

2015

A Case Study of the Impact of PBIS at Smith Elementary

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A Case Study of the Impact of PBIS at Smith Elementary

By
Amber Halliburton

An Applied Dissertation Submitted to the
Gardner-Webb School of Education
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

Gardner-Webb University
2015

Approval Page

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Abstract

A Case Study of the Impact of PBIS at Smith Elementary School. Halliburton, Amber, 2015: Dissertation, Gardner-Webb University, Elementary Schools/Behavior Modification/Relationships/Academic

This dissertation was designed to examine and assess the impact of a Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) program on student behaviors, academic environment, and the total school environment. The study examined and assessed the impact of PBIS on student suspensions, student attendance, and student interactions. Additionally, this study examined the impact of the academic achievement of students and teachers' instructional delivery time. This study examined the school-wide rules and expectations, school safety, communication, and the school's response to student positive behaviors. The study took place at a rural elementary school in western North Carolina. The school successfully completed implementation of PBIS approximately six years ago.

This program evaluation utilized a QUAN-qual mixed-methods case study approach in order to collect and analyze data to develop a conclusion about the impact of PBIS. Multiple instruments were used to provide quantitative data. Quantitative data were collected from PBIS, attendance records, North Carolina end-of-grade tests, the North Carolina Teacher Working Condition Survey, and surveys created by the researcher for students and teachers. Demographic information from the school was collected from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction School Report Card Page. Qualitative data were collected through focus groups and interviews of the teachers at Smith Elementary (a pseudonym). Quantitative and qualitative data were examined to determine the impact of PBIS on student behaviors, the academic environment, and the total school environment. By combining quantitative and qualitative data, the researcher was able to provide a holistic understanding of PBIS and its impact at the selected site.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

Schools have the potential to be environments where students and families can learn and grow (Sugai et al., 2002). They offer the opportunity to engage in meaningful experiences and opportunities for students to succeed academically and socially (Sugai et al., 2002). School is noted as being second only to family as the most important stabilizing force in the lives of young people (Blum, 2005). Regardless of the potential to positively affect students, schools struggle with meeting the behavioral demands of students, adversely affecting the learning environment. Based on an evaluation by James Luiselli and Robert Putnam concerning the longitudinal evaluation of Behavior Support Intervention in Middle Schools, student discipline concerns have become common in the public school setting and are an area of concern for teachers and administration (Luiselli, Putnam, & Sunderland, 2002). Schools often lack the ability to meet these needs for all students. According to Sugai et al. (2002), the challenges facing schools are significant and can have dramatic impacts on the educational system. Schools across the nation are struggling with ways to meet the needs of their students (Horner et al., 2004). Even basic data, such as office referrals, demonstrate there are behavioral concerns in the school environment. School systems are experiencing an assortment of deviant and socially inappropriate behaviors which are adversely affecting the education of students (Irvin et al., 2006).

This chapter explores the multidimensional components of student behavior and the implications of specific behaviors. This chapter provides current information on student crimes, student fatalities, and the overall impact of negative behaviors. Additionally, a literature review has been completed to examine the need to understand

behavior, the importance of outside factors in relation to student behavior, positive reinforcement, school staff roles, and the usage of positive reinforcements. As positive relationships are a component of positive behavior support, the impact of relationships on student behavior is examined as part of the literature review. Additional information on the need for prevention of negative behaviors, the historical events relating to student behavior and specifically Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS), and explicit social skills training have been provided. The chapter concludes by researcher clearly defining the purpose of this study, the research questions, the researcher's role in this study, and the significance of this study.

Student Crime Statistics

In a 2005 Gallup poll, students stated that violence/fighting/school safety was the biggest problem in schools. Students mentioned violence and school safety two times more than other school-related problems, including overcrowding, drugs, and alcohol (Lyons, 2005). In the 2011 Indicators of School Crime and Safety by the National Center for Educational Statistics, there were multiple incidents of crime and violence in schools throughout the United States. During the 2009-2010 school year, 85% of public schools recorded one or more crimes had taken place at school, adding up to an estimated 1.9 million crimes (Robers, Zhang, & Truman, 2012).

