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Teachers' Perceptions and Satisfaction With PBIS in a Southeast Georgia School District

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TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS AND SATISFACTION WITH PBIS
IN A SOUTHEAST GEORGIA SCHOOL DISTRICT

by

DEIDRA MARTIN

(Under the Direction of Michael Moore)

ABSTRACT

In today's educational system, an important concern is student behavior. Problem behaviors can affect students' academic learning as well as teachers' instructional time. Many programs and approaches are available to improve student behavior in schools. One school-wide program known as Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is designed to help schools create and sustain effective behavioral supports for students. PBIS is a national framework schools can use to help them design and implement behavioral practices for students. It involves all the faculty, staff, and students in a school system. Teachers are important stakeholders in implementing PBIS. If they do not fully support or "buy in" to the program, its effectiveness will be significantly compromised. The purpose of this study was to examine teachers' satisfaction level and perceptions of PBIS in a school district in the southeast USA. Teachers at a primary and an elementary school were surveyed and interviewed in order to determine their opinions of PBIS. The survey and interview data indicated that teachers in this school system were satisfied with PBIS. Results of this study could benefit administrators in this school district as they evaluate the effectiveness of PBIS and plan to implement further interventions or programs.

INDEX WORDS: Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Student Behavior, Teacher perceptions, Teacher satisfaction

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IN A SOUTHEAST GEORGIA SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Purpose of Study

Managing student behavior has been an important topic in our nation for many years and it continues to be a significant issue today (Baer, Wolf, & Risley, 1968; Skinner, 1953; Sugai et al., 2000; Walker et al., 1996). There are many different kinds of individual and school wide approaches and programs designed to improve student behavior (Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice, 2001; Gottfredson, 1997; National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities, 2009). My research will focus on a school-wide program known as Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) which is designed to help schools create and sustain effective behavioral supports for students. PBIS is a national framework schools can use to help them design and implement behavioral practices for students (OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, 2012).

Research has shown that PBIS has been an effective behavioral intervention program that positively impacts school climate (Bradshaw, Leaf, & Debnam, 2007; Lewis-Palmer, Sugai, & Larson, 1999; Todd, Haugen, Anderson, & Spriggs, 2002; Wasilewski, Gifford, & Bonneau, 2008) and academic achievement (Luiselli, Putnam, Handler, & Feinberg, 2005; Parr, Kidder, & Barrett, 2007; Putnam, Horner, & Algozzine, 2006). PBIS uses a school-wide approach which involves all faculty, staff, and students at a particular setting. Therefore, training for the program seeks to help administrators and faculty build collaborative teams and work together to ensure effective implementation (Dunlap, et al., 2000; Wasilewski, Gifford, & Bonneau, 2008). Instead of traditional training procedures of lectures and workshops, teacher training for PBIS involves more of an on-site approach in schools or community locations (Carr, et al., 2002). Teachers

discuss real-life school wide problems and situations, set goals, and select interventions and work in continuous collaboration with administrators, faculty, parents, and students to provide solutions to the targeted problems identified.

Teachers are key stakeholders in implementing PBIS. If they do not fully support or “buy in” to the program, its effectiveness will be significantly compromised. Research has shown that PBIS can be an effective behavioral intervention program; however, there is limited research on how teachers perceive this program and how it impacts teacher motivation and satisfaction (Horner, Freeman, Nelson, & Sugai, 2007; Palovlich, 2008). Anecdotal evidence would suggest that PBIS schools with reduced referrals and discipline issues have better teacher retention and higher satisfaction (Sugai, 2013).

The purpose of this study is to examine teachers’ satisfaction level and perceptions of PBIS in a school district in the southeast USA. A PBIS satisfaction survey will be conducted, followed by interviews to further examine teachers’ perceptions of this program. Using the theoretical perspective known as critical theory, this study will seek to understand how culture and institutions can shape educational practices such as PBIS. Critical theory is concerned with issues of power relationships, values, and privilege. Recognizing and challenging these issues can help make programs such as PBIS more effective.

Problem Statement. Teachers face many challenges in schools today, not the least of which includes students who exhibit problem behavior. Managing student behavior can affect teachers’ motivation, as well as the overall school climate. This study will describe the implementation of PBIS at a southeast Georgia school. It will then examine teachers’ perceptions and satisfaction level with PBIS and its impact on the school climate.

During the 2010-2011 school year, the middle school in this district failed to meet Adequate Yearly Progress goals in academic performance and was placed on the “Needs Improvement” list by the state of Georgia. Consequently, they were required to implement the school wide behavior system, PBIS. The district then decided that the elementary and primary schools would also implement PBIS.

Research Questions. The following focus questions will guide this study. Additional sub-questions used in the study are beneath the focus questions.

- 1) How satisfied with PBIS are teachers in a school in southeast Georgia?
 - a) Are teachers satisfied with the behavior expectations, consequences, short/long term incentives, data tracking system?
 - b) Are teachers satisfied with the administration’s support of PBIS?
 - c) Are teachers satisfied with the plans/decisions of the school’s PBIS team?
- 2) Has PBIS had a positive impact for teachers in a school in southeast Georgia?
 - a) Are teachers motivated to employ PBIS?
 - b) To what extent has PBIS positively affected teacher/staff behavior?
- 3) How does PBIS affect student behavior?
 - a) Has PBIS decreased student discipline problems?
 - b) Has PBIS helped to improve students’ attitudes towards school?
 - c) Has PBIS helped to improve students’ respectfulness toward others?
- 4) How does PBIS affect the school climate?
 - a) Has PBIS helped to improve relationships among students and adults in the school?
 - b) Has PBIS helped to improve safety throughout the school?
- 5) How was PBIS first implemented in this school?

- a) Were teachers involved in pre-implementation?
 - b) Were their perceptions/opinions taken seriously before PBIS was implemented?
 - c) Did teachers have adequate training and feel prepared to implement PBIS?
- 6) How is PBIS currently being implemented in this school?
- a) What preparation have teachers done on their own to implement PBIS?
 - b) Are teachers' perceptions/opinions taken seriously now that the program has been implemented?
 - c) What aspects of PBIS hinder or facilitate its implementation?
 - d) Are teachers regularly updated on procedures and process of PBIS?
- 7) What patterns or themes emerged from teachers who scored very high or very low on the PBIS satisfaction survey?

Context of Study

The United States' educational system has been replete with reports and commissions for improving American education for many years. Emphasis has been placed on developing academic standards that are rigorous and measureable. Systems have been created to ensure that teachers and students will be held accountable for meeting new learning standards. As schools have begun to focus on improving academics, increased attention has also been given to developing plans and programs for improving student behavior. Over the past twenty years, numerous behavior programs have been developed and implemented nationally. However, this study focuses on Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), a comprehensive school-wide system designed to meet both behavior and academic needs of students.

The school system in this study is in a rural southeast Georgia county. A primary school and an elementary school from this district are included in this research. There are approximately 460 students at the primary school and 480 at the elementary school.

Background of Study. In order to describe the development and implementation of PBIS, the historical context around the program must be established. During the 1980s and 1990s the term *positive behavior support* became popular. It refers to behavior interventions or strategies that can be used to reduce problem behavior and promote desirable behavior (Dunlap et al., 2000). In 1997, amendments made to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) became P.L. 105-17. One important aspect of these amendments was the concept of positive behavior support (PBS) for students whose behaviors violated school rules or was “outside personal or interpersonal norms of acceptable social behavior” (Sugai et al, 2000, p. 131). By law, if a student with a disability displays behaviors that affect his or her learning or that of others, then the child’s Individualized Education Program (IEP) team must include positive behavior interventions or supports to address the behavior. If the child does not have a behavior intervention plan, then the IEP team must conduct a Functional Behavior Assessment to address the behavior. With the passing of this amendment, the term PBS received more attention as school systems began to organize to meet behavioral needs of all students, not just those with special needs. In an additional amendment to the Individuals for Disabilities Education Act in 2004, the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services used the terminology *Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports* (PBIS) to describe strategies that schools could implement when students display problem behaviors that are socially unacceptable.

Another factor that contributed to the development of PBIS occurred in 2001. President George W. Bush signed the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2002) which radically changed

the federal government's involvement with public education. Essentially, its goal was to provide all students in public schools with an equal opportunity education. The law called for states to develop uniform standards and assessments for all public schools, thereby creating a system of federal accountability (Spring, 2011). However, student populations that were becoming increasingly diverse brought additional concerns. Currently, many students have limited English proficiency, learning and/or behavioral problems, as well as inadequate family support (Sugai et al., 2000). NCLB (2002) addresses many of these issues in the Comprehensive School Reform section (US Department of Education, 2002, Title I, Part F) and the Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities (SDFSC) section (Title IV, Part A). Although first created in 1986 due to the increasingly high rates of alcohol and drug use among young people, the Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools (OFDFS) did not become effective until 2002 with the passing of NCLB. Today this office distributes grants to programs and organizations designed to promote health, school safety, and emergency preparedness throughout the nation's schools.

Schools have had practices in place to deal with problem behaviors for many years (Sugai et al., 2000). Legal policies and amendments have contributed and affected the development of many behavior programs. This study will focus on PBIS, a school-wide systematic process that has developed in an effort to meet students' behavior needs and in turn their academic performance (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). By examining teachers' satisfaction and perceptions of PBIS in a school, this study will provide a better understanding of how PBIS impacts teachers and the overall school climate.

Researcher Perspective. This study was conducted in the school system where I am a teacher. Although, my relationship with the teachers and administration in the school could have made it difficult for me to be unbiased as a researcher, measures were taken to ensure that data

was collected impartially. Before administering surveys and interviews, teachers were ensured that all information would be kept confidential. I also took precaution to ensure that the surveys and interviews were conducted fairly and that they contained reasonably unbiased questions.

Delimitations. This study took place within a small school district. Approximately 80 teachers from the primary (Pre-K-2) school and the elementary (3-5) school were surveyed. After determining an overall score for the survey, teachers who scored in the top and bottom five percent were interviewed. Analyzing the surveys and interviews of teachers at these schools helped provide a deeper understanding of their perceptions and satisfaction with PBIS.

Limitations. A possible limitation to this study could have been lack of full teacher disclosure on the survey instrument. However, there is little the researcher will be able to do to prevent this. I am familiar with the school district in which the research was conducted, which could also have affected teachers' responses. I administered a paper copy of the survey to teachers and used this opportunity to explain the purpose of my research and ensure teachers that their responses would be kept confidential. Personally administering a survey may have allowed me to obtain more responses than administering an online survey. Another limitation to this study was that I conducted the interviews with teachers. When conducting interviews, I was careful to consider interpersonal elements of the interview process, such as ways to establish rapport, paying attention to non-verbal behavior, etc. Merriam (2009) suggests that interviewers be careful to clearly word language or questions so as not to confuse the interviewee or make him or her feel threatened in any way. The interviewer should avoid arguing or debating with a respondent, and instead, keep a neutral attitude regardless of how the interviewee responds. If the interviewer appears interested and willing to listen, participants will feel more comfortable sharing their experiences and opinions (Merriam 2009).

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Theoretical Perspective

Positive behavior intervention support (PBIS) is an applied science which seeks to enhance a person's quality of life and to minimize problem behavior (Carr et al., 2002). It uses educational methods and systems change methods to help achieve these goals. Initially, the basis of PBIS can be traced to applied behavior analysis (U. S. Department of Education, 2010; Wasilewski, Gifford, & Bonneau, 2008) as it relates to student behavior. Applied behavior analysis offered PBIS very scientific and systematic strategies for implementing behavior changes, assessments, and interventions. However, the conceptual framework of PBIS adopts a more social and cultural approach. Examining PBIS in the light of critical inquiry reveals important information about the program's development and implementation within schools today.

Critical Theory

Critical inquiry is a lens from which to view research, and this type of inquiry questions ideology, values and assumptions, and social structures (Crotty, 1998). It is concerned with power relationships and oppression, and its overall goal is a freer, more just, and equitable society. In terms of education, critical research looks at the context of how culture and institutions shape educational practices as well as "the structure and historical conditions" (Crotty, 1998, p. 35) that frame these practices. According to Kincheloe and McLaren (1994), critical researchers and theorists believe that within any society, certain groups are privileged over others which can result in oppression, especially when these marginalized groups accept their status as "natural, necessary, or inevitable" (p. 158). They also acknowledge that most

research practices often reproduce forms of race, class, and gender oppression, even if they do so unwittingly. Critical educational research then involves challenging these practices by questioning whose interests are being served, who has the power to make organizational and program changes, and what outcomes emerge as a result of these practices (Crotty, 1998).

Critical Theorists and PBIS

Apple. In *Education and Power* (1995), Apple critically examined schools and the types of knowledge they produce. He noted that schools are responsible for teaching academic knowledge, but at the same time, they reproduce certain ideologies. The more powerful social classes within society consider some knowledge to be most important in schools, and this knowledge, or cultural capital, acts “as a complex filter to stratify groups of students” (p. 20). According to Apple, just as schools are producing particular kinds of knowledge, they are also creating categories of deviance that marginalize students. When students are defined as deviant, they are categorized into groups such as slow learners, remedial education, discipline problems, etc. Schools then create support systems or treatment projects for these students which may seem neutral and helpful. However, Apple suggested that schools often blame a child’s culture or the actual child himself as the cause of deviance, which can be detrimental. More realistic factors should be considered when examining issues of deviance, such as poverty level and cultural or economic hierarchies of society (p. 51).

