, 5 –

strongly disagree) and two open ended questions. The survey assessed the teachers' feelings about CICO as an intervention and the impact it had on the students and their classrooms. This survey was distributed by the school counselor to ensure anonymity to the principal researcher. The school counselor assigned each survey a number so that he data was not identifiable to the researcher.

The data from the various sources was triangulated at the conclusion of the study window. Triangulation involved the use of the various available data to find consistencies or variations. The use of multiple sources of data provides additional validity to the information gathered from the study. Data and information gathered through the study were also reviewed with the tier two team as a form of peer debriefing. Because the study was part of a larger intervention program, it was essential to continually assess the impact and be ready to adjust as needed to provide the best support for student needs. Data for this study was collected for a period of eight weeks of student intervention. The CICO intervention program continued after the conclusion of this study. The same process continued with regular evaluation of the effectiveness of the program. Students continued receiving services as recommended by the tier two team.

Fiscal Elements

There was very little cost to run the CICO program. The staff members who assisted in the check-in and check-out process were able to complete their roles through minor reassignments at specific times of the day. No additional hours were added to their workday as a result of the program. The main location of checking in and out was in the library, where

there were multiple instructional aides and a clerk already assigned at those times of the day. They were able to continue their normal assignments while checking students in and out.

Lindstrom Johnson & Bradshaw (2016) indicate that there is an average cost of $12,400 per school, per year to implement school wide PBIS. This cost includes trainings, personnel needs, rewards, and assemblies. The addition of a tier two, check-in/check-out program adds minimal extra cost beyond the system-wide program. There was a cost associated with providing rewards for the students earning their weekly points. The tier two team developed a menu of reward options (FIGURE 11). Several of these rewards do not have a cost and serve as ways to build school connections. Examples of cost-free rewards were to be an office helper or have lunch with your teacher. These items proved to be high motivators to build stronger connections to adults within the school. The cost was incurred as a result of the program as a whole and not because of the research study.

Figure 11

Weekly Prize Choices

Welcome to Check-in/Check-out. Each day when you check out we will count up your points. Your goal is to reach **80% of the total points each day**. When you make your goal **three days in a week** - you have reached your weekly goal. When you hit your weekly goal, you will earn a prize of your choice from the list below. If you make your weekly goal each week of the month, we will have a mini celebration on club/enrichment day.

Weekly prize choices are:

- Pick from the prize box
- Lunch with a friend
- Lunch with a teacher
- Lunch with Principal, counselor, nurse, aide or other
- Mr. Collin's custodian work partner
- Office assistant
- Time with the animals in the lab
- Special Drink (Gatorade etc.)

There is cost savings as a result of the CICO program. Improvements in prosocial behavior will decrease the amount of office referrals and lost instructional time. Scott and Barrett (2004) found that over one hour of time was lost by administrators, teachers, and students for each office referral. Their study found that the cost savings in year one of PBIS implementation as a result of the decrease in behavior problems amounted to $9,106.92. This cost savings increases with the addition of tier two behavioral interventions to further assist the students who are not responding to the system-wide program. The CICO intervention aimed to increase the desired pro-social behaviors that would result in less office referrals.

CHAPTER IV

Results

Overview

This section examines the findings from research exploring two areas of implementation of Check-in/Check-out (CICO) as a behavioral intervention. The two main areas include the impact of the interventions on student behavior, and the perceptions of teachers on the effectiveness of the intervention. A detailed analysis of results from a student pre/post survey, student daily behavioral data, and a teacher post survey was presented. This section will also review the research questions, purpose of the study, description of the population, and the methodology of the study.

Purpose

The purpose of this action research project is to determine the impact of the tier two behavioral intervention, CICO, on student behavior and school climate. The investigation centers on the development of a cost-effective and easily implementable way to positively impact student behavior and social skills. An effective intervention will in turn have a positive impact on the overall school climate.

Research Questions

The following questions were used to guide this study:

1.) How does Check-in/check-out impact student behavior and climate in third through fifth grade?"

2.) How do the teachers perceive the impact of the Check-in/check-out?"

Population/Sample Population

The population for the study were students in grades three through five in Grove City Area School District's Hillview Elementary School. Hillview Elementary has 438 students and 23 teachers in grades three through five.

The sample population for the study were third through fifth grade students who had been identified as needing a behavioral intervention. The study population also included the students' teachers of core subject areas of math, science, reading, social studies and English/language arts.

Methodology

Students were identified for participation in the behavioral intervention through a culmination of office referrals, a teacher referral(s), and/or Elementary Student Assistance Program (ESAP) referrals. Those students identified were entered into the CICO program and participated in an orientation program prior to beginning. Parents were notified and permission was obtained after referral.

While in the program, the students were provided daily progress reports (DPRs) based on the established school-wide expectations to be safe, respectful and responsible. The students also completed the School Climate Survey (La Salle, McIntosh, K., & Eliason, B., 2018) at the beginning and conclusion of the study to assess any change in their assessment of school

climate. Teachers completed a survey at the conclusion of the study to assess their perceptions of the effectiveness of the CICO program as a behavioral intervention.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

Teacher survey data. Teachers who had students on their rosters who were in CICO were asked to complete a survey at the conclusion of the study. The survey was based on the BEP Acceptability Questionnaire – Teacher Version (Crone, Hawken & Horner, 2010). The survey consisted of 11 questions scored on a Likert scale (1 - strongly disagree, 2 - Disagree, 3 – undecided, 4 – Agree, 5 – Strongly Agree) and two open ended questions. The survey assessed the teachers' feelings about CICO as an intervention and the impact it had on the students and their classrooms. The survey also contained two open ended questions which allowed teachers of offer more detailed responses. CICO is intended to provide a cost effective and efficient system of positive behavior support in schools (Crone et. al., 2010). This brief survey is essential in analyzing the teachers' perspectives as to the impact of the intervention on the students and classrooms. The survey data was coded into two main categories: student behavior impact and classroom/school climate impact.

The results of the survey are indicated in tables 1 and 2. Fifteen of twenty-three teachers in grades three through five completed the survey indicating a response rate of 65.22%. Due to the mandated Covid-19 school closure beginning March 16, 2020, the survey was distributed electronically using a Google Form questionnaire. Teachers completing the survey remained anonymous as all personal information was removed from the forms.

Student behavior impact: teacher survey. Teachers were given the prompt, "I have seen an increase in appropriate behaviors since beginning CICO." No teachers strongly disagreed and one disagreed. Three teachers were undecided. Nine teachers agreed and two strongly agreed.