During the 2009-2010 year, 60% of public schools in the United States reported a crime to the police, amounting to 689,000 crimes (Robers et al., 2012). In 2009-2010, about 74% of public schools recorded one or more violent incidents of crime. Violent incidents of crime include rape, sexual battery other than rape, physical attack, fight with or without a weapon, threat of physical attack with or without a weapon, and robbery with or without a weapon. In 2010, among students ages 12-18, there were about

828,000 nonfatal victimizations at school (Robers et al., 2012). Unfortunately, all student crimes can exceed the title of harmful and become fatal. Student fatalities due to violent behaviors continue to be of concern for school officials and parents.

Student Fatalities

Across the United States, there were 33 school-associated violent deaths from July 1, 2009, through June 30, 2010 (Robers et al., 2012). Of the 33 student, staff, and nonstudent school-associated violent deaths, 25 were homicides, five were suicides, and three were legal interventions. During the 2008-09 school year, there were 1,579 homicides among school age youth ages 5-18, of which 17 occurred at school. During the 2008 calendar year, there were 1,344 suicides of youth ages 5-18, of which seven occurred at school. Throughout the 2009-2010 school year, 23% of public schools reported that bullying occurred among students on a daily or weekly basis (Robers et al., 2012). Additionally in 2009, about 28% of 12-18 year-old students reported having been bullied at school during the school year (Robers et al., 2012). These data indicate that crime, misbehavior, and lack of order occur in schools across America. The negative behaviors that students are exhibiting not only impact the individual student in acuity but also are pervasive and expansive in the long-term negative impact on the student and society.

Negative behaviors in students are also associated with subsequent problems in socialization and school adjustment. Such problems can continue into adolescence and into adulthood (Campbell, 1995). Understanding the causes of violence and knowledge of evidence-based practices can help schools identify and address early warning signs and provide students with the help they need (Dwyer & Osher, 2000). Prevention, early intervention, and intensive services can reduce violence and other troubling behaviors in

school, thus impacting levels of student performance. The prevalence of negative student behaviors can negatively impact the total school environment.

Problem Statement

Inappropriate behaviors such as noncompliance and disrespect are learned over an extended period of time; acquiring positive behaviors also takes time (Epstein, Atkins, Cullinan, Kutash, & Weaver, 2008). According to PBIS.org (2009), if a school successfully implements social skills instruction to all students in all settings, specifically defining the behavioral expectations for each location, approximately 70% to 80% of students will be supported. Approximately 20% to 30% of students will need additional support. These students typically do not respond appropriately to rules and social norms. These students tend to break rules and need to receive repeated prompts to complete simple tasks such as raising their hand or walking in a line. Such students will need more specific, individualized intervention and attention to address their specific behavioral needs.

The majority of students tend to behave appropriately when behavioral expectations are clearly defined and implemented in all settings by all staff and when positive behavior is acknowledged (Horner et al., 2004). Similar to academic achievement, poor performance is often an indicator of a deficit in that academic area, and behavior problems are often a reflection of social skills deficits. In both situations, explicit instruction can help students remedy the shortcoming. Explicit social skills instruction can help students become aware of the behavior expectations at school (Epstein et al., 2008). In response to the literature surrounding negative student behavior and the impact of such behavior, the researcher provided information concerning PBIS, a positive, pro-active approach to addressing student behaviors.

Understanding Student Behavior

Student behaviors, either positive or negative, serve a purpose. The student is gaining something from the chosen behavior. Schools can complete a functional behavior assessment in order to recognize the factors contributing to the problem behaviors (Dwyer et al., 1998).

Behaviors are often influenced by numerous factors including environmental factors such as class size, desk arrangement, layout of classroom, and transitions between spaces (Sugai et al., 2002).