Some of the theoretical principles underlying PBIS relate to critical theory. First of all, people are part of a large, interdependent social system; therefore, behavior interventions should focus on changing the context in which problem behavior occurs (Carr et al., 2002). One cannot simply change problem behavior without holding certain social contexts accountable. Social forces not only shape the knowledge and actions of students, but they also shape that of teachers

(Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1993). Another principle of PBIS is that true change involves an examination of variables such as money, time, or political power along with the implementation of specific techniques. A third principle relates to the idea that a person's behavior is the result of a continuous process of adaptation between that individual's capabilities and the environment in which he or she exists. Finally, PBIS implementation should involve the realization that we exist in a multicultural society and sensitivity must be used when considering family structures, language, communication, and value systems (Sugai, Horner, et al., 2000). Critical education research seeks to understand more about education and schooling by examining perspectives of culturally diverse or oppressed groups. Kincheloe and Steinberg (1993) suggested that educators listen to these groups and examine "reality from different angles, to analyze the deep patterns and structures of oppression" (p. 308). Critical educators should evaluate classroom situations using more of a holistic approach to understanding rather than just a cause-effect process. They will be able to better contextualize particular incidents or happenings by giving careful attention to students' "relationships to the traditions, norms, roles, and values that are inseparable from the lived world of institutions" (p. 315).

Shapiro. The practical implications of PBIS in schools today are based on specific structures and interventions. However, the underlying principles of PBIS are more holistic and less structured. In today's educational system, emphasis is being placed on school wide support systems that define and teach appropriate student behaviors in an effort to create a positive school environment (OSEP, 2012). Rather than using a single program or plan, PBIS uses a continuum of behavior supports for all students throughout a school, ranging from classroom settings to hallways, restrooms, and buses. Its overall goal is to improve the lifestyles of children and youth by making problem or undesired behavior less effective (OSEP, 2012). In his book,

Educating Youth for a World beyond Violence, Shapiro (2010) argued that educating students should include the development of their moral, intellectual, social, and imaginative capacities in an effort to help them to achieve a more cooperative and peaceful lifestyle. He advocated that human beings need a “more peaceful, less violent world” (p. 5). He explained that violence can take many forms other than physical acts of harm, and it is evidenced in ways that people treat each other by manipulating, exploiting, cheating, bullying, etc. According to him, violence is present in all areas of our lives—school, work, families, and society. Consequently, an educational agenda centered on more than just helping students acquire skills and qualifications for future jobs is necessary. The PBIS continuum seeks to establish primary (school wide), secondary (classroom), and tertiary (individual) systems of support for students in all areas of their lives—personal, social, family, health, and recreation.

Shapiro (2010) indicated many different kinds of crises in education such as testing accountability, lack of cultural responsiveness, safety in schools, retention and graduation rates, student behavior problems, and racial and class inequalities (p. 180). Yet, according to him, the most central issue is the problem of violent conflict and behavior among humans. Education should focus more on how human beings all live and relate to one another and how we care for each other and our world. He even outlined several principles of a pedagogy of peace which describe the moral and social aspects of human behavior necessary to bring about change in education. PBIS is one approach that addresses the responsibility everyone involved in education has toward each other in terms of creating a safe, inviting school environment. Positive social behaviors are introduced, modeled, and rewarded through this approach with the intent of establishing a school climate in which appropriate behavior is normal (OSEP, 2012). Specific academic and behavior targets are established by school administration and staff; however,

careful consideration must be given to the needs and culture of the learning community in which these outcomes are to be taught and measured. Being able to question “the moral environment of the school, the social relationships of the classroom, [...] as well as the broader messages of the culture in which we live” (Shapiro, 2010, p. 182) are important issues in working toward a more peaceful, interconnected community.

Unfortunately, little in education today relates to the interrelated needs and experiences of human beings (Shapiro, 2006). Schooling and educational reform focus more on academics and achievement rather than helping young children develop the skills to become critically engaged and responsive members of society. Shapiro called for educators to become more conscious of the implicit or hidden aspects of schooling which can impact students’ values, attitudes, and beliefs. Human behavior, and what constitutes normal and abnormal behavior, is an area that is often not explicitly stated but rather implied. Shapiro indicated that these implied distinctions have been used to form systems of exclusion and oppression. Schools tend to “reward middle-class norms in language, vocabulary, dress, attitudes to authority, and behavior” (p.49), which can lead to prejudices against minority groups and lower socioeconomic class. An underlying philosophy of PBIS is the principle of normalization where the goal is to help disenfranchised groups, or people in danger of being devalued, to receive equal treatment and respect of others in society (Carr et al., 2002). Connecting this concept of normalization to Shapiro’s observations of education helps show how predetermined behavior expectations or plans such as PBIS can lead to marginalizing some groups of students. However, if administrators and staff are more aware of these issues, steps can be taken to ensure that all students are treated fairly and equally within the school-wide PBIS system.

Purpel. In *Moral Outrage in Education*, Purpel (1999) critically examined the issue of moral or character education in which schools intervene with the behavior and character of students. He acknowledged that this type of education is a way for schools to serve as “agents of social stability, political stasis, and cultural preservation” (p. 83). According to Purpel, schools should strive to improve the character of its students, but also be aware of embracing a curriculum that excludes or demeans any individual. The broader goal of education should be to create a more just society in which students can experience creativity and fulfillment in learning. The rules and expectations of PBIS that are taught within a school reflect the values of that system. Behaviors that schools value may indeed be influenced by ideologies; however, the overall goal of PBIS is to help individuals improve their quality of life and to make sure that everyone is treated respectfully and fairly (Carr et al., 2002). This underlying goal clearly links with Purpel’s idea of a sound moral education.

Purpel (1989) also discussed the topic of responsibility and how the culture of schools can shape students’ ideas and feelings of being responsible. According to him, schools send a message that students have a responsibility to work hard and make high grades. However, they also send a message of competition and achievement that often unfairly favors middle or upper class. Purpel suggested that schools should do more to help all students fully embrace their “legitimate responsibilities and contribute to the development of the intellectual [and] psychological [...] resources required to respond in a way that is fulfilling and meaningful” (p. 45). PBIS supports this same idea by teaching students to accept responsibility for their actions and behavior. It is an approach that seeks to enhance students’ abilities to function effectively within a school and community environment (Sugai et al., 2000). This approach focuses on

school-wide behavior, but it also supports individual children with particular behavior needs and concerns by giving them the necessary resources to be successful.

Although some of the theories and philosophies of the PBIS framework relate to critical theory, the practical implementation in schools today relates to more traditional, formal thinking. The approach may address the importance of social values and cultural responsiveness, but in practice, PBIS is driven by systems, policies, research, and data (OSEP, 2012; Sugai et al., 2000). An important part of the systems approach in PBIS is the positive behavior continuum which emphasizes a proactive or preventative approach to interventions. Within a school, all students function at the primary level where they receive positive behavior support from the staff. However, if students' behavior intensifies, they move to a secondary or tertiary level where they will receive group or individual interventions, respectively (Sugai et al., 2000; OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, 2012). According to the U.S. Department of Education (2010) successful implementation of PBIS involves active leadership through management and implementation teams. Professional development, coaching, and evaluation processes are needed to inform school staff. The approach should be implemented in phases, and finally, the sustainability of PBIS must rely on continued planning and decision-making that is supported by policy and research (Carr et al., 2002; Sugai et al., 2000).

Foucault. The structured implementation of PBIS relates to Foucault's idea of discipline as a form of power and an art of correct training. In *Discipline and Punishment* (1977), Foucault described discipline in a variety of settings, including hospitals, prisons, and schools. He indicated that discipline procedures were a means of coercion that began through observations. People in authority or power could observe individuals and manipulate their behavior through

certain procedures or methods. Foucault explains that such observation was possible through a design known as the panopticon. Originally, the panopticon was a design used in prisons where there was a central location or tower from which it was possible to see all the hallways and inmates. This permanent visibility is simply a form of power used as a means of authority and control. Unfortunately, this design is used in many school buildings today. There is a central office and all hallways leading from the office are clearly in view. According to Foucault, surveillance or observation of students by teachers and administrators was just as much a part of school as academic instruction. If a student does not behave correctly or behaves contrary to the rules established by those in power, he is subjected to punishment. However, in modern disciplinary systems, the goal is to correct or reform negative behavior (Gutting, 2012). Society today imposes certain norms or standards upon individuals, and there is concern when people fail to reach these required standards.

Of the two schools included in this study, only the elementary school is built according to the panopticon design. The primary school (Pre K-2) is located in an older building. However, PBIS rules and expectations are located across settings within the building—classrooms, hallways, restrooms, cafeteria, etc. This constant presence of rules is a similar demonstration of power and control. The elementary school (3-5) in this study is located in a newer building. It is possible to observe all three hallways from a central location. Again, this constant surveillance is an easy way for those in authority to maintain their control over students.

Another of Foucault's concepts of power is the idea of biopower, which refers to having control or power over a population or group of people (Foucault, 1998). This form of power is not one of violence that seeks to punish or take away the rights and privileges of people. Rather, it is power that seeks to secure and improve the lives of people. The idea behind biopower is that

people need continuous regulations and corrections (Ojakangas, 2005), and specific student expectations associated with PBIS are examples of biopower. Authority figures believe student behavior should be managed or controlled; therefore, they create rules and expectations in order to regulate behavior. PBIS expectations are designed so that students should be able to reasonably follow them. When students obey these expectations, they will help foster a positive school climate and learning atmosphere.

Ball. In his critique of educational reform, Ball (1990) argued that schools are no longer governed professionally, but bureaucratically. Through management and controlling techniques of administration, schooling has become a part of society's production and market competition. Pinar (2004) acknowledged that the nation's efforts to reform education have shifted control of public schools away from the actual "public" and toward "business-controlled management accountability systems" (p. 164). Teachers are less autonomous and their work is highly controlled by policies and standards. Ball (1990) claimed that this type of control is what Foucault called a technology of power, or a modern panopticon, through which the exertion of power causes loss of freedoms. He claimed that school effectiveness should be concerned with issues such as whose interests are being served or fulfilled than with achieving greater efficiency. Pinar (2004) also argued that education should focus on creativity, individuality, and dissent rather than implementing others' objectives (p. 25).

In light of these agency aspects discussed, this research study seeks to examine teachers' perceptions of PBIS. It will examine whether or not their viewpoints or opinions were considered when the system was adopted and after its implementation. Teachers may feel constrained or controlled by the standards or requirements of PBIS even though the school administration is requiring them to adopt this behavior system. Consequently, teachers may be imposing this same

feeling on students. Students may believe that such a system is too controlling and that they have no freedom, which is what Ball (1990) suggested when he wrote that education often renders its students as subjects of power.

In his research of Stephen Ball and Foucault, Wang (2011) acknowledged that Ball's interpretation of power within education was correct; however, he offered a possible solution to overcoming the control or domination that exists in educational fields. Wang's solution was that of transformative discourse, which aligns closely with Foucault's ideas. According to Wang, people who are controlled or subjected to authority can overcome this by dialoguing with those in power and critically examining issues or situations. Such dialogue can allow teachers to feel more empowered if their voice and opinions are truly heard and considered (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 1996). In her argument for reflective practices, Cohen (2008) also advocated that teachers need more time to dialogue with each other, administrators, and even researchers in an effort to improve their practices. Through this type of shared discourse, multiple perspectives can be considered and solutions to problems may be reached (Pinar, 2004).

In schools implementing PBIS, teachers and students alike may benefit from such discourse. Teachers who may not fully agree with the behavior system or feel that certain aspects need rethinking could discuss their views with other teachers and administrators. In the same way, students should have opportunities to voice their opinions about the system. Wang (2011) noted that meaningful change can occur when there is continual modification and discourse between subjects and objects. There must be mutual respect and consideration between both sides in order for transformative discourse to be successful. Unfortunately, this freedom of expression may not be possible in some educational settings. Nevertheless, when all PBIS stakeholders work together, the system's implementation will likely be more effective.

Critical Theory and PBIS Implementation

In a school that implements PBIS, behavior expectations and consequences are explicitly defined by an administrative team. However, the team is also responsible for establishing guidelines for a reward system for students who behave appropriately. Foucault (1977) referred to this as a gratification-punishment system. Today many PBIS schools have some type of tangible rewards for students to earn, and often these rewards can be redeemed or exchanged for prizes or certain privileges at various stages. Teachers and staff members are also encouraged to reward students who are behaving appropriately. This type of reward system often makes it easy to separate or rank students into “good” and “bad” groups, based on their behavior. According to Baker (2007), schools with structures, such as the PBIS behavior system, help students develop certain knowledge or behavior they need to function in society. Those students who possess cultural capital, or the knowledge and skills of the dominant class (Willis, 1977), are often the ones rewarded for appropriate behavior while lower class students tend to be the ones punished for misbehavior (Jackson, 1990).

Implementing PBIS in schools often involves a traditional, structured approach despite the theoretical principles upon which the framework was founded. Critically examining the behavior interventions and strategies of PBIS can reveal important information about a school’s society and culture. In her research, Cohen (2008) applied many of Foucault’s ideas to early childhood education practices, particularly disciplinary power which is used to normalize or train people (p. 16). Foucault indicated that every institution had certain rules or norms associated with it, which could ultimately lead to one group dominating or exercising power over another group. Educational research provides guidelines for developing appropriate academic and behavioral practices within schools; however, using a singular approach can marginalize certain

minority groups. Cohen (2008) argued that more attention be given to children's social development within the home and community in order to better understand how to provide an appropriate education. Consideration should be given to how these social contexts relate to gender, race, class, and ethnicity and how these factors influence academic settings. Foucault indicated that certain practices, rules, and procedures exist so that goals can be accomplished. Critically analyzing and discussing these procedures can help establish exactly what is to be known and expected, as well as to allow for diversity in how the goals are to be accomplished. As teachers examine multiple perspectives, give attention to students' needs and interests, and reflect on their own biases and opinions, they can better understand the danger in relying on prescribed approaches to education.