Teachers next responded to the prompt, "I have seen less inappropriate behaviors since beginning CICO." One teacher strongly disagreed. Two teachers disagreed. Four teachers were undecided. Seven teachers agreed and one strongly agreed.

In the third prompt teachers responded to, "I have seen an increase in the use of positive social skills since beginning CICO." No teachers strongly disagreed and one disagreed. Four teachers remained undecided while nine teachers agreed and one strongly agreed.

Teachers were next prompted with, "CICO has an impact on the amount of office referrals I had to make." No teachers strongly disagreed and one disagreed. Six teachers were undecided. Eight teachers agreed and none strongly agreed.

The next prompt which addressed student behavior was, "CICO cause a distraction for the students involved in the program." No teachers responded that they strongly disagreed while ten responded that they agreed. Four teachers indicated that they were undecided. No teachers agreed and one strongly agreed.

The next prompt was, "CICO caused a distraction for the students NOT involved in the program." Two students strongly disagreed and eleven disagreed. No teachers responded that

they were undecided. Two indicated that they agreed and none indicated that they strongly agreed.

The final prompt that addressed student behavior was, "CICO was effective at increasing the Eagle Expectations to be safe, respectful, and responsible." No teachers strongly disagreed and one disagreed. One teacher remained undecided. Ten teachers indicated that they agreed and three more strongly agreed.

School and classroom climate impact: teacher survey. Teachers were given the prompt, "CICO was easy for me to implement." No teachers indicated that they strongly disagreed or disagreed. Four teachers remained undecided. Five teachers agreed and six more strongly agreed.

Next teachers were prompted with, "CICO took away too much instructional time." Four teachers strongly disagreed and nine more disagreed. Two teachers were undecided and no teachers agreed or strongly agreed.

Teachers were then given the prompt, "CICO had a positive impact on school climate." No teachers chose strongly disagree or disagree. Five teachers were undecided. Eight indicated that they agreed and one strongly agreed.

The final prompt given to the teachers was, "I would recommend CICO to other schools or classrooms." No teachers selected strongly disagree and one agreed. Three teachers were undecided. Nine teachers agreed and one strongly agreed.

Teacher survey open ended responses. There were two open ended questions asked as part of the survey. The responses to these questions were thematically coded into one of the two categories; student behavior impact and school/classroom climate impact. Several responses had parts that fit into both categories and those individual parts were coded accordingly.

Eight of the teachers responded to the question, "what additional feedback can you offer to improve Check-in/check-out?" One teacher reported that the students involved "would be upset if they did not earn their points for the day". That teacher also stated that the program was helpful in pinpointing specific times when behaviors were occurring. Another teacher commented that he/she feels that accountability and consequences are needed for the students as a result of their behavior. One teacher responded that he/she spent a lot of time at the beginning and end of the day helping the students in CICO and that he/she was not able to help other students as a result. One teacher reported that the person checking in/out the student(s) had a positive impact on the student. Another teacher reported that building a system that "forced" teachers to check the DPR folder throughout the day would be beneficial. That teacher described that system as being a way to "provide more than just an exit interview for the student."

Five teachers responded to the question, "beyond Check-in/check-out, what additional supports do you feel you need to address student behaviors in your classroom?" Three teachers indicated that collaboration with other teachers would be beneficial. One teacher mentioned that the office referral system was difficult to maintain with students who were in

the program and that referrals were not always handled in a timely fashion when made. Two

teachers indicated that they felt the school is in need of a social skills or positive peer

interactions program for additional student support.

Table 1

Teacher Survey Response Frequency Scale

Perceived CICO Impact	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
I have seen an increase in appropriate behaviors since beginning CICO.	0	1	3	9	2
I have seen less inappropriate behaviors since beginning CICO.	1	2	4	7	1
I have seen an increase in the use of positive social skills since beginning CICO.	0	1	4	9	1
CICO had an impact on the amount of office referrals I had to make.	0	1	6	8	0
CICO was easy for me to implement.	0	0	4	5	6
CICO caused a distraction for the students involved in the program.	0	10	4	0	1
CICO caused a distraction for students NOT involved in the program.	2	11	0	2	0
CICO took away too much instructional time.	4	9	2	0	0
CICO was effective at increasing the Eagle Expectations to be safe, respectful, and responsible.	0	1	1	10	3
CICO had a positive impact on school climate.	0	0	5	8	1
I would recommend CICO to other schools or classrooms.	0	1	3	9	1

N=15

Student daily CICO data. Students were provided a Daily Progress Report (DPR) sheet each day prior to going to homeroom by the CICO coordinator. The sheet was inside a folder which was then carried to each class throughout the day. Each teacher rated the student throughout the day on a scale of zero to two, with the score breakdown as follows: two = Amazing, One = Almost There, Zero = Let's Keep Working. Student daily CICO data was entered into the CICO-School Wide Information System (SWIS). CICO-SWIS is a web-based system which provides a safe and secure location to enter student data from their daily progress reports CICO. Individual and group reports from the CICO-SWIS system were analyzed to determine student success.

Students averaged 21 days of data as part of the study. There were a total of 23 student days during the study period. There was a wide range of student daily attendance ranging from 69.5% to 100%. One student missed seven days. One student missed four days. One student missed three days. Six students missed one day or less. The total days of data collected were cut short due to the mandated Covid-19 closure in the State of Pennsylvania beginning March 16th. The research plan was for eight weeks of daily behavioral data. Due to the closure, five weeks were collected.

All students began with the goal of earning 80% of their daily points. Seven of nine students averaged over the 80% goal for the duration of the study. The average daily point percentage for the study sample was 85.96% with the average distance from the goal of +5.96%. The distance from goal percentage is included in the CICO-SWIS program to help determine student success at a quick glance (Table 2).

Table 2

Average Daily Points Report

Student	Days of Data (23 possible)	Avg Daily % of Points	Distance from goal of 80%
1	22	86.93	6.93
2	22	83.08	3.08
3	20	88.47	8.47
4	22	95.08	15.08
5	22	86.36	6.36
6	16	81.86	1.86
7	23	95.65	15.65
8	23	79.59	-0.41
9	19	76.61	-3.39
	Avg. Days	Avg. %	Avg. Distance from goal
	21	85.95888889	5.958888889

Table 3 shows the percentage of days that the each student met their goal. Students had an average of 15.88 day where they reached their goal. Although 78% of the students averaged above their daily goals, consistency was difficult for some students. Student 4 made his/her goal every day. On average, the students in the study sample made their goals 67% of the days with a range from 50% to 100%.