When schools begin to understand the reasoning behind the behavior, behaviors can be appropriately addressed, and negative behaviors should lessen (Epstein et al., 2008). Schools are able to better understand the specific behavior the student is displaying, the impact of this behavior on learning, when and where the behavior occurs, and the frequency of the behavior. By having this information, schools can better determine the basis of the problem and begin to find ways to modify the behavior (Epstein et al., 2008). While it is imperative for school staff to understand the behaviors while at school, staff must recognize that students are exposed to a multitude of factors that can directly impact their educational performance and behavior. By acknowledging that multiple factors can be impacting students, schools can respond appropriately. While many external factors are beyond the school's control, understanding these components can help schools to respond appropriately to student behavior.

Understanding External Factors

When schools understand the environmental factors and the relationship to student behaviors, changes can be made accordingly. Schools can examine behavioral antecedents in order to help reduce the probability that the behavior will occur. By

increasing communication, it is possible to eliminate the need for the behavior or consequences. Schools will be able to appropriately implement positive reinforcement to encourage the new behavior (Sugai et al., 2002). By identifying problem areas throughout the school environment, specific student behaviors, and difficult times throughout the day, teachers and staff can more effectively develop strategies and interventions to address the areas of concern (Epstein et al., 2008). This allows for a school-wide approach to proactive intervention using data to drive the decisions (Luiselli et al., 2002). Just as students can choose to respond negatively or positively, school systems can choose to respond negatively with punitive responses or positively with positive reinforcement.

Positive Reinforcement

When school systems choose to respond positively, a new system is created. A system of positive reinforcement evolves (Luiselli et al., 2002). Schools are able to collect data throughout the total school environment and assess current discipline policies. This allows teachers and staff to engage in discussion about interventions and prevention (Luiselli et al., 2002). Schools may also use observation and anecdotal records of student behavior and review specific school challenges during the decision-making process (Epstein et al., 2008). School-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) is the establishment of socially appropriate behavior expectations and supports for all students within a school environment (PBIS.org, 2012). This is the universal level which addresses total school environment, all students, and all staff in all settings. Socially appropriate behaviors are the specific behavioral expectations decided upon by the school. These behavioral expectations can vary from school to school. It is a team-based process using assessment to provide data in order to make appropriate

interventions (PBIS.org, 2009). PBIS becomes integrated into the school environment (PBIS.org, 2012). By specifically including PBIS lessons and expectations throughout the day, positive behavior becomes a part of school culture and is interwoven in the school dynamics.

PBIS encourages schools to use their time and resources more effectively while making data-based decisions concerning interventions along a three-tiered continuum (PBIS.org, 2012). With a school-wide system, there are clear behavioral expectations through the school building and the school day. A school will have an increased risk of having students who solve problems with violence if the students are not encouraged and taught to interact appropriately (Dwyer & Osher, 2000). By creating a system-based response, all staff can respond similarly and cohesively to best support students.

Staff Expectations

In PBIS schools, staff are able to speak a common language and provide a common message to students. One person is not responsible for meeting the needs of students or ensuring school-wide safety (Dwyer & Osher, 2000). All school personnel have a responsibility in modifying behavior and reducing violence within the school setting (Dwyer & Osher, 2000). Staff must work to create an orderly environment where students and staff feel respected and students get the help they need (Dwyer & Osher, 2000).

Within the school environment, all staff are responsible for creating safe environments where all students can learn social and academic skills (Irvin, Tobin, Sprague, Sugai, & Vincent, 2004). It has also been found that the types of disruptive behaviors children demonstrate change over time and through the various stages of development (Kaufman et al., 2009). By involving everyone in the development of

school-wide expectations, rules, and procedures, teachers become active members in the decision-making process. They are able to adjust as student behaviors change. When students are met with a system that positively reinforces their behavior, students are able to succeed consistently throughout the school environment.