According to Philip Jackson (1990), a student's job in school is to do more than master the academic curriculum. He or she must also be able to master the hidden curriculum of schools. Students must be able to conform to the dominant beliefs and social practices that those in authority construct within schools. Jackson (1990) noted that a school's reward system can be linked with a student's success in both the academic and hidden curriculum. A student who complies with school rules and follows classroom procedures is often considered a "model" student and rewarded according to his or her efforts, even if he has not mastered all of the academic content. Similarly, a student who fails to comply with institutional expectations can usually expect disciplinary action. In an effort to shape and control student behavior, PBIS rewards and punishes students based on prescribed rules and expectations created by those in authority. The program's rewards are typically inexpensive, materialistic toys or trinkets that seem to appeal only to "model" students. Students with problem behavior are not motivated

enough by the rewards to change or correct their behavior. Thus, the cycle of misbehavior continues, and PBIS has failed to help these students conform to more positive behavior.

In this particular study, the primary and elementary schools both use a tiered system of tangible rewards that students can earn and exchange for prizes or privileges as well as incorporating other environmental supports. One example is the school system's mascot, a bulldog, so one incentive used is small dog bones that students can earn when they behave as expected. Students can then exchange collected dog bones for small prizes or certain privileges or rewards.

The structured approach of PBIS within a school system lends itself to a singular approach to managing behavior. Administrators and teachers may need to challenge some of the PBIS practices in order to make the program's implementation more successful. They could make suggestions to the leadership teams about changing certain aspects of PBIS that are ineffective, and through shared dialogue, create a more efficient system. Schools today are managed like a business, and teachers are often reluctant to share their opinions or challenge practices (Ball, 1990; Pinar, 2004) because of those in authority positions. However, both administrators and teachers should be aware of the types of students being rewarded and punished through PBIS and carefully consider the diverse culture and backgrounds of these groups of students. If certain groups of students are being punished or rewarded more often than others, what are some possible causes? The gratification-punishment system (Foucault, 1977) may not be meaningful, especially for students who are considered behavior problems. Who makes the decisions about what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behavior? Acceptable behavior should not be based on just the knowledge and skills of the dominant class. Instead, thought should be given to how minority groups have certain behaviors that might be construed

as inappropriate, but in actuality, are conducive to learning (Jackson, 1990). Are students motivated to earn PBIS rewards or do the rewards appeal only to specific groups of students? Is the school satisfied with tangible, extrinsic rewards and the way PBIS links appropriate behavior with materialism? Answering these kinds of critical questions can help schools refine and improve PBIS methods so that all students are treated fairly and equally. Throughout this study, the researcher will consider these types of questions and make personal notes and observations to provide rich detail to the study's context.

This research study will focus on the implementation of PBIS within a school district by examining teachers' perspectives. However, it will also critically examine the program through detailed interviews, observations, and notes. The overall goal is to understand the impact that PBIS has on a school environment in an effort to ensure that program is successful.

Historical Development of PBIS

In the 1980s, attention was given to identifying and implementing effective behavioral interventions for students with behavior disorders. At the University of Oregon, researchers began numerous studies and projects related to student problem behavior (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012). Some of their findings indicated that more focus should be placed on prevention, research-based interventions, and school-wide initiatives in order to improve behavior disorders. In the 1990s with the reauthorization of IDEA, a grant was given to establish a national Center on PBIS. What resulted was a partnership of researchers from the University of Oregon, Kansas, Kentucky, Missouri, and South Florida. Additional states with active state-level leadership PBIS teams include Maryland, Iowa, New Hampshire, and Illinois. Consequently, much of today's literature on PBIS originates from researchers at these institutions. Currently, the National Technical Assistance (TA) Center on PBIS has provided support and professional development

to more than 16,000 schools for fourteen years. The Center has also been influential in shaping the PBIS framework through its online collection and distribution of research-based behavior practices (www.pbis.org), national leadership conferences, and best-practices blueprints for Implementation, Evaluation, and Professional Development. Many studies have been conducted since the 1980s to document the effectiveness of PBIS at the school-wide level. The research supports improvements in school climate, problem behavior, and academic achievement and is found mainly in peer reviewed journals such as *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, *School Psychology Quarterly*, *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, and *Education and Treatment of Children*. Following a description of how PBIS is implemented in schools, this review will examine the effectiveness of the behavioral framework.

PBIS Implementation

The foundation of PBIS is based on four main characteristics: behavioral science, practical interventions, social values, and a systems approach (Dunlap, et al., 2000; Sugai, et al., 2000). Schools, communities, and families can use the framework of PBIS to apply research-validated behavioral approaches to teaching and learning settings in an effort to increase desired behaviors. According to Sugai and Horner (2001), the theoretical framework of PBIS is a function-based approach to behavior support which essentially relies on applied behavioral analysis when teaching appropriate behavior. The idea behind this framework is that certain events trigger a behavior, and consequence events affect the likelihood of this behavior occurring or not occurring again. Two aspects of this framework are positive and negative reinforcement. Positive reinforcement means a behavior will likely occur again if something is given or presented after the behavior occurs. Negative reinforcement means that a behavior will likely occur again if something is avoided or removed after the behavior occurs.

The main goal of PBIS is to improve a person's quality of life, but the program also seeks to minimize and extinguish problem behavior altogether (Carr, et al., 2002; U.S. Department of Education, 2010). Initially, the process requires data collection on student behavior school wide. This data is analyzed for maladaptive patterns, such as the scope and frequency of disciplinary referrals, current behavior plans, and systems for dealing with behavior infractions. The data is then used to design student outcomes or goals which can be reached through supports to enhance specific student, class wide, and school wide behaviors through crafted interventions (OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, 2012). However, for the program to be successful, a systematic approach must provide support for the implementation of these behavioral practices and interventions.

The systems approach to PBIS means that the program is based on clearly written policies, integrated into the regular curriculum, and enhanced by communication among all stakeholders (Carr, et al., 2002; Sugai, et al., 2000). According to the OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (2012), systems must be created to support effective practices and procedures by individuals within the school. These evidence-based practices should relate to the adoption and sustainability of PBIS and allow for ongoing development. Figure 1 shows four key elements of PBIS and how schools can use these to build an effective behavior system: 1) Outcomes, 2) Data, 3) Practices, and 4) Systems.

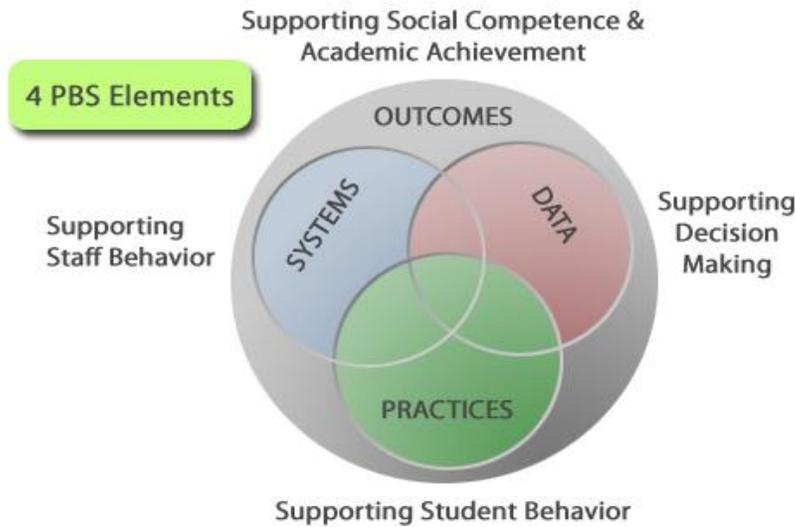


Figure 1. Four PBS Elements (OSEP Technical Assistance Center on PBIS, 2012)

Outcomes refer to behavior and academic goals that administrators, teachers, and students emphasize. Practices are the evidence-based strategies or interventions that help students reach the goals. Data is the information recorded to show that goals are or are not being met and whether strategies need to be altered. Systems refer to supports—school district, school, classroom, non-classroom, individual, family, community—that can be implemented to ensure that PBIS is being effective and can be sustained over time (OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, 2012; Sugai, et al., 2000).

Equally important in the implementation of PBIS is the positive behavior continuum which emphasizes a proactive or preventative perspective to interventions. At the primary prevention level, all students receive positive behavioral support from the school staff in all school environments. This support can be in the form of pre-determined rewards or consequences created by the school’s PBIS team. Students with more intense problem behaviors will proceed to the secondary prevention level where they will receive specialized group interventions. Finally, if these interventions are not successful, students will move to the tertiary

prevention level where interventions will be individually specified (Sugai, et al., 2000; OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, 2012).

Implementing PBIS involves the commitment of a wide range of stakeholders, such as teachers, administrators, students, parents, and community members. According to the U. S. Department of Education (2010), there are four main levels that can ensure successful implementation of PBIS. First, active leadership must be coordinated through management and implementation teams. Next, these teams must provide professional development, coaching, and evaluation processes to inform school staff. A comprehensive program such as PBIS should be implemented in phases that range from exploration to full implementation. Finally, the sustainability of PBIS must rely on continued planning and decision-making that is supported by policy and research.

The school district in this study implemented PBIS during the 2010-2011 school year. Leadership teams have been established since the first year of implementation. During the second year, evaluation processes were used by team members and an administrator to make sure students and teachers knew procedures, rules, consequences, etc. However, no evaluation procedures have been used during this third year. Based on the PBIS Implementation Blueprint (U.S. Department of Education, 2010), this school district is still in the initial implementation phase in which practices have been changed, rules and expectations are visible, and outcomes are being documented. In order for the schools to be in the full implementation phase, there would have to be complete and accurate implementation of PBIS practices with leadership support, ongoing training, and evaluation procedures. The last stage of implementation is known as innovation and sustainability and occurs when an entire school district adopts PBIS. Currently,

this district implements PBIS in the primary, elementary, and middle school. Practices would have to be put in place at the high school level in order to reach this stage.

Effectiveness of PBIS on Behavior

Over 40 years of research has helped to establish PBIS as an effective behavioral intervention system in the United States (Carr, et al., 2002; Dunlap, et al., 2000; OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, 2012; Sugai et al., 2000). It has been linked to both a positive school climate and an increase in student achievement in certain academic subjects (Bradshaw, Leaf, & Debnam, 2007; Lewis-Palmer, Sugai, & Larson, 1999; Luiselli, Putnam, Handler, & Feinberg, 2005; Parr, Kidder, & Barrett, 2007; Putnam, Horner, & Algozzine, 2006; Todd, Haugen, Anderson, & Spriggs, 2002; Wasilewski, Gifford, & Bonneau, 2008). Some research has also shown that PBIS has helped to increase teacher motivation or satisfaction; however, there is a need for additional research in this area (Horner, Freeman, Nelson, & Sugai, 2007; Palovlich, 2008). The following literature will acknowledge the benefits of PBIS in schools, but it will also show the need for further investigation in how the behavior systems impacts teachers.

PBIS and school climate. For the purpose of this study, school climate will be defined according to the National School Climate Council (2013). School climate refers to the character and quality of school life and is based on “patterns of students', parents' and school personnel's experience of school life and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures” (NSCC, 2013). The council suggests that four main areas be considered when attempting to assess school climate:

- Safety: rules and norms, physical and social-emotional security
- Relationships: respect for diversity, adult social support for students, peer social support

- Teaching and Learning: supportive teaching practices, supportive social and civic knowledge
- External Environment: school connectedness/engagement, physical surroundings

PBIS clearly relates to these dimensions of school climate, particularly safety and relationships. In terms of school safety, the positive behavior system focuses on teaching rules and expectations to students. PBIS also seeks to establish relationships among students, teachers, and administrators to provide students with supports they need to be successful behaviorally and academically. For this study, research on PBIS and school climate was limited to studies that focused on school safety: reducing office discipline referrals (ODR) and out of school suspensions (OSS), reducing problem behavior, and improving perceptions of school safety. Research related to improving relationships among students and teachers was also considered.

Many rigorous studies have indicated that schools implementing PBIS had significant reductions in ODR data (Nelson, 1996; Sprague, et al., 2001). In the peer reviewed journal, *Behavior Analyst Today*, Luiselli, Putnam, and Handler (2001) indicated a 69% reduction in ODRs and a 62% reduction in OSSs in their quantitative study. Similarly, Todd, Haugen, Anderson, and Spriggs (2002) indicated an 80% reduction in ODRs in the first year of PBIS implementation and a 76% reduction in the second year in their article in the *Journal of Positive Behavior Supports*. More recently, Bradshaw and Leaf (2008) indicated reduced ODR data as well as improved perceptions of school safety among teachers and staff in a Maryland school system. In 2005, the New Hampshire Center for Effective Behavior Interventions and Supports reported that in one study there was a 28% decrease in ODRs with significant decreases also noted in OSSs (Muscott, 2006). Most of these studies were included in peer reviewed journals or

involved schools that had strong state-level PBIS leadership teams. However, similar results have been obtained from less rigorous studies. In a dissertation research study involving PBIS in two Alabama elementary schools, Palovlich (2008) indicated a reduction in of ODRs, and teachers reported few incidents of problem behavior. Wasilewski, Gifford, and Bonneau (2008) researched eight elementary schools in North Carolina that used PBIS and noted that the overall school climate was positive, and teachers indicated that they supported the implementation of PBIS.

These studies have shown that PBIS is related to reducing behavior problems. A critical factor to consider is that the research on fewer ODRs and OSSs was done within the first few years of PBIS implementation. Teachers and administrators were cognizant of the new behavior system which could have lead them to report fewer discipline incidents. An interesting finding would be to compare the number of referrals and suspensions after several years of implementing PBIS.

There have been conflicting reports through the years that have not shown any measureable change in a school's climate based on the implementation of PBIS. In one study included in the peer reviewed journal, *Education & Treatment of Children*, there appeared to be an increase in student's social skills, but there was no change in the overall safety of the school (Sprague, et al., 2001). In a dissertation study of schools that implemented PBIS and schools that did not implement PBIS, Hodnett (2008) noted no reduction in ODRs in terms of defining safe schools. Even though there was a significant reduction in ODRs in Scott and Barrett's (2004) research of PBIS in the *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, the authors noted that this did not necessarily mean that the behavior system had created meaningful social changes in the lifestyles of the students, which is an ultimate goal of PBIS.