Table 3

Percentage of Days Meeting Goal

Student	Number of Days Meeting Goal	Percentage of Days Meeting Goal
1	17	77%
2	11	50
3	17	85
4	22	100
5	16	73
6	11	69
7	21	91
8	14	61
9	14	74

Determining a student's overall success in the intervention must go beyond utilization of one factor in their scores. It is important to determine to what extent a student is consistently reaching his/her goals daily, as well as, achieving those goals over a period of time. Table 4 shows the comparison of the average percentage of daily points to the percentage of days meeting the established goal of 80%. There is a discrepancy in that students averaged an overall score of 85.95% per day but were only successful on an average just over 67% of the days. This table further indicates the severity of inconsistency with some students. For instance, Student 2 was averaging above the goal of 80% for the duration of the study period but only made his/her goal 50% of the days.

Table 4

Comparison of Average Daily Points to Days Meeting Goal

Student	Avg Daily % of Points	Percentage of Days Meeting Goal
1	86.93	77%
2	83.08	50
3	88.47	85
4	95.08	100
5	86.36	73
6	81.86	69
7	95.65	91
8	79.59	61
9	76.61	74
Avg	85.95%	67.09%

Student survey data. Students participating in the intervention were given the School Climate Survey (La Salle et. al., 2018) prior to beginning the intervention and at the conclusion. Due to the mandated closure of schools on March 16, 2020, the post intervention survey was sent to the students digitally through student email as a Google Form document. Paper copies were also mailed as needed. The first eleven questions remained the same for both the pre and post surveys. Three questions were added to the post survey specifically to assess the participants' perceptions as to how the intervention impacted their behavior and why. These were added to determine the impact of the intervention, particularly because student perception of school climate could have been negatively impacted due to the school closure and pandemic. The

sudden closure could have had an impact that changes the student view of school climate that is not related to the intervention at all. The questions provided additional information from the students that are directly related to the intervention and were unlikely impacted by the school closure.

The School Climate Survey is a brief, 11-question survey. The survey is scored on a Likert scale using never, sometimes, always, and often as response choices. The results were compiled and scoring changed to numeric values so that never = 1, sometimes = 2, often = 3, and always = 4. The results of the survey's first eleven questions were compared and indicated in Table 6.

The data in table 5 indicates that the students' views regarding school climate went down in eight of eleven areas when compared before and after taking part in the intervention. The overall average scores went down as well. Prompt one, "I like school" had an average score increase of .11. Prompt two, "I feel like I do well in school" had an average decrease of -.11. Promt three, "My school wants me to do well" had an average decrease of -.11. Prompt four, "My school has clear rules for behavior" showed an average decrease of -.22. Prompt five, "Teachers treat me with respect" had an increase of .22. Prompt six, "Good behavior is noticed at my school" indicated a decrease of -.22. Prompt seven, "I get along with other students" showed a decrease of -.22. Prompt eight, "I feel safe at school" had an increase of .11. Prompt nine, "Students treat each other well" had a decrease of -.44. Prompt 10, "There is an adult at my school who will help me if I need it" showed a decrease of -.22. The final prompt, "Students in my class behave so that teachers can teach showed a decrease of -.66.

Table 5

Student Pre/Post Numeric Average Comparison

Question	Pre	Post	Difference
1	2.78	2.89	0.11
2	2.89	2.78	-0.11
3	4	3.89	-0.11
4	4	3.78	-0.22
5	3.56	3.78	0.22
6	3.33	3.11	-0.22
7	2.89	2.67	-0.22
8	3.33	3.44	0.11
9	3.11	2.67	-0.44
10	3.78	3.56	-0.22
11	3.44	2.78	-0.66
Avg.	3.373636	3.213636	-0.16

The students were given four follow-up prompts in the post survey using the same Likert scale for scoring. The first three additional prompts posed the question 'why did you select the answer to the previous question'. The students were given no further information regarding the open ended questions, just an open text box to type or write in depending on the format of their response. Table 6 displays the frequency of student responses to the additional questions on the post survey.

The first additional prompt was, "participating in CICO improved my behavior." Zero students selected never and one selected sometimes. Three students felt that CICO often improved his/her behavior and five indicated that the intervention always improve their behavior.

The second additional prompt was, "participating in CICO helped me do better in school." Zero students indicated that the intervention never helped them do better. Three stated that that it sometimes helped. Two chose that CICO often helped. Four students felt that CICO always helped them do better in school.

The final additional prompt was, "I enjoyed participating in the CICO program." Zero students selected never or sometimes for this prompt. Three students chose often. Six students indicated that they always enjoyed the CICO program.

All nine students offered responses to why the students selected their answers to, "Participating in CICO improved my behavior." Two students indicated that the prizes they received were the reason they selected their response to the question. One student stated that they now, "raised my hand in school," and another noted that, "it made me think before I do." A student remarked that his behavior improved because, "I got all sixes," and another because, "I was in it." One final student stated that CICO improved their behavior because they, "had goals to help me."

Eight of nine students responded to provide at reason they chose their answer to, "participating in CICO helped me do better in school." One student responded, "now I barely goof off in school," and another that, "I didn't get in trouble as much." Two more students indicated that prizes were the reason for their selection. One student discussed that they have bad mornings and CICO helped them to not be, "grumpy all day."

In response to, "I enjoyed participating in CICO" all students provided input. Once again, prizes were mentioned by two students as being the reason for their selection. Several

students indicated that the intervention helped them to think before making choices and correct their mistakes.

The final prompt asked, "Are there any ways that you think CICO could be better?" Five students indicated that they could not think of any ways it could be better. One student indicated that the teacher should be able to hold their folder. Another student responded, "homework passes." A final response expanded to state, "It helped me where I needed help. I need help staying on track. I need help with staying organized so I put things back where they belong. I need help finding a way to pay attention for a long time." The same student when on to indicate, "I want more check in during the day because if I have trouble in a class I get grumpy and I have trouble getting happy and listening again. I get riled up at lunch and I want a warning so I can calm down before class."

Table 6

Additional Question Response Frequency

Question	Frequency of Response			
	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
Participating in Check-in/Check-out improved my behavior	0	1	3	5
Participating in Check-in/Check-out helped me do better in school	0	3	2	4
I enjoyed participating in the Check-in/Check-out program	0	0	3	6

Summary

The findings of this study add to the body of knowledge in the area of how the implementation of Check-in/Check-out (CICO) impacts a school's teachers, students and school climate. The findings are encouraging in that students successfully maintained an overall average level of behavior that was above the goal of 80%. The teachers also reported the intervention to be successful with regard to student behavior and ease of implementation. However, there were signs of inconsistency in student behavior while in the intervention. Several students could maintain an overall average behavior rating above the stated goal but their daily performance varied drastically. In addition, the student view of the school climate trended downward slightly from the beginning of the intervention to the end.