Positive Results

In schools that are utilizing PBIS, there have been reports of 20% to 60% reductions in office referrals with noted improvements in the overall school environment and academic achievement of students (Barr, 2007; Horner et al., 2004). By maintaining specific school-wide rules and expectations on a consistent basis, many students are more likely to act appropriately (Horner et al., 2004). Through the provision of school-wide expectations, clearly defined rules, a common language, and a common reward system, the behavioral climate can change.

When students recognize behavioral expectations are for all students, they are more likely to adhere to these expectations (Horner et al., 2004). With an increased connection to school, attendance percentages increase, aggressive behaviors decrease, and academic achievement increases (Blum, 2005). Recognizing that there is a universal expectation can reduce student frustration and allow students to develop relationships with school staff. Safety and relationships are integral in the development and implementation of a positive behavior approach. Discipline, rules, and school responses are no longer personal. Expectations are clearly established for all students and staff.

The Importance of Relationships

A critical factor in reducing student violence is a relationship with an adult who is accessible in times of need (Dwyer & Osher, 2000). Effective schools ensure time is provided for adults and students to develop appropriate relationships (Dwyer & Osher,

2000). Positive teacher-student interactions are vital to the process of improving student behavior (Epstein et al., 2008). A noted characteristic of a school that is safe and responsive to children emphasizes positive relationships among students and staff (Dwyer & Osher, 2000). Effective schools also foster positive student interpersonal relations; thus, students are encouraged to help each other and to feel comfortable assisting others in getting help when needed. Students who do not receive the support they need are less likely to behave in socially desirable ways (Dwyer & Osher, 2000).

Positive behavior is more likely to thrive when relationships at all levels are trusting and supportive and reflect a shared commitment to establish a healthy school and community (Epstein et al., 2008). Appropriate student behaviors are acknowledged with the goal “of having positive interactions four times more than negative interactions” (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction [NCDPI], 2011, p. 12). Research also shows PBIS schools have many more positive than negative student-teacher interactions. PBIS schools appear more welcoming to visitors than non-PBIS schools. Psychologists have found correlations between positive interactions with teachers and increases in students’ social skills, emotional regulation, motivation, engagement, cooperation with classroom rules and expectations, and academic performance (Epstein et al., 2008). By creating an environment where students have positive interactions, receive explicit social skills training, and have consistency in the school environment, students can begin to feel that school can be a safe place for them.

School Safety

Schools must ensure that students are safe and are learning socially appropriate skills (Horner et al., 2004) in an environment where learning is more productive. Schools are often forced to implement character education programs, anti-bullying programs, and

drop-out prevention programs. However, these do not focus on strategies and interventions tailored to the specific needs of students (Harvard Education, 2009). While many students have specific social skills deficits, social skills instruction is often not a part of the curriculum (Sugai et al., 2002). Character education programs are often lacking in explicit social skills instruction. A school cannot succeed if it ignores the needs of students with severe academic or behavioral needs (Dwyer & Osher, 2000). Schools must recognize that students are in need of explicit social skills instruction and vehemently address behavioral concerns with all students. Social skills instruction needs to be addressed in the same way as academic deficits – intervention for current needs and prevention of future needs.

The Need for Prevention

Historically, schools often utilized interventions as opposed to prevention. Invasive interventions such as metal detectors and school resource officers may be provided for increased safety, but these interventions do not explicitly teach social skills (Harvard Education, 2009). They are in response to the current state of schools. While these methods do not teach social skills to students, school staff are being held responsible for ensuring safe environments where all children can learn appropriate academic and social skills (Irvin et al., 2004). A growing number of schools are discovering the most effective way to reduce suspensions, expulsions, office referrals, and other similar actions is to emphasize a proactive approach to discipline (Dwyer & Osher, 2000). Effective schools are implementing school-wide campaigns that establish high expectations and provide support for socially appropriate behavior (Dwyer & Osher, 2000). Prevention approaches have proven effective in enabling school communities to decrease the frequency and intensity of behavioral problems (Dwyer & Osher, 2000).