PBIS and student achievement. Most of the research on PBIS and student academic achievement refers to the relationship between PBIS and improved scores in Reading and Math or the relationship between PBIS and increased instructional time. In a review of research reported in an online PBIS newsletter, Putnam, Horner, and Algozzine (2006) found several studies that indicated a relationship among academic performance and problem behavior from elementary school to high school. McIntosh (2005) researched reading skills as they relate to disciplinary problems in schools. According to him, students enter school with varying reading skills, and if they experience negative achievement in literacy instruction, they are more likely to demonstrate behavior problems. As academic skills become harder, students will often misbehave as a way to escape or avoid these tasks. In a 1999 study reported in the *Journal of Emotional Disorders*, Tobin and Sugai found correlations between middle and high school students' academic success and their behavior. A student's academic failure in high school was correlated with the number of suspensions he or she had in ninth grade. Research also showed correlations between specific types of ODR behaviors (fighting, threats of violence, etc.) and sixth graders' grade point averages.

Putnam, Horner, and Algozzine (2006) indicated in their review of literature that the amount of time spent on instruction is highly correlated to student achievement. They reported studies in which research on PBIS has shown to decrease problem behavior in schools, thereby increasing the amount of instruction time (Putnam, Handler and O'Leary-Zonarich, 2003; Scott & Barrett, 2004).

Several rigorous studies about PBIS and increased student achievement have been included in national peer reviewed journals or presented at national or international conferences on behavior. Luiselli, Putnam, and Sunderland (2002) found that after a middle school

implemented PBIS, school attendance increased and students' maintained higher report card grades over the course of four years. In 2004, Horner, Sugai, Eber, & Lewandowski did a comparative study of Illinois schools that did and did not implement PBIS. The schools with PBIS had 62% of third graders meet the state's Reading Achievement Standard. By contrast, the schools without PBIS had 47% of third graders meeting the state standard. In 2005, Luiselli, Putnam, Handler, and Feinberg reported in their study of schools with PBIS that there was a 25% increase in math and 18% in reading standardized tests scores. In a comparative study of an Oregon school district implementing PBIS, Putnam, Horner, and Algozzine (2006) indicated that standardized test scores improved when compared to districts that did not implement PBIS. In a presentation on a Maryland school district, Parr, Kidder, and Barrett (2007) reported that schools implementing PBIS gained instructional minutes and showed significant gains on reading and math state achievement tests.

Nevertheless, some less rigorous studies involving PBIS do not indicate an increase in achievement scores. In his dissertation research, Postles (2011) indicated that in his comparative study of Maryland middle schools with and without PBIS there were no significant results in student achievement scores in reading or math. Similarly, Jaimison (2010) reported that PBIS had no significant affect on South Carolina elementary school students' reading or math performance on state tests even though it positively impacted student behavior. Although dissertation research may not be as thorough as research published in national, peer reviewed journals, it is important to note that differences do exist in terms of how PBIS is related to student achievement.

Studies have shown high correlations between PBIS and student achievement scores in Reading and Math; however, increased student achievement could be attributed to a number of

factors. School curricula changes, faculty and administration changes, or testing issues could also influence student scores. Having clearly defined rules and expectations for students to follow is beneficial, but one could argue that PBIS alone does not cause students to achieve higher academic scores.

PBIS and teacher motivation and satisfaction. The National Technical Assistance Center for PBIS (www.pbis.org), which publishes monthly newsletters on various topics, included research on how PBIS relates to teacher motivation and satisfaction. According to Horner, Freeman, Nelson, and Sugai (2007), schools that implement PBIS correctly and reliably show improved faculty and staff satisfaction. In fact, a critical feature of PBIS is obtaining teacher buy-in before implementation. Before implementing PBIS, George and Martinez (2007) suggested that teachers be given an overview of data that shows schools who have successfully implemented the behavior system. They also suggested showing teachers the number of discipline referrals, suspensions, etc. from their school to indicate how a program such as PBIS might be able to decrease problem behavior and maximize instructional time. These strategies might help teachers see the importance of adopting a positive behavior system in their school. Classroom teachers have a significant role in PBIS because they are responsible for teaching and modeling appropriate behavior and procedures for students at a universal or primary level. Without teacher motivation and support, PBIS will not be able to be effective.

In a dissertation study, Palovlich (2008) surveyed PBIS leadership team members and administrators in Alabama schools and found that both groups responded favorably toward PBIS in terms of participation and outcomes. Similarly, dissertation research on eight public schools in North Carolina indicated that 43% of teachers surveyed were very satisfied with their overall experience with PBIS at their school (Wasilewski, Gifford, & Bonneau, 2008). In another

dissertation study of three successful PBIS schools in Maryland, Cooper (2010) found that supportive leadership and ongoing professional training led to increased motivation and excitement among staff members. This helped to create a positive learning atmosphere which, in turn, can lead to increased academic achievement for students.

McArdle's (2011) doctoral research on Oregon and Illinois schools that were considered High Implementation (HI) or Low Implementation PBIS schools also revealed information regarding teacher motivation. Teachers were asked to report barriers and facilitators to implementing PBIS. Teachers at both HI and LI schools reported that teacher buy-in was a critical barrier to successfully implementing PBIS.

Research supports the relationship between PBIS and increased teacher motivation, and much of this information was conducted through surveys. However, teachers may not always be completely honest when surveyed about a program their school initiates. They may feel reluctant to disagree with the administration or other faculty who support the program. Teachers also have different opinions and interpretations about appropriate student behavior. Some behaviors that one teacher considers inappropriate may be tolerated by another teacher. This makes it difficult to clearly define how satisfied teachers are with a behavior support system.

Research supports the idea that teachers who believe in a program or support system's worth will implement it more effectively (Cooper, 2010; McArdle, 2011). If teachers feel forced into implementing a program, then they might not follow all the necessary steps and procedures. Once teachers begin using a PBIS system, they need to help students understand the importance of it. Although studies support the idea that PBIS relates to teacher motivation and satisfaction, additional research information is needed to show how the program directly impacts teachers' perceptions and satisfaction level.

PBIS and Students' Extrinsic/Intrinsic Motivation. Unlike traditional behavior programs, PBIS does not rely on punishment as a way to decrease undesirable behavior. Instead, PBIS teaches appropriate behavior skills and procedures, and it rewards students for displaying these behaviors. For many years, research has been conducted on the effects of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation on students in school. While some argue that students need extrinsic rewards or reinforcement (activities, tokens, privileges, food, etc.) for their academic performance or behavior, others are opposed to such practices. Since the 1970s, many rigorous studies have strongly suggested that schools should not provide formal praise or extrinsic rewards to students (Deci, 1975; Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 2001; Kohn, 1996; Lepper, Greene & Nesbett, 1973). Researchers have noted that educators might not use rewards properly. They might provide rewards without clearly defining the behavior being rewarded, inadvertently provide rewards for problem behavior, or even provide rewards too infrequently. They claimed that allowing students to receive rewards for behaviors and tasks that are expected of them can be detrimental to their intrinsic motivation.

However, additional research has shown that external rewards have been used in education for many years with a direct relation to academic and social success. According to some authors in national peer reviewed journals, rewards play an important part of any school, and they are not harmful to students' intrinsic motivation (Akin-Little, Eckert Lovett & Little, 2004; Cameron, Banko & Pierce, 2001; Reiss, 2005). Horner and Spaulding (2006) noted that schools which have clear behavior expectations and specific strategies for rewarding appropriate behavior are perceived as having safe, effective learning environments. PBIS is founded upon this idea of rewarding students appropriately for desirable behavior and also for teaching new behaviors and skills when students display problem behaviors. According to Horner and

Spaulding (2006), proper rewards can help students build life-long skills that can eventually be sustained with intrinsic motivation.

One could argue that PBIS is a system in which authority figures seek to control and regulate students through the use of rewards. However, the rewards students can earn for appropriate behavior may not be motivating for some students. These students then have no incentive for behaving properly. They may view certain rules as unnecessary and as just a way for those in power to try to control them. An important issue for teachers and administrators to consider when implementing PBIS is establishing clear rules as well as a variety of meaningful rewards in order to reach all students.

Critical Review of Literature

Examining PBIS involves critically analyzing every aspect of the program as well as the literature that supports the topic. Schools reproduce certain ideologies and beliefs which tend to marginalize certain students (Apple, 1995). A behavior program such as PBIS could make it easier for schools to categorize groups of students as behavior or discipline problems. When PBIS is first implemented in a school, rules and expectations are identified, a consequence and reward system is put into place, and interventions are designed for specific problem behaviors. However, there is a need for administrators and faculty to critically examine who created the rules and expectations and whether the rewards and consequences will be meaningful for students. Some students may not value or understand the significance of certain rules due to their family culture, language, or value system. This can especially be true for schools with a predominantly white faculty and a culturally diverse student body (Sugai, Horner, et al., 2000). If administrators and staff are aware of such issues, they can take steps to ensure that behavior

plans and interventions are designed fairly and equally without disenfranchising any group of students.

Most of the literature on the effectiveness of PBIS comes from national peer reviewed behavioral journals. Studies included in these journals were rigorously conducted, and much of the data came from states with strong PBIS leadership initiatives. Many of the researchers in these studies were directly involved in the development and implementation of PBIS in school systems. Consequently, the results of these studies strongly supported the inclusion of PBIS in schools. On the other hand, some of the doctoral research included in this review did not involve schools or states strongly vested in PBIS already, and these studies often contradicted those from scholarly journals. The effectiveness of PBIS can be influenced by a number of factors. Therefore, a thorough and critical examination of the implementation design is necessary if schools are implementing or deciding to implement PBIS.

In summary, this literature review has highlighted research on PBIS and examined its effectiveness on student achievement, the climate of a school, as well as teacher motivation and satisfaction. Nevertheless, there is a need for further research to examine teachers' satisfaction level and opinions of PBIS, especially considering the significant impact teachers have in implementing this program.

Chapter 3

Methods

Teachers face many challenges in schools today, especially students who exhibit problem behavior. Managing student behavior can affect teachers' motivation, as well as the overall school climate. Teachers are important stakeholders in implementing PBIS, and their full support of the program is needed in order for it to be implemented effectively. Research has shown that PBIS is an effective behavioral intervention program; however, there is limited research that examines how teachers perceive this program and how it impacts their motivation and satisfaction (Horner, Freeman, Nelson, & Sugai, 2007; Palovlich, 2008).

Research Design

This study involved a mixed methods approach which examined teachers' perceptions and satisfaction with PBIS through quantitative and qualitative measures. Primary teachers (Pre K-2) and elementary teachers (3-5) were surveyed to determine their perceptions and satisfaction with PBIS. They used a 5-point Likert scale to rate statements from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. Using results from the survey, teachers who scored very high or very low levels of satisfaction were interviewed to gain a deeper understanding of their views and opinions of the program. A total score of the survey items was calculated. Then teachers who scored in the top and bottom five percent were interviewed.

Although the review of literature on PBIS indicated studies of how the program impacted academics in schools, this particular study did not focus on the relationship with PBIS and academic subjects. Instead, it focused only on teachers' perceptions of PBIS, how they felt it had impacted student behavior, school climate, etc.

Sample

The target population for this study included teachers at a primary (Pre K-2) and an elementary school (3-5) within a district that implements PBIS. There are approximately 40 teachers at both the primary school and elementary school. The sample size will be the entire population of approximately 80 teachers.

Both schools are located in a southeast Georgia school district and considered Title I schools. The primary school has consistently met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) measures since 2003 in the areas of test participation, academic performance, and attendance rating. There are approximately 466 students, with 78% eligible for free and reduced lunch, 12% considered students with disabilities, and 11% considered limited English proficient at the primary school. The racial demographics of this school are 40% White, 28% Black, 28% Hispanic, and 4% Multiracial.

The elementary school has made AYP except for 2003, 2007, 2010 when they did not meet the AYP criteria in academic performance. At the elementary school, there are approximately 484 students, with 82% eligible for free and reduced lunch, 16% considered students with disabilities, and 13% considered limited English proficient. The racial demographics of this school are 43% White, 26% Black, 27% Hispanic, and 3% Multiracial.

PBIS was first implemented in this school district during the 2010/2011 school year. It was initiated because the middle school failed to meet AYP goals in academic performance and was placed on the "Needs Improvement" list by the state of Georgia. PBIS was an integral part of a school improvement plan for the middle school due to failure to meet AYP goals, and administrators felt that the elementary and primary schools would also benefit from the

program's PBIS implementation. Most teachers in the schools are believed to be familiar with the behavior system due to mandatory orientation policies for all faculty. Since PBIS is a school-wide program in both schools, policies are in place to help orient new teachers to become aware of the system and the procedures, interventions, and goals of the PBIS program in the county.

Before conducting the survey or interviews, permission from the school superintendent and each of the schools' principals was obtained. Teachers were also fully informed about the survey and interview. The researcher and faculty advisor are the only people with access to their information, which will be kept completely confidential.

Instruments/Measures of Sources of Data (Quantitative)

In order to examine teachers' satisfaction with PBIS, this study used a modified survey instrument. The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Technical Assistance Center on PBIS (2012) provides sample evaluation instruments for school systems to use and suggests that schools adapt them to their own district. The researcher used these sample instruments and created similar items that related to this investigation. The researcher also modified some items from a similar PBIS Satisfaction Survey after requesting permission from the author (Hill, 2011).

Surveys are an important part of the PBIS evaluation process at both the state and district level (OSEP Technical Assistance Center on PBIS, 2013). Part of the evaluation process involves gathering survey data on the outcomes and implementation fidelity of PBIS through PBIS coaches' surveys, leadership team surveys, and faculty/student surveys (George, Kincaid, & Childs, 2008). The Benchmarks of Quality, an evaluation tool designed to monitor PBIS team activities, is currently used by thousands of schools (Kincaid, George, & Childs, 2010). Schools implementing the Benchmarks of Quality are required to survey faculty/staff members and students annually to help identify successful areas of PBIS and areas that need improvement.