Research Question 1: How does Check-in/check-out impact student behavior and school climate in third through fifth grade?

Student behavior. The tier two interventions helped students to achieve an overall average daily behavior rating of 85.96%. Seventy-eight percent of the students achieved their daily goal; however, the daily goal was met just over 67% of the days. This indicates that students had a wide range of scores on their daily rating and that behavioral consistency was not evident. Outliers on both ends were evident with a student who averaged above the daily goal average but only made their goal 50% of the days. Conversely, another student reached his goal every day during the study at a 95% average. This data indicates that the overall average level of student behavior in the sample was high. The considerably lower amount of days where goals were met indicates future need to develop ways to grow student consistency.

Additional questions added to the post intervention survey indicated that the student perceived success in the intervention. Over 88% of the students responded that participating in CICO helped to improve their behavior. One hundred percent of the students responded that they enjoyed participating in the intervention. The students' anecdotal responses also indicated that they felt the intervention was helpful. Students stated that they "behave more" and now "barely goof off" as a result of the intervention.

School climate. Student perception of school climate went down based on the pre/post School Climate Survey (LaSalle et. al., 2018). There was a decrease in average score on 73% of prompts. The overall score went down as well. The average response remained between always and often, which indicates an overall favorable view of school climate. However, the data does not indicate that school climate improved as a result of the intervention. It must be noted that the post survey was given in the midst of a mandatory school closure due to Covid-19 which could have influenced student ratings.

Research Question 2. How do the teachers perceive the impact and effectiveness of the tier two intervention program?

Student behavior. Data from the teacher post intervention survey indicates that they perceive that the intervention program was effective and had a positive impact on student behavior. More than 73% of the teachers agreed or strongly agreed that they had seen an increase in appropriate behavior since the students began CICO. Teachers also felt that the intervention was successful in increasing the use of positive social skills while decreasing the amount of office referrals they needed to make. More than 86% of the teachers agreed or strongly agreed

that the students participating in the intervention increased the student's ability to be safe, respectful, and responsible.

There was a discrepancy in the teachers' perceptions of the impact and effectiveness of the intervention on student behavior. Just over 53% of the teachers agreed that participating in CICO decreased inappropriate behaviors by the students. This compared with the 73% that saw an increase in appropriate behaviors indicates that some students were improving their positive behavior while not decreasing their negative behavior. This was further illustrated by the inconsistency in the student data which showed that some students could achieve a high overall average without consistently earning their points on their daily progress report (DPR).

School climate. The teachers' responses to the survey indicated that student participation in CICO had a positive impact on school climate with none of the respondents disagreeing. More than 73% of the teachers felt that CICO was easy to implement in their classrooms and that it did not cause a distraction. The teachers also felt positive that they would recommend using CICO to other teachers and classrooms, while zero disagreed with the statement.

Anecdotal teacher responses indicated that although they felt the program was a success, there could be improvements. Several teachers indicated that collaborations with the students other teachers would be beneficial. Also, a teacher reported that a system to force the teachers to check the student's DPR folder throughout the day would be beneficial and move beyond merely providing an exit interview for the student.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

Many schools have difficulty maintaining high academic expectations while also providing instruction and support for student behavior. One way that schools have begun to address student behavior is through the implementation of Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS). PBIS is a three tiered system of supports and interventions that uses data and instruction to increase positive student behavior (Sugai & Horner, 2009). The main focus of PBIS is preventative rather than punitive (Todd, Cambell, Meyer, & Horner, 2008; Sugai & Horner, 2009).

This study specifically focused on how a tier-two intervention provided through PBIS impacted student behavior and school climate. The tier two intervention utilized was Check-in/check-out (CICO), which is a commonly used and relatively easy to implement school-based program (Crone, Hawken & Horner, 2010). The study utilized data gathered from student surveys, student daily behavioral data, and teacher surveys to determine the effectiveness of CICO. The investigation of behavioral interventions and their impact provides important information for school planning. In addition to the ease of implementation of CICO, the cost of implementation and maintenance are low (Crone et. al., 2010.).

Chapter one of this study provided the introduction to the research and reasons the intervention was selected. Chapter two was a review of literature related to school climate,

Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS), and Check-in/Check-out (CICO). Chapter three focused on the methodology including purpose, setting, participants, intervention/research plan, and data collection. Chapter four included the results of the intervention with a description and analysis of the data collected. Chapter five contains conclusions, planning and applications as a result of the study.

Purpose. The purpose of this action research project is to determine the impact of a tier-two behavioral intervention, specifically CICO, on student behavior and school climate. The study investigates the development of a cost-effective and easily implementable way to positively impact student behavior and social skills. The study also investigates how the intervention impacts school climate.

Research Questions. The following questions were used to guide this study:

3.) How does CICO impact student behavior and school climate in third through fifth grade students?"

4.) How do teachers perceive the impact and effectiveness of the tier two intervention program?"

Population/Sample Population. The population for the study were students in grades three through five in Grove City Area School District's Hillview Elementary School. Hillview Elementary has 438 students in grades three through five and 23 teachers. Third through fifth grade students in need of behavioral interventions were invited to participate. Teachers who had the identified students in math, science, social studies, reading, and English/language arts were also included.

Methodology. Students were identified for participation in the behavioral intervention through a culmination of office referrals, a teacher referral(s), or and ESAP referral. Those students identified were entered into the CICO program. While in the program, the students were provided daily progress reports (DPRs) based on the established school-wide expectations to be safe, respectful and responsible. The students also completed the School Climate Survey (La Salle & Meyers, 2014) at the beginning and conclusion of the study to assess any change in their assessment of school climate. Teachers were given a survey at the conclusion of the study to assess their perceptions of the effectiveness of the CICO program as a behavioral intervention.

Major Findings

The findings of this study add to the body of knowledge in the area of how the implementation of Check-in/Check-out (CICO) impacts a schools teachers, students and climate. The findings suggest that students successfully maintained an overall average level of behavior that was above the goal of 80%. The teachers also reported that the intervention to be successful with regard to student behavior and ease of implementation. However, student behavior was inconsistent at times. Several students could maintain an overall average behavior rating above the stated goal but their daily performance varied drastically. One specific student met their average daily goal with an average of 83%, yet made their daily goal 50% of the days. In addition, the student view of the school climate trended downward slightly from the beginning of the intervention to the end.