Creating a safe school requires having in place many preventive measures for children's mental and emotional problems as well as a comprehensive approach to early identification of all warning signs that might lead to violence toward self or others (Dwyer & Osher, 2000).

Improving the behavioral climate at school must begin with an emphasis on prevention— heading off behavior problems through programs and approaches that encourage and reinforce positive behavioral expectations for all students (Epstein et al., 2008). Similar to learning to read, write, and calculate math, students must also receive explicit instruction on social skills. Students must be taught how to interact with others and how to solve conflicts without violence (Dwyer & Osher, 2000). Reformation concerning schools' responses to behavior has been in development since the inception of the idea of public school. While the way students behave has changed, the existence of negative behaviors has not. Negative student behavior in the schools has been a concern for many years.

IDEA 1997

Beginning with the implementation of the IDEA 1997 (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act), there has been an increase in attempts to implement a functional behavior system (Sugai & Horner, 2010). Positive behavior support and functional behavior assessments (FBA) are two major ideas found in the 1997 amendments to the IDEA (Sugai et al., 2002). Congress amended IDEA 1997 and included new regulations concerning PBIS. The term was originally PBS – Positive Behavior Support – but is now only referred to as PBIS. It is the only form of addressing behavior that is mentioned in American educational law (Sugai et al., 2002). Congress continues to support PBIS and recognizes the benefits to persons with disabilities.

Historically, persons with disabilities, specifically behavioral disabilities, did not receive equitable treatment within the school environment (Sugai et al., 2002). During the *Mills v. Board of Education* court case, Congress identified the need for schools to use an evidence-based approach to proactively address the needs of students with behavioral concerns (Sugai et al., 2002). This resulted in the need to amend the IDEA in 1997 and in 2004.

Congress stated the potential for a PBIS program to help prevent exclusive treatment of students (PBIS Maryland, 2012). The usage of a PBIS program remains in the current version of IDEA 2004 (PBIS Maryland, 2012). These concepts are not new but are vital in improving the quality of education all students receive, regardless of ability (Sugai et al., 2002). PBIS is meant to improve the opportunity that schools, families, and communities have to create an effective learning environment using research-based practices (Sugai et al., 2002). With any PBIS program, focus is given to creating a school environment where all students can be successful by making negative behaviors less profitable to students and where positive behaviors occur more frequently. At the core of PBIS is the integration of behavioral science, practical interventions, and social values. As schools attempt to meet the behavioral needs of all students, they must become aware of the components of PBIS and FBA (Sugai et al., 2002).

PBIS is a term that refers to positive interventions and a system designed to support social instruction (Sugai et al., 2002). Positive behavior support is a process that has the potential to positively affect schools and families to create an environment conducive to learning (OSEP Center of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, 2011). It is presumed that this type of program unites all school members in teaching and reinforcing behaviors and will result in a reduction in serious behavior problems and an

improvement in school climate (Irvin et al., 2004). A systematic approach to student behaviors allows teachers and school staff to provide explicit instruction to address student behaviors. This explicit teaching of social skills is at the core of PBIS.

Social Skills Instruction

PBIS is a system of interventions aimed at preventing negative student behaviors. It is not a specifically designed curriculum (NCDPI, 2011). PBIS has become known as an approach to help schools “define and operationalize [their] structures and procedures” (Sugai et al., 2002, p. 5). PBIS is a framework for implementation that is intended to address academic and behavioral needs of students. PBIS focuses on the need for data collection during the implementation stage and continued monitoring of data throughout the process (PBIS Maryland, 2012). In the early 1980s, public schools recognized the need to improve behavior support for students (Sugai et al., 2002). The University of Oregon began gathering data from schools and reviewing research about the behavioral needs of students and behavior modification. From this information, researchers at the University of Oregon found that efforts should be directed toward prevention using research-based techniques, the collection of data, the implementation of school-wide programs, and increased staff development and training (PBIS Maryland, 2012).