Another PBIS evaluation tool is the Self Assessment Survey used to determine initial and annual effectiveness of behavior systems in a school (Sugai, Horner, & Todd, 2003). Sample questions staff members are asked to rate include whether behavior expectations are taught and rewarded, whether expectations and consequences are clearly defined, etc. The School-wide Evaluation Tool (SET) is also used to assess features of a school-wide behavior support system, and part of the data for this includes collecting student and staff surveys (Sugai, Lewis-Palmer, Todd, & Horner (2005). A SET administrator randomly asks staff members and students questions about PBIS, such as “Can you name a behavior expectation?” or “Have you been given (or given out) a reward recently?” Surveys are an integral part of PBIS evaluations; consequently, the researcher used the provided samples from the OSPE Technical Assistance on PBIS (2013) to create the satisfaction survey used in this study.

The PBIS Satisfaction Survey (see Appendix A) included 24 items, and participants rated the statements on a five-point Likert scale: 1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Not Sure, 4-Agree, 5-Strongly Agree. The survey was scored by adding the number of all the ratings for each question, so the scale range from low to high was 24—120. A pilot study of this survey instrument was conducted in order to determine validity and reliability. The PBIS Leadership Team from this school district’s middle school was used to pilot the survey. The team is composed of two teachers from grades 6, 7, and 8, the band teacher, the school counselor, and the school principal. The middle school also implements PBIS, so teachers’ level of familiarity should have been similar to teachers in the sample population. Answering the survey items in the pilot study helped determine if participants have sufficient understanding or knowledge to express their opinion about the topic. The pilot study also included a place for individuals to make recommendations or comments for improving the survey; however, no suggestions were

made. The PBIS Leadership Team helped determine the content validity of the instrument to make sure the survey measures the content it claims.

The survey instrument assessed various elements of PBIS. Teachers were asked to rate their feelings about the program's impact on student and staff behavior, their satisfaction with the program's expectations/consequences and short/long term incentives, and their perceptions of administrative support for the program. Other items required teachers to rate their feelings on how PBIS has affected the school climate and how it is being implemented throughout the school. A detailed description of how the PBIS Satisfaction Survey correlates to the research questions used in this study is included in Appendix B.

Procedures

The researcher chose to administer the PBIS Staff Satisfaction survey to teachers at both schools in person. The principals scheduled a faculty meeting, and before giving the survey, teachers were given a thorough explanation of the research and the purpose for wanting teachers' opinions. Teachers were informed that their answers were confidential and would not be shared with anyone. At the primary school, teachers were allowed to fill out the surveys on their own and return them to a folder provided by the researcher. At the elementary school, the principal asked that teachers fill out the surveys after the faculty meeting and then return them. Administering a survey in person and being able to fully explain one's research or answer questions was believed to increase the chances for a greater response.

Data Analysis

For this descriptive study, the means and standard deviations of each survey item were calculated for the total sample as they related to each research question. Threats of internal validity for this study could have been confounding factors such as the school environment,

teachers' age, teachers' level of experience, or lack of standardized instructions given to faculty. The researcher was aware that these factors might influence teachers' perceptions. A threat to the external validity of this research design involved a type of population validity in which the results cannot be generalized from the sample population used in the study to a larger population. Findings from this type of study will only be generalized to the school district in which the research was conducted. However, findings could possibly be transferred to school districts with similar demographics. Administrators could use findings from this research when planning implementation of similar programs or when evaluating existing programs. They might also use the results to consider additional training for faculty and staff to ensure successful implementation of programs.

Instruments/Measures of Sources of Data (Qualitative)

A supplemental qualitative research design will further extended the survey results on teachers' satisfaction level and perceptions of PBIS. The unit of analysis for this study was the teacher. Using results from the PBIS Staff Satisfaction survey, the researcher interviewed teachers who scored very high or very low levels of satisfaction. High and low levels of satisfaction were determined by calculating a total score for the survey and then selecting the top and bottom five percent of teachers to be interviewed.

The purpose of interviewing is to obtain information about people that cannot be directly observed (Patton, 2002). An advantage of using the interview method is that interviewers are able to ask more in-depth questions regarding participants' attitudes, beliefs, and experiences. This method allows for interviewers to build rapport or trust with respondents, thereby obtaining more information than a survey. For this study, interviews allowed the researcher to obtain more detailed information from teachers who held the most and least favorable views of PBIS.

Teachers were able to elaborate and speak more freely about the program than simply rating survey items. When analyzing the data, the researcher determined what aspects of the program seem to work well for teachers and what aspects teachers find difficult to implement. Looking closely at these high and low opinions provided insight into how PBIS could be better implemented or altered to suit the needs of this school district.

The structure for the interview was open-ended and informal (see Appendix C). Interviewees who scored in the top five percent on the survey were told that they appeared very satisfied with PBIS based on their survey scores. Then they were asked to elaborate on why they were satisfied. Possible probes that could be used throughout the interviews included asking teachers what aspects they believed facilitated PBIS implementation, what parts of the program they especially liked, how they used it, etc. This same type of interview was used for those who scored in the lowest five percent on the survey. Only the researcher noted that they were dissatisfied or neutral about PBIS and asked them to explain why they felt this way. Some possible probes included asking teachers what barriers or obstacles they felt hindered PBIS implementation, what parts of the program did not work for them, etc. A pilot test of the interview was conducted to ensure that data were reasonably unbiased and so that the interviewer could identify any potentially threatening questions or problems. Again, the middle school PBIS Leadership Team was used for the pilot test.

When interviewing, some important issues to consider are the interpersonal elements of the interview process, such as ways to establish rapport, paying attention to non-verbal behavior, etc. Merriam (2009) suggests that interviewers be careful to clearly word language or questions so as not to confuse the interviewee or make him or her feel threatened in any way. The interviewer should avoid arguing or debating with a respondent, and instead, keep a neutral

attitude regardless of how the interviewee responds. If the interviewer appears interested and willing to listen, participants will feel more comfortable sharing their experiences and opinions. The interviewer should make notes throughout the process to record his or her reactions or thoughts, any descriptive notes, the interviewee's verbal and non-verbal behavior, etc.

Procedures

When the surveys were analyzed and teachers who scored in the top and bottom five percent were determined, the researcher requested an interview with them. Since the interviews were conducted during the summer of 2013, the researcher met the teachers at a convenient location, usually in the interviewee's home. During the actual interview process, the researcher took detailed notes and observations and afterwards typed the responses into a document. The context was described completely, such as physical environment, participant descriptions, routines, schedules, etc.

Data Analysis

After interviewing the selected teachers and documenting the responses, the researcher analyzed the written documents. This process required reading the interviews many times, paying close attention to any particular themes or patterns that emerged from the data. The researcher also analyzed the notes, descriptions, and observations collected during the interview process or throughout the study. Then a detailed analysis was written using the collected data.

Findings from this analysis can be generalized only to this particular school district. However, results might possibly be transferred to other districts with similar demographics. Administrators could use findings from this research when planning similar program implementation or when evaluating existing programs.

Conclusion

Limited research exists on teachers' perceptions of PBIS and how the program impacts their motivation and satisfaction (Horner, Freeman, Nelson, & Sugai, 2007; Palovlich, 2008). Through surveys and interviews, additional information can be gained in these areas. Using this information, administrators and teachers may be able to implement PBIS more effectively and ensure that students learn appropriate, positive behavior. In turn, this would ideally improve the overall climate of the school.

Chapter 4

Research Findings

The purpose of this descriptive study was to determine teachers' satisfaction level with the PBIS behavior initiative. Teachers participated in a PBIS Satisfaction Survey by rating 24 statements on a Likert scale: 1—Strongly Disagree, 2—Disagree, 3—Not Sure, 4—Agree, 5—Strongly Agree. The sample size for this research was 80 teachers, but only 71 of them completed the survey; therefore, the participation rate was 89%.

Results were calculated and reported using means and standard deviations. The mean score for all the items on the PBIS Satisfaction Survey was 3.647 (SD .161). The mean and standard deviation for each item on the PBIS Satisfaction Survey was also calculated (Table 1). Statements with mean scores above 4.5 will be interpreted as Strongly Agree. Those with mean scores between 4.5 and 3.5 will be interpreted as Agree, while those between 3.5 and 2.5 will be interpreted as Not Sure (Neutral). Mean scores below 2.5 will be considered as Disagree. Based on the overall mean score of 3.647, most teachers in this study appeared to be satisfied with the PBIS behavior system.

To calculate the score for a survey, each statement's rating number was added together for a total score. For example, the "Strongly Agree" statements equaled 5; the "Agree" statements equaled 4, etc. The scale for the surveys ranged from 24—120, with 24 being the lowest score and 120 being the highest score. Scores were determined for each participant, and the four teachers who scored in the top and bottom five percent were asked for an interview. The top four scores were 120, 106, 106, and 103, with a mean of 108.75. The bottom four scores were 46, 51, 56, and 60, with a mean of 53.50.

In the following section, survey results will be compared to each research question.

Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations for PBIS Satisfaction Survey Items

PBIS Survey Item	Mean	SD
1. Overall, I feel that PBIS has had a positive impact on student behavior.	3.72	.85
2. Overall, I feel that PBIS has had a positive impact on teacher/staff behavior.	3.45	.92
3. I am satisfied with the PBIS expectations (classroom, hallway, cafeteria, and restroom).	4.01	.77
4. I am satisfied with the PBIS consequences (verbal/written warnings, loss of privileges, parental contact, office referrals, etc.).	3.52	1.03
5. I am satisfied with our school's short term PBIS incentives (tangible rewards, prizes, etc.).	3.92	.81
6. I am satisfied with our school's long term PBIS incentives (behavior celebrations/parties at the end of grading periods).	3.89	.94
7. I believe the PBIS data tracking system (major/minor offences, office discipline referrals, daily behavior reports, etc.) is easy and efficient.	3.61	1.12
8. I am satisfied with my school's administrative support for PBIS.	4.04	.96
9. I am satisfied with the plans and decisions of my school's PBIS team.	3.79	.80
10. I consistently teach PBIS expectations/consequences to my students.	4.14	.52
11. I consistently model PBIS expectations for my students.	4.25	.50
12. I consistently reward students using the PBIS reward system in place at my school.	4.04	.71
13. I feel that PBIS rewards students displaying positive behavior at an appropriate rate.	3.68	.95
14. I feel that PBIS punishes students displaying negative behavior at an appropriate rate.	2.89	1.15
15. I believe that PBIS has helped decrease student discipline problems significantly at my school.	3.01	1.05
16. I believe that PBIS has helped improve students' attitudes toward school.	3.28	.90
17. I believe PBIS has helped to improve students' respectfulness toward others.	3.09	.95
18. I believe PBIS has helped to improve relationships among students and adults at my school.	3.27	.93
19. I believe PBIS has helped improve safety throughout the school.	3.47	.88
20. I feel that teachers' perceptions/opinions were considered before PBIS was implemented at our school.	3.41	.94
21. I am satisfied with the training I received on PBIS expectations, consequences, and the referral process.	3.83	.88
22. As a teacher, I have made preparations on my own in order to implement PBIS.	3.97	.66
23. I feel that teachers' perceptions/opinions are considered now that PBIS has been implemented at our school.	3.51	.91
24. I feel that teachers and staff are regularly updated or informed of PBIS procedures and processes.	3.77	.98

Research Question 1

- 1) How satisfied with PBIS are teachers in a school in southeast Georgia?
 - a) Are teachers satisfied with the behavior expectations, consequences, short/long term incentives, data tracking system?
 - b) Are teachers satisfied with the administration's support of PBIS?
 - c) Are teachers satisfied with the plans/decisions of the school's PBIS team?

According to the survey, teachers in this school district are relatively satisfied with PBIS.

The first nine survey items related to this research question, and eight of them had mean scores that ranged from 3.52 to 4.04. These scores indicated that teachers agreed with or were satisfied with these statements. The two statements with the highest mean scores showed that teachers were satisfied with the PBIS expectations throughout the school (M 4.01, SD .77) and with the school's administrative support (M 4.04, SD .96). Teachers indicated that they were satisfied with the short (M 3.92, SD .81) and long term (M 3.89, SD .94) PBIS incentives, and the PBIS team (mean 3.79, SD.94). Teachers also indicated satisfaction with PBIS' positive impact on student behavior (M 3.72, SD .85), with PBIS consequences (M 3.52, SD 1.02), and with the data recording system (M 3.61, SD 1.12). The statement that fell into the Not Sure/Neutral range was whether PBIS had positively impacted teacher and staff behavior (M 3.45, SD .92).

Research Question 2

- 2) Has PBIS had a positive impact for teachers in a school in southeast Georgia?
 - a) Are teachers motivated to employ PBIS?
 - b) To what extent has PBIS positively affected teacher/staff behavior?

In the PBIS survey, items 10-14 related to Research Question 2. Teachers agreed with four of the statements related to this question, indicating their satisfaction with these statements.

They perceived that they consistently taught the PBIS expectations/consequences (M 4.14, SD .52), modeled them for students (M 4.25, SD .50), and rewarded students (M 4.04, SD .71).

Teachers also felt that PBIS rewarded students who displayed positive behavior at an appropriate rate (M 3.68, SD .95). However, teachers were not sure that PBIS punished students displaying negative behavior at an appropriate rate (M 2.89, SD 1.15).

Research Question 3

- 3) How does PBIS affect student behavior?
 - a) Has PBIS decreased student discipline problems?
 - b) Has PBIS helped to improve students' attitudes towards school?
 - c) Has PBIS helped to improve students' respectfulness toward others?

Items 15-17 in the PBIS survey related to Research Question 3 about student behavior.