Research Question 1. *How does CICO impact student behavior and school climate in third through fifth grade students?*

Student Behavior. CICO helped students achieve an overall average daily behavior rating of 86% (80% established goal). 78% of the students achieved their daily goal; however, the daily goal was met 67% of the days. This indicates that students had a wide range of scores on their daily rating and that their behavior was inconsistent. Outliers were evident with a student who averaged above the daily goal average but only made his/her goal 50% of the days. Conversely, another student reached his/her goal every day during the study at a 95% average. This data indicates that the overall average rating in the sample was high. The considerably lower amount of days where goals were met indicates future need to develop ways to grow student consistency.

Additional questions added to the post intervention survey indicated that the students had a positive attitude regarding the intervention. 88% of students responded that participating in CICO helped to improve their behavior. 100% of students reported that they enjoyed participating in the intervention. The students' anecdotal responses also indicated that they felt the intervention was helpful. Students stated that they "behave more" and now "barely goof off" as a result of the intervention.

School climate. Student perception of school climate decreased based on the pre/post School Climate Survey (LaSalle & Meyers, 2014). Most responses were always and often, which indicates an overall favorable view of school climate. However, the data does not indicate that

school climate improved as a result of the intervention. The post survey was given in the midst of a mandatory school closure due to COVID-19, which could have influenced student ratings.

Research Question 2. *How do the teachers perceive the impact and effectiveness of the CICO program?*

Student Behavior. Data from the teacher post intervention survey indicated that they perceive the intervention program was effective and had a positive impact on student behavior. 73% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that they had seen an increase in appropriate behavior since students began CICO. Teachers also felt that the intervention increased the use of positive social skills while decreasing the amount of office referrals. 86% of the teachers agreed or strongly agreed that the students increased the student's ability to be safe, respectful, and responsible.

There were mixed teachers' perceptions of the impact and effectiveness of the intervention on student behavior.   53% of the teachers reported that participating in CICO decreased inappropriate behaviors by the students. Based on 73% of teachers that reported an increase in appropriate behaviors indicates that teachers saw more improvement in the students' positive behaviors than in their negative behaviors. This was further illustrated by the inconsistency in the student data which showed that some students could achieve a high overall average without consistently earning their points on their daily progress report (DPR).

School Climate:

64% of teachers' responses to the survey indicated that student participation in CICO had a positive impact on school climate and no teachers selected that they disagreed. 73% of the teachers felt that CICO was easy to implement in their classrooms and did not cause a distraction. All teachers felt positive that they would recommend using CICO to other teachers and classrooms.

Anecdotal teacher responses indicated that they felt the program was a success, and recommended that there could be improvements. Several teachers indicated that collaborations with the student's other teachers would be beneficial. Also, a teacher reported that a system to ensure that the teachers to check the student's DPR folder throughout the day would be beneficial and move beyond merely providing an exit interview for the student.

Unexpected Findings

An unexpected finding emerged from the study. When reviewing and comparing the daily behavioral ratings with the overall student daily average, inconsistencies were discovered. It became evident that students could maintain a high overall rating average, yet have very inconsistent scores from day to day. Data revealed that several students were able to maintain their goal average of 80% by balancing some very high scores with some days with scores significantly lower. This was corroborated by information from the teacher survey which stated that students showed an increase of positive behaviors but not necessarily a decrease in the negative behavior.

Conclusions

The goal of this study was to determine the impact of the PBIS tier-two intervention Check-in/check-out (CICO) on student behavior and school climate. Several conclusions were attained as a result of this study.

Conclusion 1. Check-in/Check-out (CICO) helped students maintain overall average of daily behavior ratings that was 6% over the established goal. The Daily Progress Report (DPR) is a built-in progress monitoring tool within CICO, which was used each day for scoring of student behavior by the teachers (Crone et. al., 2010). Each student in the study was given a target goal of 80% points earned daily on their Daily Progress Report (DPR). Daily progress was entered into the School-Wide Information System (SWIS). Through twenty-three school days of data collection, students earned an overall average of 86% of their daily possible points. Seven of the nine students in the study averaged over their target goal of 80%. This data indicates that the CICO intervention helped students maintain positive behaviors.

Based on the data, this intervention should be expanded to include more students in the elementary setting. The structure of the program allows for ease of expansion but will require new locations and additional personnel to assist. Hillview Elementary was renovated and now includes students from K-1 which provides access to the intervention to all students in grades K-5. Due to the layout of the new building, it will be more efficient to have separate check-in and check-out locations for students in grades K-2 and grades 3-5. This will allow the process to occur in a closer proximity to grade level classrooms.

Conclusion 2. Student behavior was inconsistent while in the intervention. While the students maintained an overall average of 86%, they only reached their daily goals 67% of the days. This indicates that overall scores were skewed by very high and low days. An individual student scores illustrated a student who maintained an overall average over the goal of 80% but made that goal 50% of the days. Students with extremely inconsistent behavior may do better in other intervention types or more intensive interventions.

Scores on the teacher surveys also corroborated the student daily data by showing a discrepancy between the teachers' feelings on the increase in appropriate behaviors versus a decrease in negative behaviors. The subtle difference in the question led to responses indicating that 73% of teachers felt that while there was an increase in appropriate behavior, while 53% reported that there was not a decrease in inappropriate behavior.

Based on the differences in reported survey responses, further development is needed on programs related to behavioral consistency. Professional development sessions will be planned with the tier two behavior support team and an educational consultant from the Midwestern Intermediate Unit Four (MIU4) to determine best practices applicable to the Hillview Elementary setting. The tier two team will provide professional development sessions to the entire staff to develop best practices.

Conclusion 3. CICO had a positive impact on student behavior and classroom climate from teacher perspective. Teachers agreed that there was an increase in positive behaviors and the use of positive social skills. In addition, 87% of the teachers agreed that CICO helped students to increase their ability to follow Hillview Elementary's Eagle Expectations to be safe,

respectable, and responsible. Teachers also indicated that the intervention was easy to implement while not impacting too much instructional time.

Based on the data indicating that teachers felt there was a positive impact on behavior and climate, expansion of CICO to be used with students in other grades and classrooms is warranted. The expansion of the building due to the renovation will provide obstacles when including additional grade levels. These obstacles will be addressed by having grade level check-in and check-out zones for grades K-2 and 3-5.