Teachers' ratings indicated that they were unsure of how PBIS had affected student behavior in their school. They were not sure if PBIS had helped decrease student discipline problems significantly (M 3.01, SD 1.05), if it had helped improve students' attitudes toward school (M 3.28, SD .90), or if it had helped improve students' respectfulness toward others (M 3.09, SD .95). The relatively large standard deviations for these statements indicated that there was a lot of variance among teachers' ratings.

Research Question 4

- 4) How does PBIS affect the school climate?
 - a) Has PBIS helped to improve relationships among students and adults in the school?
 - b) Has PBIS helped to improve safety throughout the school?

Items 18 and 19 on the PBIS survey related to school climate. Results indicated that teachers have a neutral satisfaction level with how PBIS has affected the school climate. Teachers were

not sure that PBIS had helped improve relationships among students and adults at their schools (M 3.27, SD .93). Their ratings also indicated that they were not sure if PBIS had helped to improve school safety (M 3.47, SD .88); however, since the mean for this rating is so close to 3.5, it might also be interpreted as satisfaction.

Research Question 5

- 5) How was PBIS first implemented in this school?
 - a) Were teachers involved in pre-implementation?
 - b) Were their perceptions/opinions taken seriously before PBIS was implemented?
 - c) Did teachers have adequate training and feel prepared to implement PBIS?

On the PBIS survey, items 20 and 21 related to the initial implementation of PBIS in this school. Teachers were asked to rate whether their perceptions/opinions were considered before PBIS was implemented in their school, and the results indicated that they were not sure (M 3.41, SD .94). When they were also asked to rate their satisfaction with the PBIS training they received, teachers indicated that they were satisfied (M 3.83, SD .88).

Research Question 6

- 6) How is PBIS currently being implemented in this school?
 - a) What preparation have teachers done on their own to implement PBIS?
 - b) Are teachers' perceptions/opinions taken seriously now that the program has been implemented?
 - c) What aspects of PBIS hinder or facilitate its implementation?
 - d) Are teachers regularly updated on procedures and process of PBIS?

Items 22-24 on the PBIS survey related to the current implementation of PBIS in the school, and results indicated that teachers appeared satisfied with the current program. Teachers agreed

with the statement that they had made preparations on their own in order to implement PBIS (M 3.97, SD .66). They felt that their perceptions/opinions were considered now that PBIS was implemented in their school (M 3.51, SD .91). Teachers also felt that they were regularly updated and informed of PBIS procedures and processes (M 3.77, SD .98).

PBIS Interview Results—Teachers scoring high on PBIS Survey. After analyzing survey data, the four teachers who scored highest and lowest on the survey were contacted for an interview. Since the interview data were collected during the summer months, most of the interviews took place in the participants' homes. The researcher informed participants that they had scored high or low/neutral on the PBIS survey and asked them to explain why. Throughout the interviews, the researcher probed participants with questions such as, "What facilitates or hinders PBIS?" "How do you feel about the school's computer data system for PBIS?" or "What behaviors do you find most difficult to deal with?" The researcher took notes as the interviewees talked, and afterwards, wrote detailed explanations of the meetings including setting, facial expressions, etc. The following sections will explain the interview results and how they relate to Research Question 7: What patterns or themes emerged from teachers who scored very high or very low on the PBIS satisfaction survey?

The four teachers who scored highest on the PBIS survey were a kindergarten teacher (120), two third grade teachers (106, 103) and a speech pathologist (106). A common theme throughout their interviews was that PBIS worked well because it placed more emphasis on positive rather than negative behaviors. The teachers expressed that they preferred to praise and reward students for behaving appropriately rather than punish those who misbehaved. Each teacher remarked that the students seemed motivated to earn rewards. The kindergarten teacher noted that the younger kids respond well to the incentive plan in place at the primary school.

There, students receive “dog bones” as rewards, and they are allowed to trade their bones in at a school store in exchange for prizes, toys, etc. According to the kindergarten teacher, this tangible reward system made it easier for students at this age to understand and comprehend. She also mentioned that the students really seemed to enjoy the large “good behavior” celebrations at the end of each grading period. However, nine weeks is a long time, and some children had difficulty understanding that their behavior throughout this time affected whether or not they can attend these celebrations.

The two third grade teachers and the speech pathologist teach at the elementary school. All three of them also indicated that students worked hard to be able to participate in the behavior celebrations at the end of each grading period. At this school, students also receive “dog bones” as rewards; however, there is no school store. Students must earn a certain number of dog bones and have no more than a set number of detention referrals in order to participate in the celebrations which included activities such as outside games, bubbles, picnics, etc. One teacher mentioned that on these special days, students would be so happy and excited. “It was amazing to see how such simple things could thrill the children,” she said.

During the interviews teachers were asked to express their opinions on the PBIS computer data system used to record student behavior information. The computer program is designed for teachers to input behavior data on students who receive consequences for misbehaving. For example, if a child has recess detention, then the specific events that caused him or her to lose recess will be recorded in the computer. Specific dates, times, and types of behavior can be entered, and there is also a place for teachers to enter comments. This information is shared with the school’s PBIS team during weekly meetings. Three of the teachers mentioned that the computer system was easy to use, and they liked the detailed record of

student behavior that it provided. Since the speech teacher is not a regular classroom teacher, she does not input data into the computer system. The kindergarten teacher mentioned that this data system helped the PBIS team identify a student who was having consistent behavior difficulties. The teacher had not noticed that the child's behavior was occurring at the same time each day, but the data indicated this. Consequently, the team identified some specific goals for the child, and her behavior improved. Her teacher noted that without the computer data, this child's behavior would probably not have been detected as early and may have developed into a more serious problem. One of the third grade teachers mentioned how important this information was for parent conferences. If a child is having behavior difficulties, talking about it with parents is much easier with the computer data to show when, where, and what type of behaviors are occurring.

In the interviews, teachers were also asked to discuss some student behaviors that they found particularly challenging. All four teachers indicated that disrespect was the most difficult student behavior to handle. The two third grade teachers mentioned that they could handle students who were disruptive, talkative, or impulsive; however, the most challenging behavior problem was students who were disrespectful to adults or others. One third grade teacher who has taught for over twenty years noted that disrespect was becoming a more common problem in today's society. In her opinion, students are not being taught to be respectful at home, so they do not know how to be respectful toward adults and students at school.

PBIS Interview Results—Teachers scoring neutral/low on PBIS Survey. Of the four teachers who scored neutral/low on the PBIS survey, two were first grade teachers (57, 60) and two were second grade teachers (46, 51). All four teachers were at the primary school, and each teacher indicated that they had had one or more students who displayed severe behavior

problems in the classroom during the past year. For all of them, a common complaint about the PBIS system was that it failed to punish students who displayed negative behavior. Each of these teachers mentioned the importance of rewarding positive behavior and indicated that they liked this aspect of the program. However, they felt that students who truly misbehaved were not receiving adequate punishment or consequences. The teachers indicated that students who consistently misbehaved were not motivated by the reward system. One second grade teacher said, "I had a class with several severe behavior problems, and the kids just did not care about earning dog bones, going to the school store, or even attending the large celebrations. Nothing seemed to motivate them. I really needed help dealing with this kind of situation." Both a first and second grade teacher noted that they had students who had been caught stealing dog bones from other students. "These students wanted the rewards, but since they had not earned them, they resorted to taking them from other students. This was a very serious issue to me!"

Both first grade teachers noted that they spent a large amount of time trying to help the students with problems be more successful. Consequently, they would reward these students for even a slight improvement in behavior. Then it was easy to overlook the students who were always behaving appropriately. One teacher said, "Students who were constantly a behavior problem would sometimes wind up with more rewards than those who always did the right thing." Two of the teachers mentioned that while they liked the reward and incentive program, they would also like to see students become more intrinsically motivated to behave appropriately.

When discussing the computer data system during the interviews, all four teachers indicated that it was time consuming and somewhat confusing. For example, if a student got into trouble during his morning class, the teacher would have to fill out a form to indicate the time,

place, and type of behavior that occurred. This form would be given to his afternoon teacher who was responsible for entering the data into the system. Teachers noted that filling out these forms was very time consuming. Entering data could also be confusing because the afternoon teacher was not present when the situation happened. Several teachers talked about how they would have liked to receive more administrative support when dealing with students and behavior problems. One first grade teacher noted, “The administration would tell us to be particular when entering data into the computer. For example, we had codes for each behavior, but if a child was caught stealing, we could not code the behavior as “theft”—that was for older students and more serious incidents. Instead, we were to use the code ‘non-serious, non-threatening behavior.’ To me, this was sending the wrong message to students and parents.”

A second grade teacher mentioned that she had entered a referral into the computer system, but the administration removed the incident. “I entered a ‘red’ referral, which means an office referral for a serious behavior (fighting, bullying, etc.), but for some reason the principal removed it from the system. The child never received any consequences for that incident, and I never received an explanation either. I understand that some situations require special attention, and this particular child did have some other issues; however, as his teacher I would have liked to been more informed.”

Several teachers in this group mentioned that there were times when a student was being particularly disruptive and they needed administrative assistance. Sometimes the administration would not be available. One teacher indicated that the administration made her feel incompetent whenever she called for assistance or talked with them about her concerns for a student. “I had a child with severe problems, and I was entering information in the computer daily on him. The PBIS team had all the information, but I could not get any help for the child. I kept asking for

some kind of interventions we could put into place for him, but I never got an answer. I really had a hard time controlling his behavior and keeping him engaged in class. I felt incompetent as a teacher, because I could not get the help I needed.”

During the interviews, these teachers were also asked to discuss the behaviors that were most challenging for them. Each of them also indicated that disrespect was the hardest behavior to handle in the classroom. One first grade teacher mentioned that the disrespectful attitudes present in students today relates to their home lives. “If students are not taught to be respectful of others early in life, then by the time they get to school, it is difficult to teach them this. Many of our students are from lower socio-economic backgrounds and may be being raised by single parents. They often do not have the resources or opportunities other more privileged kids have. However, as teachers, part of our job is to help teach these students how to behave appropriately in society. School is a place where they can not only learn academics, but also how to live and function with others in the world.” During the interviews, teachers in this group provided more detailed examples of disrespectful student behavior. One teacher mentioned how that when asked to do something, students would make “snide or ‘smart-aleck’ comments” or some would even openly defy the teacher’s request. Another teacher commented that a previous student was very disrespectful toward other students—he would physically hurt them and also verbally say things that would hurt the other students.

Summary of Findings

According to the PBIS survey results, teachers indicated that they were relatively satisfied with PBIS at their schools. Of the twenty-four items, the mean for 16 statements fell into the range of “Agree,” and the mean for 8 statements fell into the range of “Disagree.” The statement, “I consistently model PBIS expectations for my students,” received the highest mean

score of 4.25 (SD=.499). The statement that received the next highest rating was “I consistently teach PBIS expectations/consequences to my students,” with a mean score of 4.14 (SD=.515). The survey item, “I feel that PBIS punishes students displaying negative behavior at an appropriate rate,” received the lowest mean score of 2.88 (SD=1.149). The statement that received the second lowest rating was, “I believe that PBIS has helped decrease student discipline problems significantly at my school,” with a mean score of 3.01 (SD=1.049).

The survey items that received the highest ratings were related to teacher behaviors. Those receiving the lowest ratings were related to student behaviors. Although survey results indicated that teachers were satisfied with PBIS, there were some inconsistencies with the surveys and interview data that will be reported in the following chapter.

Chapter 5

Interpretation/Discussion of Findings

Results from the PBIS Satisfaction Survey indicated that teachers in this school district were relatively satisfied with PBIS. However, when the survey statements were further analyzed, some inconsistencies appeared. Critically analyzing these findings and the interview data can provide a more complete view of teachers' perceptions and satisfaction with PBIS.

The overall goal of the PBIS system is to positively affect student behavior by making problem or undesirable behavior less effective (OSEP, 2012). However, on the PBIS survey, statements directly related to student behavior received some of the lowest ratings. Those that received the highest ratings were ones that related directly to teachers' behaviors. Teachers in this school district appear satisfied with their own actions regarding PBIS, but they do not appear truly satisfied with how it is impacting students. They indicated overall satisfaction with PBIS, but on several statements that related to its impact or outcomes, teachers indicated that they were "Not Sure." If the goal of PBIS is to help students, how can teachers be satisfied with a behavior system that has had a positive impact on student behavior, but at the same time be unsure if that system has decreased discipline problems or improved students' attitudes?

Teachers play an important role in the effectiveness of PBIS implementation within a school. They should teach the proper behaviors and implement the procedures/interventions with fidelity; otherwise, inconsistency could affect positive behavior outcomes (Cooper, 2010; Horner, Freeman, Nelson, & Sugai, 2007; McArdle, 2011). In this survey, teachers indicated that they consistently modeled and taught PBIS expectations/consequences (M 4.25, 4.14, respectively) to students and consistently rewarded students (M 4.04) because these statements had the highest mean scores on the survey results. It is important for teachers to perceive that

they were implementing PBIS with fidelity. For this reason, teachers may have been reluctant to give a low rating to statements that related to their own behavior. However, other factors may have influenced their perceptions and survey ratings.

Although though the goal of PBIS is to improve the lifestyles of children and youth, the behavior system does include a hierarchy of power or authority. Foucault (1977) viewed discipline as form of power in which people in authority could observe and manipulate others' behaviors through specific procedures and methods. PBIS is a system in which authority figures seek to control and influence the behaviors of others. The ultimate authority of PBIS in this district is an administrative team who determines all the expectations and consequences. This team has power over the teachers in this district, because they are required to implement this system. In turn, teachers have authority over students because they are able to reward what they perceive to be appropriate behavior and to punish problem behavior.