Conclusion 4. CICO was not effective in increasing student perceptions of school climate. While data indicated student success and favorable teacher impressions of the intervention, there was not a connection to an increase in overall student perception of school climate. The overall average score on the student survey of school climate decreased from the surveys given at the beginning of the intervention and those given at the conclusion. A factor that could have contributed to the decrease in school climate perception, most notably the mandated school closure due to COVID-19. Regardless of the reason for the decline, CICO as a tier-two intervention does not appear to directly increase school climate.

Conclusion 5. Students reported a favorable view of CICO. Eight of nine participants stated that participating in the program helped them to improve their behavior. Six of nine students reported that it helped them do better in school and all nine enjoyed participating in the intervention. The students' anecdotal responses supported this conclusion with statements about how they felt they improved his/her behavior.

The positive student perspective indicates that students in other classrooms and grades may also have a favorable view of participating in the program. Student surveys will continue to be utilized to help the tier-two team keep the program fresh and meeting the needs to the students.

Conclusion 6. CICO is a cost effective way to positively impact student behavior. The program was designed to be used with existing school staff with readily available materials. The CICO coordinator required approximately 30 minutes per day to prepare DPR sheets, check-in with students to start the day, check-out with students to conclude the day, and enter data into the SWIS program. The coordinator required no additional time to be added to her schedule. As the program increases in size, additional personnel will be needed to provide necessary support for the students.

Weekly rewards and prizes were purchased for under $200 for the duration of the study. In addition to the prizes of monetary value, there were rewards that were of no cost to the district such as time working with custodians, lunch with teachers, and lunch with friends. Students were able to choose their prize. Additional cost would be incurred as the program is expanded due to increases in prize options due to increased participation and corresponding prize distribution.

The PBIS tier-one and tier-two teams will work together to obtain donations from community stakeholders to offset the cost of the programs. Although the overall cost is low, donations may help expand the options of incentives. Involving stakeholders also has the

potential for other experiences that could be available for students outside of the school at little or no cost to the district, such as field trips and gift cards.

Future Directions for Research/Recommendations

The Grove City Hillview Elementary tier-one PBIS team obtained donations for items to be used as incentives. The teams will continue to seek donations for additional prizes and incentives for CICO. Student surveys will be utilized to determine items and activities of interest with a focus on items or activities with no cost to district. The menu of rewards and incentives needs continual adjustment to keep student interest high. Donations and low/no cost options will keep ongoing and future costs low.

Crone et. al., (2010) indicate that in order to assess true outcomes of the intervention it is important to ensure the critical features are in place. High fidelity of implementation is related to positive outcomes for students in the intervention (Crone et. al., 2010). Fidelity will be addressed by utilizing scripts for the check-in and check-out process. Teachers will continue to utilize a rubric for scoring on the DPR. Tier-two intervention fidelity assessments are available from behavioral education consultants through the Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV (MIU4).

Students who have shown continued and consistent success in the program will be gradually faded from the intervention. Fading refers to the recommended approach by Crone et. al., (2010) to wean students out of the intervention. Crone recommends using self-management to assist in fading support from CICO. The tier-two core behavior support team will require professional development on the fading process and student self-management.

Students who are successful in the CICO intervention will be introduced to fading by the CICO coordinator who will remain the coordinator for the fading process.

For students who have shown to have inconsistent behavior in the intervention, further support options are needed. Adjustments to the CICO intervention can be made without changing the structure of the overall program. Crone et. al., (2010) suggests modifying the program in the simplest ways possible first and expanding modifications as needed. There is a need for a menu of modifications that can be quickly implemented as needed. Two to three weeks of data at minimum is recommended before any modifications are made (Crone et. al., 2010). The student's time prior to modification will be used as baseline data to measure the success of the modification.

Recommendations for Further Research

Prior research suggests a positive correlation between student behavior and school climate (Wang and Degol, 2016). Further research is needed to determine how school climate is impacted over longer periods of time where the CICO is implemented and while school remains in session. In this study, students were given the post intervention survey in the midst of a closure due to Covid-19. The measurement of climate while school is in session may provide a better indicator a positive change to the overall climate of a building. Further investigation is warranted to determine if CICO can be used as a tool to directly and positively impact school climate. An expanded program that includes a higher percentage of the school population may provide more of a positive impact.

Further research is also needed to investigate specific interventions aimed at increasing consistency of behavior. Students showed inconsistent behavior while in the CICO intervention according to teacher ratings. To address that inconsistency, research on the development of additional intervention options is warranted. Variations to the existing CICO model such as individualized goal setting and specific staff members for checking in/out may provide additional support to students.

In addition to more tier-two interventions, further research of more intensive interventions may be necessary. 77% percent of the students in this study showed consistent positive behavior; however, individualized interventions are needed for the students who fell below the goal level. As the number of tier-two interventions are expanded to a broader population, there may be more students who fail to find success and need more intensive interventions. Research should focus on the types of interventions that best serve those students who need more intensive and individualized approaches.

Another area for further research is whether there is a connection between school attendance and success in CICO. In addition, research to determine if participation in CICO can help to increase student attendance may be beneficial. Students in this study ranged from 70% to 100% attendance during the intervention. Research over a longer period of time may help determine whether students who attend more regularly are more successful in CICO.

Summary and Concluding Statements

Schools continually search for low cost approaches to address and improve student behavior. A system wide approach is school-wide Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports

(PBIS). Hillview elementary successfully implemented tier-one of PBIS and collected school-wide data to help determine students who were in need of interventions. CICO was implemented in the school to provide support to those students indicating difficulty.

CICO was successful for the majority of students who participated in the study. Teachers and students both reported that the students benefitted in several ways. The intervention was inexpensive to operate and largely met its intended goals of assisting students in maintaining expected behavior.

As an assistant principal, a large part of the researcher's responsibility is student discipline. Choosing tier-two behavioral interventions for this study was an attempt to find systematic ways to approach students who were having consistent behavioral problems in school. Often, school codes of conduct do not provide for development of expected behavior. This study sought find a structured approach to groups of students who were not reaching those expectations. The information gained will help continue the development of interventions and reach a wider portion of our student body.