Foucault's (1977) explanation of panopticon, or constant observation and surveillance, applies to PBIS in this school system. First of all, student expectations and consequences are constantly present throughout the school classrooms, hallways, restrooms, cafeterias, etc. Teachers and students are reminded of expectations/consequences every day during morning announcements. Also, the PBIS administrative teams meet weekly to discuss the behavior system. Essentially, the team observes teachers and monitors whether or not they are rewarding/punishing student behavior. Teachers then observe students and reward/punish behavior according to the prescribed measures. Being constantly watched can put undue pressure on both teachers and students. Administrators need to make sure that teachers are implementing the system correctly, but they should take care not to be overbearing or dominating. Similarly,

teachers should be consistent and fair when implementing PBIS but careful not to make students feel too controlled or dominated.

PBIS is a required behavior system for these schools, so teachers may have felt pressure from the team to implement the system even if they did not fully agree with it. Stephen Ball (1990) called this a modern panopticon, in which the exertion of power causes loss of freedoms. When teachers are highly controlled by policies and standards, they may not freely express their own feelings or actions. This could have affected how they answered survey questions regarding their own behavior. Even though teachers were assured that their survey answers would be kept confidential, they may have been reluctant to admit that they did not consistently model, teach, or reward students. The management and controlling techniques of administration has caused teachers to become less autonomous (Ball, 1990; Pinar, 2004). Instead of voicing their true thoughts and opinions and risking their jobs, teachers tend to simply accept the business-like systems that control education today. Regardless of why they rated their own actions favorably, teachers in this system indicated that they were satisfied with how they implemented PBIS.

On the survey, teachers indicated that they were satisfied with the school's administrative support for PBIS (M 4.04). This is another statement in which teachers may not have felt comfortable enough to fully disclose their true feelings. Teachers might have been afraid that if they spoke out against those in authority, then they would be punished or receive unfavorable consequences. In his research of Ball and Foucault, Wang (2011) agreed with both theorists' interpretation of power being used as a way to control others. He advocated that people who are controlled or subjected to authority figures participate in transformative discourse with those in power. In educational situations, this type of critical dialogue might allow teachers to feel more empowered and less controlled as they work with administrators to improve practices. This

would be beneficial, but it could be difficult for teachers to learn to speak freely and voice their opinions, especially if they were worried about the consequences such as losing their jobs. It might also be difficult for some administrators to actually listen to teachers' thoughts and opinions since they are typically used to making all decisions, rules, etc.

The teacher interviews provided more information on how some teachers felt about administrative support for PBIS. Teachers who scored low on the survey all had a general complaint that students' disruptive, problem behavior was not handled properly. These teachers all indicated that their classes had more than one student with severe behavior issues. Some of these teachers felt that instruction in their classroom suffered as a result of student disruptions such as constant talking out, student disagreements, defiant behavior, etc. These teachers were not hesitant about sharing unfavorable thoughts concerning the school's administration. A few of them mentioned that they did not receive administrative support when dealing with severely disruptive behaviors. One teacher noted that she felt incompetent because she did not know how to handle a particularly disruptive student, and even after asking for assistance, she never received any help from the administration or the PBIS team. Another teacher said that she received administrative support, but she too felt bad about calling an administrator to her room because of a disruptive student. Two teachers spoke about how the administration was not consistent when handling problem behavior. For example, the student handbook stated that specific actions would be taken after first offence, second offence, etc., such as corporal punishment or parental contact. However, administration would not consistently follow these procedures.

Research has shown that administrative support is vital to the success of PBIS (Cooper, 2010; McArdle, 2011). This school district would benefit from hearing these teachers' thoughts

concerning the lack of administrative support. In light of Foucault (1998) and Wang's (2011) thoughts on transformative discourse, perhaps a critical discussion between teachers and administrators could offer insight on why these teachers did not feel supported. Some possible explanations could be that an administrator was not present to immediately handle a situation. There have been occasions where both the principal and the assistant were away from campus and the counselor or instructional coach was left in charge. Also, the administrators may not have been aware that teachers felt incompetent when they had to call an administrator to their classroom because of disruptive student. They may not be aware that their presence caused teachers to feel inadequate or incompetent. However, this type of information is important for someone in authority to know, especially if they want to create a positive working environment. Administrators might consider having a meeting with teachers to discuss how they could offer more support in dealing with problem behaviors or to just reassure teachers that they do appreciate their efforts.

On the survey, teachers indicated that they were satisfied that PBIS had had a positive impact on student behavior (M 3.72). However, there was some discrepancy with this finding since teachers did not rate specific statements regarding students' behavior as favorably. The item with the lowest mean score indicated that teachers disagreed that PBIS punished students displaying negative behavior at an appropriate rate (M 2.89). The statement with the next lowest mean score indicated that teachers disagreed that PBIS had decreased student discipline problems significantly at their school (M 3.01). Teachers also disagreed that PBIS had helped students to be more respectful (M 3.09), improved their relationships with others (M 3.27), or improved their attitudes toward school (M 3.28). There is no way for teachers to perceive that

PBIS had positively impacted student behavior and at the same time, give such low ratings to areas that specifically related to students' behavior.

According to Shapiro (2010), school administrators and staff establish academic and behavior targets, but careful consideration must be given to the needs and culture of the learning community in which these outcomes are taught and measured. Given the discrepancies among teachers' perceptions of how PBIS has impacted student behavior, administrators need to give more thought to the system's expectations, consequences, and incentives. If the system was truly impacting student behavior in a positive way, teachers' survey ratings would likely have been higher in the areas related to student behaviors. Some areas that administrators might consider examining include what kinds of problem behaviors are occurring most often, whether certain groups of students are rewarded or punished more often than others, and whether students appear motivated by the incentives or rewards or threatened by the consequences.

In Apple's (1995) critical examination of schools, he noted that schools often create categories of deviance that marginalize students into groups such as slow learners, discipline problems, etc. He advocated that schools examine factors such as poverty level and economic hierarchies of society when considering the cause of deviance rather than blaming the child. Kincheloe and Steinberg (1993) suggested that educators listen to the perspectives and opinions of culturally diverse groups in an effort to analyze structures of oppression and power. Shapiro (2010) also called for educators to be more aware of the hidden or implicit areas of schooling which can impact students' values, attitudes, and beliefs. If administrators discover that certain groups are being punished or rewarded more than others, they should definitely consider researching these cultures more closely. Perhaps students from these cultures do not place the same value on certain behaviors that those in power do. What constitutes problem behavior

problem behavior for authority figures or administrators may not be what some cultures perceive as being problematic. Here again, schools could benefit from encouraging critical discourse among all PBIS stakeholders—teachers, students, parents, and administrators.

The teacher interviews provided additional insight into possible reasons for the discrepancies among teachers' perceptions. When asked about challenging behaviors they had encountered in their school, all of the teachers indicated that disrespectfulness was definitely a problem behavior and a barrier to PBIS. Students exhibiting this type of behavior had difficulty following PBIS expectations as well as responding to consequences. The four teachers who scored low on the satisfaction survey tended to provide more details on specific problem behaviors that hindered instruction, such as defiance, not following directions, student disagreements, etc. One reason for this could have been that all four of these teachers mentioned that they were currently teaching or had previously taught students with severe behavior problems. An important resource for teachers with students who have extreme behaviors is a Functional Behavior Analysis (FBA). Conducting an FBA can target when and where certain behaviors occur, what are possible events that trigger behaviors, and even possible solutions or interventions.

Since disrespectful behavior was mentioned during all the interviews, additional research in this area would be helpful. Administrators could determine a definition for disrespect, receive input from teachers and students on what it meant to be disrespectful, and establish specific goals related to improving this type of behavior. Research has shown that some students may not value or even understand certain rules as a result of their family culture, value system, language, etc. (Sugai, Horner, et al., 2000). Administrators and teachers need to be aware of these types of situations and contexts, especially when establishing student expectations and consequences. If

disrespectfulness is a problem behavior that most teachers are encountering, then teaching students more appropriate ways to handle certain situations would be beneficial.

On the survey, teachers indicated that they were satisfied with the PBIS short and long term incentives (M 3.92, 3.89). Also during the interviews, most of the teachers spoke favorably regarding the PBIS incentives. However, in the interviews some teachers mentioned that PBIS did not seem to work for every child. They felt that students with problem behaviors were not being reached because the system was not motivating or interesting to them. Teachers at the primary school noted that students with problem behaviors did not seem to care whether or not they earned dog bones because they did not like the prizes and toys at the store. The school needs to examine why students who exhibit problem behaviors the ones not interested in the rewards. As Apple (1995) suggested, this school has categorized some students into a “problem behavior” group. These students are typically well known by teachers and administrators for misbehaving and getting into trouble. When the same students are repeatedly the ones exhibiting problem behavior, there is a problem with the behavior system. It is imperative that the school administrators try to determine why the behavior system is not working. They should be dialoguing with these students about their behavior and trying to find ideas and incentives that might be more motivating. The school should be careful not to quickly label students who exhibit them and complain that the system does not work for them. Instead, measures should be taken to correct problem behaviors with more appropriate ones.

Research has shown that rewards can play an important part in school settings. Those schools with clear behavior expectations and strategies for rewarding students are perceived as having effective learning environments (Akin-Little, Eckert Lovett & Little, 2004; Horner & Spaulding; Reiss, 2005). However, in order for PBIS to be effective, the incentives and rewards

must be motivating and desirable for students. School staff and administrators could try offering different kinds of rewards and incentives to students. If prizes and tangible items do not motivate them, perhaps they would respond to activities, such as extra recess time, access to computers, helping a teacher or staff member with a task, etc. Shapiro (2010) argued that education should be about developing students' moral, social, and imaginative capacities as well as focusing on academics. Purpel (1999) also noted that the broader goal of education should be to create a just society and help students experience creativity and fulfillment in learning. Finding ways to keep students interested in school and teaching them get along with others can help create a positive learning environment.

Many times students misbehave because they are bored with schoolwork or because the work is too difficult for them; consequently, teachers should try to determine the reason that students exhibit problem behavior if possible. Some students may need more engaging or challenging tasks, while others may need tasks simplified to prevent frustration. Regardless, teachers may find that altering students' academic workload may improve their behavior.

Most of the teachers in both interview groups indicated that students' behavior was related to their home environment. Some mentioned that the lack of parental support was the reason students had problem behavior. They indicated that parents were failing to teach children ways to behave appropriately at home; consequently, children did not know how to function properly at school. Other comments indicated that parents did not support the school when their child had difficulty behaving appropriately. Parents failed to hold their child accountable for his or her behavior and instead, blamed the school. Changing students' problem behaviors cannot happen without taking into account the social contexts and forces that shape students' knowledge and actions (Carr et al., 2002). When implementing PBIS, school administration and staff must

consider the cultural diversity of the school and be sensitive when considering family structures, language, communication, and value systems. The school might consider holding a parent meeting in order to inform parents about PBIS expectations and consequences. If students have severe behavior problems, administrators should explain the school policy for parental contacts, suspension, etc. School administrators might also consider holding parenting classes or seminars to teach parents strategies for managing behavior.

A possible barrier to PBIS that both high and low scoring teachers mentioned was teacher consistency. They said that some teachers were really upbeat about the behavior program. They teach the expectations, give out rewards, promote positive behavior, etc. On the other hand, some teachers are very inconsistent because they do not agree with the program. These teachers are ones who rarely give out rewards and fail to follow the steps of the behavior system. This division among teachers could be the reason they indicated on the survey that PBIS had not had a significant impact on teachers/staff behavior (M 3.45). An important part of implementing PBIS correctly and reliably is obtaining teacher buy-in (Horner, Freeman, Nelson, & Sugai, 2007). Teachers might be more consistent with PBIS if they understood and believed in its value. Some teachers may view PBIS as just another program administrators are requiring them to use. Foucault's (1998) idea of biopower was that people need continuous regulations in order to improve their lives, and teachers may see this behavior system as another way in which administrators are regulating their lives. They are required to follow certain procedures, teach specific rules, etc., and some teachers find these kinds of regulations constraining. Nevertheless, for PBIS to be successful, teachers must believe in its worth and implement it with fidelity.

Another vital part of PBIS is supportive leadership and ongoing professional training, which can lead to increased motivation among staff members (Cooper, 2010). During the

interviews, only one teacher from the primary school mentioned PBIS training. She said that she would have liked to have received better training on the system. According to her, proper training might help teachers become more consistent with PBIS. On the survey, teachers indicated that they were satisfied with the training they had received (M 3.83). Teachers also indicated that they had made preparations on their own in order to implement PBIS (M 3.97). Teachers in this system did receive PBIS training; however, it occurred three years ago from a teacher sent to an initial PBIS training who redelivered the information to the rest of the faculty. The school's PBIS team leader has had additional training in recent years. Follow-up trainings for the faculty and staff have included topics such as how to record information in the computer data system, what kinds of behavior to record, what constitutes severe problem behavior, etc. Research has indicated that the sustainability of PBIS must rely on professional development, coaching, and system evaluation (Carr et al., 2002; Sugai et al., 2000). This school system would benefit from offering teachers and staff additional training on PBIS. It would also benefit from continued planning and revising of the behavior system.

One statement on the PBIS survey asked teachers to rate their opinion of the computer data tracking system used by the schools. The mean score for this statement was 3.61, indicating that teachers' opinions of the computer system were neutral. In the interviews, some teachers mentioned how precise and accurate it was for describing specific behaviors, and they also noted that the data helped show patterns in students' behavior. A few of the teachers indicated that entering the data into the computer was somewhat confusing since teachers entered information on their afternoon classes. This meant that if a child got in trouble during the morning class, that teacher had to make sure the afternoon teacher knew exactly what to enter. Most of the teachers who scored low on the survey spoke about how time-consuming it was to keep track of behavior

information on the computer. Two primary teachers said that recording behavior problems to send to the afternoon teacher actually took class time because it was so detailed and involved. Teachers had to be accurate when describing the situation so that the information would be correctly entered into the data system. One reason these teachers may not have been satisfied with the data system was because they had to use it more often due to the problem behaviors in their classrooms. Administrators might consider letting teachers enter behavior information into the computer if an incident occurs in their own classroom. This would prevent confusion from teachers having to record situations in writing, give them to another teacher, and then have that teacher input the information into the system.