Teachers are looking for ways to positively approach the students with behavior difficulties. Teachers do not have the time to continually stop and correct behavior or deal with class disruptions. Classroom disruptions also impact the learning of the other students in the class. The teachers in this study indicated that CICO helped the students in the intervention while not creating a distraction for the other students. Ultimately, this means that teachers can focus on instruction more and behavior less which maximizes the use of their instructional

time.   It also means that the instruction in the classroom can more consistently reach a larger

percentage of the students helping the entire school achieve at a higher level.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Informed Teacher Consent

Dear Teacher,

I am writing this letter not as the assistant principal, but as a doctoral student of California University of Pennsylvania. I request permission for you to participate in a research study to be used for my doctoral capstone project. I am conducting a research project to determine the impact of behavioral and social skills interventions on the upper elementary school climate. I hope to use what is learned from this study to create a plan to better provide supports for students as they are needed.

Please consider this letter your invitation to participate in a survey regarding the impact and effectiveness of the behavioral interventions. You were selected because you are an upper elementary school teacher you have a student who is participating in PBIS interventions. Participation is voluntary and you may refuse to complete the survey. The surveys will be anonymous to ensure anonymity to the principal researcher (myself).

Why are we doing this study?

The purpose of this study is to determine how behavioral and social skills interventions impact the students, teachers, and overall climate of a school. Appropriate behavior and social skills can be presented in a preventative, positive and systematic way. This will be an attempt to use data to drive, monitor, and evaluate the school wide positive behavior support program so that it provides the greatest benefits to the students and school as a whole.

Procedures:

Potential student participants will be considered based on office referrals, teacher referrals, or other referral means. Students who are participating in the study will be provided behavioral and social skills interventions in the form of Check-in/Check-out (CICO). The intervention will occur daily at the beginning and conclusion of each day and will consist of goal setting and tracking progress throughout the day toward those goals.

Your participation will be to help facilitate the CICO process within your classroom with selected students as well as the completion of a survey about how the process impacted you, your classroom and your overall perception of the effectiveness.

Risks and discomforts:

The dual role of myself (assistant principal) as the principal researcher could lead to teachers feeling that there could be diminished support and/or collaboration if they would decide not to participate.

The benefits of the study are that with improved behavior and social skills the overall climate of your classroom and building will improve.

Records and Documentation:

Records and documentation related to your participation in this study will remain confidential. Your survey will remain anonymous. Once the data from the study is compiled, only the researcher will have access to it.

Results of this study may be used in publications and presentations but student names will never be used or known to the researcher.

General and Special Considerations:

This study is approved by the California University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board. This approval is effective _____ and expires _____.

Contacts:

For questions about the research:

Andrew Kemper (Researcher) 724-458-9330 ext. 3103; andrew.kemper@gcasdk12.org

Dr. David Foley (Faculty Advisor); foley@calu.edu

For questions about your child's rights as a participant:

California University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board (IRB); instreviewboard@calu.edu

California University of Pennsylvania Faculty Advisor: Dr. David Foley; foley@calu.edu

Teacher Permission Participation in Research:

I have read this form and the research study has been explained to me. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions. If I have additional questions, I have been told who to contact. By signing this form, I give permission to participate in the research study described above.

_____

Teacher's Name (Printed)   Date:

_____

Teacher's Signature   Date:

Appendix B

Teacher Survey

Please respond to the following survey using the following rating scale:

(1-Strongly Agree, 2-Agree, 3-Undecided, 4-Disagree, 5-Strongly Disagree)

_____I have seen an increase in appropriate behaviors since beginning Check-in/Check-out

_____I have seen less inappropriate behaviors since beginning Check-in/Check-out

_____I have seen an increase in the use of positive social skills since beginning Check-in/Check-out

_____Check-in/check-out had an impact on the amount of office referrals I had to make

_____Check-in/Check-out was easy for me to implement

_____Check-in/Check-out caused a distraction for the students involved

_____Check-in/Check-out caused a distraction for the students not involved

_____Check-in/Check-out took away too much instructional time

_____Check-in/check-out was effective at increasing the Eagle Expectations to Be Safe, Be Respectful, and Be Responsible

_____Check-in/Check-out had a positive impact on the overall grade level climate

_____I would recommend Check-in/Check-out to other teachers/classrooms

What additional feedback could you offer to improve check-in/check-out?

What supports do you feel that you still need to address student behaviors in your classroom?

Appendix C

Informed Parent Consent

Dear Parent or Guardian,

I am writing this letter not as the assistant principal, but as a doctoral student of California University of Pennsylvania. We have begun behavioral and social skills interventions as part of our school-wide Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) program. I am conducting research to determine the impact of our interventions as well as their impact on school climate. I hope to use what is learned from this study to better provide supports to students.

Participation:

We will use eight weeks of data gathered throughout the interventions. The use of your child's data in the study is voluntary and can be withdrawn at any time. All records will remain confidential and student names will be coded numerically to ensure anonymity to the principal researcher (myself).

Why are we doing this study?

The purpose of this study is to determine how behavioral and social skills interventions impact the students, teachers, and overall climate of a school. Appropriate behavior and social skills can be presented in a preventative, positive and systematic way. This will be an attempt to use data to drive, monitor, and evaluate the student program so that it provides the greatest benefits to the students and school as a whole.

Procedures:

Students whose data are being used in the study will be provided social skills interventions in the form of Check-in/Check-out (CICO). The intervention will occur daily at the beginning and conclusion of each day. Each session will consist of goal setting and tracking progress throughout the day toward those goals.

Each student who participates will be put into a random group. That group will check in with a staff member at the beginning of each day to review their goals and expectations. Teachers will keep track of how students are progressing toward those goals throughout the day. The students will check back in with a staff member at the end of the day to see how they did in reaching their goals, celebrate successes and look to build in areas of difficulty. This will be tracked for 8 weeks to see how well the students can do in reaching their goals. Upon reaching their goals, they will be rewarded with special treats and prizes.

Risks and discomforts:

The dual role of myself (assistant principal) as the principal researcher could lead to parents or student concerns about bias if they were to choose not to have their data used in the study. The potential risks will be addressed by ensuring that the students who are participating in the study are coded by a

random number which will be used for data purposes. The principal researcher will not know which students were invited to participate or which are participating.

The school's administrative assistant will be organizing and coordinating any invitation mailings and related consents or denials. Information related to those invitations will only be sent and received by the administrative assistant. All students who are invited will be randomly assigned a number and the principal researcher will only know the participants who have granted consent by the random number assigned.

In any study there are unforeseeable risks associated. In the event that there would be any physical, emotional or psychological harm, referrals to the school counselor, school psychologist and/or outside agencies are available through the main school office. In the event that any concern with your child and this study would arise please contact Grove City Area School District, the researcher or the institutional review board of California University of Pennsylvania at the contacts listed below.

The benefits of study are that your child will have the opportunity to increase their social skills and be able to better navigate their school days and school community. There are additional opportunities for one on one or small group counseling through the counseling department at the school.

Records and Documentation:

Records and documentation related to your child's participation in this study will remain confidential. The child's teacher, administrative assistant, school counselor, principal, and researcher will have access to the data but only the teachers, counselor and administrative assistant will know which students are participating in the study. At the conclusion of the study the administrative assistant will assign a number to each student. With the number as the only identifying characteristic, the data will be presented to the researcher.

Records of the names and numbers will be maintained securely in the guidance office but will not be part of the student's permanent school file. Records in the guidance office are secure and remain locked unless the counselor is in. Once the data from the study is compiled, only the researcher will have access to it and the names and corresponding numbers will be shredded by the administrative assistant.

Results of this study may be used in publications and presentations but student names will never be used or known to the researcher.

Exceptions to the promise of confidentiality include reporting evidence of abuse or neglect and/or a child threatening to harm themselves or others.

General and Special Considerations:

This study is approved by the California University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board. This approval is effective 1/16/20 and expires 1/15/21.

Participation can be terminated at any time by the researcher. Parents will be notified if research is terminated prematurely. The participant can also withdraw from the research at any time. The

participant's parent will need to inform Marj Smoker, administrative assistant, of the request in order to remove the participant from the study.

Participants will be notified in writing by the principal investigator if any significant findings would develop during the research that may affect or influence their willingness to continue participation.

Contacts:

For questions about the research:

Andrew Kemper (Researcher) 724-458-9330 ext. 3103; andrew.kemper@gcasdk12.org

Dr. David Foley (Faculty Advisor); foley@calu.edu

For questions about your child's rights as a participant:

California University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board (IRB); instreviewboard@calu.edu

California University of Pennsylvania Faculty Advisor: Dr. David Foley; foley@calu.edu

Parental Permission for Child's Participation in Research:

I have read this form and the research study has been explained to me. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions. If I have additional questions, I have been told who to contact. By signing this form, I give permission for my child to participate in the research study described above.

_____

Parent/Legal Guardian's Name (Printed)   Date:

_____

Parent/Legal Guardian's Signature   Date:

Appendix D

Informed Student Assent Letter

Dear Student,

My name is Andrew Kemper. I am the Assistant Principal here at Hillview Intermediate Center. We are looking for new ways to help improve our social skills and behavior. We are looking to collect data on a program called Check-in/Check-out. We want to make sure that you know what is happening and whether you would like to try it. If you do not want your data to be used, you don't have to and that is OK.

Each student who participates will be put in a group. That group will check in with a staff member at the beginning of each day to review their goals and expectations. Teachers will keep track of how you are doing toward those goals throughout the day. The students will check back in with a staff member at the end of the day to see how they did in reaching their goals. This will be tracked for 8 weeks to see how great you can do in reaching your goals. Upon reaching your goals, you will be also be rewarded with special treats and prizes. You will also be completing a brief survey at beginning and at the end. The survey will be anonymous.

If you are willing to be part of this, please check below and return to your teacher or Mrs. Smoker in the Hillview office. If you do not want to be part of it, you don't need to do anything.

_____

Student name (printed)   Student name (signature)   Date

Appendix E

School Climate Survey Pre-intervention

Name: _____   Grade: _____

1. I like school

   _____Never   _____Sometimes   _____Often   _____Always

2. I feel like I do well in school

   _____Never   _____Sometimes   _____Often   _____Always

3. My school wants me to do well

   _____Never   _____Sometimes   _____Often   _____Always

4. My school has clear rules for behavior

   _____Never   _____Sometimes   _____Often   _____Always

5. Teachers treat me with respect

   _____Never   _____Sometimes   _____Often   _____Always

6. Good behavior is noticed at my school

   _____Never   _____Sometimes   _____Often   _____Always

7. I get along with other students

   _____Never   _____Sometimes   _____Often   _____Always

8. I feel safe at school

   _____Never   _____Sometimes   _____Often   _____Always

9. Students treat each other well

   _____Never   _____Sometimes   _____Often   _____Always

10. There is an adult at my school who will help me if I need it

_____Never   _____Sometimes   _____Often   _____Always

11.   Students in my class behave so that teachers can teach

_____Never   _____Sometimes   _____Often   _____Always

Appendix F

School Climate Survey Post intervention

Name: _____   Grade: _____

1. I like school

    _____Never   _____Sometimes   _____Often   _____Always

2. I feel like I do well in school

    _____Never   _____Sometimes   _____Often   _____Always

3. My school wants me to do well

    _____Never   _____Sometimes   _____Often   _____Always

4. My school has clear rules for behavior

    _____Never   _____Sometimes   _____Often   _____Always

5. Teachers treat me with respect

    _____Never   _____Sometimes   _____Often   _____Always

6. Good behavior is noticed at my school

    _____Never   _____Sometimes   _____Often   _____Always

7. I get along with other students

    _____Never   _____Sometimes   _____Often   _____Always

8. I feel safe at school

    _____Never   _____Sometimes   _____Often   _____Always

9. Students treat each other well

    _____Never   _____Sometimes   _____Often   _____Always

10. There is an adult at my school who will help me if I need it

_____Never   _____Sometimes   _____Often   _____Always

11. Students in my class behave so that teachers can teach

_____Never   _____Sometimes   _____Often   _____Always

12. Participating in Check-in/Check-out improved my behavior

_____Never   _____Sometimes   _____Often   _____Always

Why did you select the answer to the previous question?

13. Participating in Check-in/Check-out helped me do better in school

_____Never   _____Sometimes   _____Often   _____Always

Why did you select the answer to the previous question?

14. I enjoyed participating in the Check-in/Check-out program

_____Never   _____Sometimes   _____Often   _____Always

Why did you select the answer to the previous question?

15. Are there any ways that you think Check-in/Check-out could be better

_____Never   _____Sometimes   _____Often   _____Always

Why did you select the answer to the previous questions?

Appendix G

Internal Review Board Approval

Institutional Review Board

California University of Pennsylvania

Morgan Hall, 310

250 University Avenue

California, PA 15419 instreviewboard@calu.edu

Melissa Sovak, Ph.D.

Dear Andrew,

Please consider this email as official notification that your proposal titled "The Impact of Behavioral Interventions on 4th Grade Climate" (Proposal #18-095) has been approved by the California University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board as amended.

The effective date of approval is 01/16/20 and the expiration date is 01/15/21. 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 01/15/21 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