A common theme from the four teachers who scored high on the PBIS satisfaction survey was that PBIS was a very structured, organized behavior system. They liked that the program provided consistency throughout the school. These teachers also reported satisfaction with the incentives and consequences of the PBIS system. Some teachers mentioned how much the students enjoyed the incentives such as the behavior celebrations or the dog bone store where students redeem their bones for prizes. Not only does the store reward students for good behavior, but it also teaches students important lessons about saving/spending and delayed gratification.

Several primary school teachers complained that the length of time between good behavior celebrations was too long. Young students have difficulty understanding time frames, especially the length of a grading period. These teachers mentioned that having more frequent celebrations might be helpful. Teachers at the elementary school also noted that students responded really well to the good behavior celebrations held at the end of each grading period.

Students at this age were better able to understand that their behavior throughout an entire grading period determined whether or not they attended the celebrations.

Some of the teachers who scored high on the survey indicated that the prescribed consequences of the PBIS system worked well for students. At both the primary and elementary schools, students receive recess detention for misbehaving, and they spend their recess in the Respect Room. Here they would discuss their problem behavior and work on strategies to improve it. Also, at both schools, if students do not complete their work because of inappropriate behavior, they have recess detention in the Productivity Room and complete their assignments then. The elementary school teachers rotate monitoring the Respect/Productivity Room. At the primary school, one teacher per grade level is responsible for monitoring the Productivity Room, and the school counselor monitors the Respect Room for all grade levels.

A few of the teachers who scored low on the survey mentioned that the Respect and Productivity Rooms failed to improve students' behavior. Once again, the reason they gave was that these consequences failed to motivate the students. If missing recess fails to motivate students, then the administration should find something more meaningful for these students.

Teachers play an important role in the effectiveness of PBIS, so their buy-in to the behavior system is a vital part of its success. This study indicated that overall, teachers appeared satisfied with PBIS. However, further analysis showed areas in which teachers' answers were contradictory. Incorporating interviews with the surveys provided more insight into teachers' satisfaction and dissatisfaction with this school district's behavior system.

Implications for Further Research

Results from this PBIS study indicated teachers' perceptions and satisfaction levels with PBIS. The survey information showed that teachers' attitudes toward the behavior system were

relatively satisfactory. However, examining survey items and teacher interviews provided more insight into how teachers truly felt about the program. According to survey results, teachers appear satisfied with their own actions regarding PBIS—teaching/modeling the expectations, rewarding students accordingly, etc. Research supports the idea that teacher satisfaction improves when PBIS is implemented correctly and reliably (George & Martinez, 2007; Horner, Freeman, Nelson, & Sugai, 2007). However, teachers did not appear very satisfied that PBIS was improving student behavior problems or that students displaying negative behavior were being punished appropriately.

Most research indicates that for PBIS to be effective, teachers must buy-in to the system's initiatives (George & Martinez, 2007; McArdle, 2011). The results of this study showed that teacher buy-in within this district appeared reasonable. Teachers appeared satisfied with the system's short and long term incentive plans and how students responded to these incentives. Still, a few teachers expressed concern for the students who were not motivated by the PBIS rewards and incentives. Some teachers also expressed their concern about the lack of administrative support they received in terms of students with problem behaviors. Previous research indicates that administrative support for PBIS and ongoing professional development are important factors for motivating teachers to implement the behavior system (Wasilewski, Gifford, & Bonneau, 2008; Cooper, 2010).

Both positive and negative information from this study regarding PBIS could be shared with school administrators. Teachers may need additional training on PBIS, or they may need to be shown how that PBIS has directly improved student behavior such as fewer discipline referrals or suspensions. These could all lead to more teacher support and increased motivation for implementing PBIS (Cooper, 2011; George & Martinez, 2007; McArdle, 2011). In this

school district, changes may need to be made to ensure that all students are benefiting from this behavior initiative and to ensure that all teachers have the support they need to effectively implement the program.

Critically examining how PBIS is implemented in this district is also necessary. Administrators need to be more culturally responsive when creating expectations, consequences, and incentives. They need to carefully consider whether or not this behavior system unfairly marginalizes certain groups of students. They also need to be aware of how their position as authority figures can affect both teachers and students when implementing PBIS.

Many additional factors that were not included in this research could also affect teachers' perceptions of PBIS. For example, students at both the primary and elementary schools in this study are ability-grouped for Reading and Math. Further research might examine teachers' views of PBIS with high achieving students versus lower achieving ones. Also, the age and experience level of teachers might influence how teachers view a behavior system like PBIS. Another area for further research might be to examine teacher retention rates in this school district before and after PBIS implementation to see if there is a correlation between teacher retention and teacher satisfaction.

This study did not focus on how PBIS affected student behavior in this school district in terms of office discipline referrals, school suspensions, etc. Further research could examine these areas before the implementation of PBIS and compare them with the number of referrals or suspensions after PBIS was implemented in this district.

Additional research on school climate could also be conducted to provide more information on satisfaction within the school. The Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools (2013)

reports data from school climate surveys for school districts across the nation. This data could be used to compare satisfaction before and after PBIS implementation in the school.

Results from this study can only be generalized to this particular school system; however, school districts that utilize PBIS and districts with similar demographics could also benefit from this research. Teachers may not have strongly agreed or disagreed with the behavior initiative, but the study's findings did provide valuable information on teachers' perceptions and satisfaction with PBIS. Measures need to be taken to ensure that all students are motivated by the incentives/rewards. Teachers need administrative support in dealing with problem behavior and also to ensure that they are being consistent with the expectations of PBIS.

If PBIS is to be a successful initiative, administration, faculty, staff, and students must all follow the procedures and expectations of the behavior system. This study focused on teachers' perceptions of PBIS. However, teachers are only one part of the program. Ongoing research, professional development, motivating incentives, and consistency among all stakeholders can ensure that PBIS is an effective initiative within a school system.

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Appendix A

PBIS Satisfaction Survey Instrument

Teacher Name _____

Please read each question and circle the response that closely matches your feelings. All responses and information will be kept confidential. Thank you for participating in this survey.

1. Overall, I feel that PBIS has had a positive impact on student behavior.
Strongly disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree
2. Overall, I feel that PBIS has had a positive impact on teacher/staff behavior.
Strongly disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree
3. I am satisfied with the PBIS expectations (classroom, hallway, cafeteria, and restroom).
Strongly disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree
4. I am satisfied with the PBIS consequences (verbal/written warnings, loss of privileges, parental contact, office referrals, etc.).
Strongly disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree
5. I am satisfied with our school's short term PBIS incentives (tangible rewards, prizes, etc.).
Strongly disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree
6. I am satisfied with our school's long term PBIS incentives (behavior celebrations/parties at the end of grading periods).
Strongly disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

7. I believe the PBIS data tracking system (major/minor offences, office discipline referrals, daily behavior reports, etc.) is easy and efficient.

Strongly disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

8. I am satisfied with my school's administrative support for PBIS.

Strongly disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

9. I am satisfied with the plans and decisions of my school's PBIS team.

Strongly disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

10. I consistently teach PBIS expectations/consequences to my students.

Strongly disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

11. I consistently model PBIS expectations for my students.

Strongly disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

12. I consistently reward students using the PBIS reward system in place at my school.

Strongly disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

13. I feel that PBIS rewards students displaying positive behavior at an appropriate rate.

Strongly disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

14. I feel that PBIS punishes students displaying negative behavior at an appropriate rate.

Strongly disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

15. I believe that PBIS has helped decrease student discipline problems significantly at my school.

Strongly disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

16. I believe that PBIS has helped improve students' attitudes toward school.

- | | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Not Sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|-----|---|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| 17. | I believe PBIS has helped to improve students' respectfulness toward others. | | | | |
| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Not Sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| 18. | I believe PBIS has helped to improve relationships among students and adults at my school. | | | | |
| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Not Sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| 19. | I believe PBIS has helped improve safety throughout the school. | | | | |
| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Not Sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| 20. | I feel that teachers' perceptions/opinions were considered before PBIS was implemented at our school. | | | | |
| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Not Sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| 21. | I am satisfied with the training I received on PBIS expectations, consequences, and the referral process. | | | | |
| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Not Sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| 22. | As a teacher, I have made preparations on my own in order to implement PBIS. | | | | |
| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Not Sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| 23. | I feel that teachers' perceptions/opinions are considered now that PBIS has been implemented at our school. | | | | |
| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Not Sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| 24. | I feel that teachers and staff are regularly updated or informed of PBIS procedures and processes. | | | | |

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Not Sure

Agree

Strongly Agree

25. What additional thoughts or concerns about PBIS do you have?

Appendix B

PBIS Survey Correlated to Research Questions

The following focus questions will guide this study. Additional sub-questions used in the study are beneath the focus questions.

- 1) How satisfied with PBIS are teachers in a school in southeast Georgia?
 - a) Are teachers satisfied with the behavior expectations, consequences, short/long term incentives, data tracking system?
 - b) Are teachers satisfied with the administration's support of PBIS?
 - c) Are teachers satisfied with the plans/decisions of the school's PBIS team?
- 2) Has PBIS had a positive impact for teachers in a school in southeast Georgia?
 - a) Are teachers motivated to employ PBIS?
 - b) How does PBIS affect teacher/staff behavior?
- 3) How does PBIS affect student behavior?
 - a) Has PBIS decreased student discipline problems?
 - b) Has PBIS helped to improve students' attitudes towards school?
 - c) Has PBIS helped to improve students' respectfulness toward others?
- 4) How does PBIS affect the school climate?
 - a) Has PBIS helped to improve relationships among students and adults in the school?
 - b) Has PBIS helped to improve safety throughout the school?
- 5) How was PBIS implemented in this school?
 - a) Were teachers involved in pre-implementation?
 - b) Were their perceptions/opinions taken seriously before PBIS was implemented?
 - c) Did teachers have adequate training and feel prepared to implement PBIS?
- 6) How is PBIS currently being implemented in this school?
 - a) What preparation have teachers done on their own to implement PBIS?
 - b) Are teachers' perceptions/opinions taken seriously now that the program has been implemented?
 - c) What aspects of PBIS hinder or facilitate its implementation?
 - d) Are teachers regularly updated on procedures and process of PBIS?
- 7) What patterns or themes emerged from teachers who scored very high or very low on the PBIS satisfaction survey?
- 8) To what extent do my findings agree or disagree with the literature on PBIS?

PBIS Satisfaction Survey Item	Correlation to Research Question
1. Overall, I feel that PBIS has had a positive impact on student behavior.	3a, b, c
2. Overall, I feel that PBIS has had a positive impact on teacher/staff behavior.	2a, b
3. I am satisfied with the PBIS expectations (classroom, hallway, cafeteria, and restroom).	1a
4. I am satisfied with the PBIS consequences (verbal/written warnings, loss of privileges, parental contact, office referrals, etc.).	1a
5. I am satisfied with our school's short term PBIS incentives (tangible rewards, prizes, etc.).	1a
6. I am satisfied with our school's long term PBIS incentives (behavior celebrations/parties at the end of grading periods).	1a
7. I believe the PBIS data tracking system (major/minor offences, office discipline referrals, daily behavior reports, etc.) is easy and efficient.	1a
8. I am satisfied with my school's administrative support for PBIS.	1b
9. I am satisfied with the plans and decisions of my school's PBIS team.	1c
10. I consistently teach PBIS expectations/consequences to my students.	2a
11. I consistently model PBIS expectations for my students.	2a
12. I consistently reward students using the PBIS reward system in place at my school.	2a
13. I feel that PBIS rewards students displaying positive behavior at an appropriate rate.	1, 2
14. I feel that PBIS punishes students displaying negative behavior at an appropriate rate.	1, 2
15. I believe that PBIS has helped decrease student discipline problems significantly at my school.	3a
16. I believe that PBIS has helped improve students' attitudes toward school.	3b
17. I believe PBIS has helped to improve students' respectfulness toward others.	3c
18. I believe PBIS has helped to improve relationships among students and adults at my school.	4a
19. I believe PBIS has helped improve safety throughout the school.	4b
20. I feel that teachers' perceptions/opinions were considered before PBIS was implemented at our school.	5a, b
21. I am satisfied with the training I received on PBIS expectations, consequences, and the referral process.	5c
22. As a teacher, I have made preparations on my own in order to implement PBIS.	6a
23. I feel that teachers' perceptions/opinions are considered now that PBIS has been implemented at our school.	6b

24. I feel that teachers and staff are regularly updated or informed of PBIS procedures and processes.	6c
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What additional thoughts and concerns about PBIS do you have?

Appendix C

PBIS Teacher Interview

Teacher Name _____

Please answer the following questions as clearly as possible.

1. You scored very high/very low or neutral on the PBIS satisfaction survey. In other words, you are very satisfied/dissatisfied or neutral about PBIS. Why is this?

The following additional questions may also be used during the interview.

2. Is there a PBIS school-wide team that addresses behavior? Who is the leader?

3. Are you a member of the PBIS team?

4. What are the main school rules or expectations? What does the school-wide behavior acronym mean?

5. Have you taught the school rules/behavior expectations this week?

6. Have you given out any of the school-wide acknowledgements or incentives this week?

7. How do you feel about the short term PBIS incentives? The long term PBIS incentives? Are they appropriate or efficient, why or why not?

8. What type of student problems or behaviors do you find most difficult to handle? Which of these problems or behaviors would you refer to the PBIS team?

9. How would you describe the PBIS training you received?

10. What preparation have you done on your own in order to implement PBIS?

11. How would you describe the impact PBIS has had on your school?

12. How would you describe the overall climate of your school? In this sense, school climate refers to school safety and the relationships between students and teachers?

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

14. What aspects of PBIS do you feel facilitate the implementation of the program?

15. What additional thoughts or concerns about PBIS do you have?