With the 1997 reauthorization of IDEA and grant monies, the Center for Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports was created by the University of Oregon researchers. OSEP was created to better support schools in dealing with behaviors. The PBIS center was established through this center and with partnerships with several other states (PBIS Maryland, 2012).

Since the early 2000s, the National Technical Assistance Center on PBIS has helped to mold the ideals of PBIS and school-wide support systems (PBIS Maryland,

2012). Currently, more than 16,000 schools nationwide are using PBIS implementation. PBIS also worked to establish a web-based library of resources, professional development opportunities, and conferences (PBIS Maryland, 2012). *Safeguarding our children: An action guide*, produced by the Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice of the American Institutes for Research and the National Association for School Psychologists, in agreement with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Office of Special Education Programs, and in conjunction with IDEA, found that PBIS offers teachers suggestions, interventions and techniques to help maintain and improve student behaviors (Dwyer & Osher, 2000).

According to NCDPI, PBIS programs are a means to create a learning environment where student achievement is increased and problem behaviors decrease (NCDPI, 2011). The process focuses on improving a school's ability to teach expectations and support behavior for all students (NCDPI, 2011). PBIS recognizes interventions must be culturally appropriate (Sugai et al., 2002). According to Horner, co-director of PBIS.org, the "most efficient approach to decreasing behavior problems in schools is through investment in prevention" (Horner et al., 2004, p. 21). Schools should focus on teaching behavioral expectations for all students (NCDPI, 2011). School-wide PBIS (SWPBIS) is a three-tiered model. Its purpose is to modify behaviors through effective teaching and proactively addressing needs of students and staff (OSEP Center of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, 2011). PBIS replaces punishment with school-wide changes in order to result in long-term behavior changes across settings (Sugai et al., 2002). SWPBIS is the reference to a school-wide positive behavior support system. Sugai, a major contributor in the work of PBIS, stated that all students should receive instruction in a variety of settings, not limited to the classroom; PBIS should be

delivered to all students and can positively impact student behavior (Sugai et al., 2002).

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of PBIS on student behavior, student academic environment, and the school environment. This study examined the impact of PBIS on student suspensions, attendance, and student interactions. This case study also examined the impact on the academic environment by examining the effects on student achievement and the amount of instructional delivery time. This study also examined the impact that PBIS had on the school environment. This study examined the impact of PBIS on the school-wide rules and expectations, school safety, communication and this school's response to positive behavior.

By examining the impact of PBIS at the selected site, research was gained on the actual impact it has had on these students at this specific site in relation to this school's implementation of PBIS. There was also data to show the impact of student achievement and the perception of students and teachers on behaviors that occur in the school and the overall feeling concerning the school environment. By understanding the long-term impact of PBIS frameworks, schools can better gauge the level of influence that PBIS has on the school community (PBIS.org, 2012). The researcher has examined the impact of PBIS on the student, academics, and school.

Research Questions

After reviewing the status of the PBIS program at the selected rural elementary school in North Carolina, the literature surrounding PBIS, behavior modification theory, social-skills training, and student-teacher interactions, the following research questions were created. These questions served as the guide throughout the research process.

1. What is the impact of PBIS at Smith Elementary on student behaviors?
2. What is the impact of PBIS at Smith Elementary on the academic environment?
3. What is the impact of PBIS at Smith Elementary on the school environment?

For the purpose of this case study, student behaviors are defined as office discipline referrals (ODRs), student attendance records, and student interactions with peers and with teachers. For the purpose of this case study, academic environment was defined by student academic achievement, specifically end-of-grade (EOG) tests. Additionally, instructional delivery was considered part of the academic environment. Instructional delivery was defined as the teacher's ability to deliver material. School environment was defined as school-wide expectations and rules, student suspensions, expulsions, and acts of violence. Consideration to school safety, communication within the school setting, and the school's response to positive behavior were also included in the definition of school environment.

Researcher's Role

The researcher collected data concerning the PBIS process at an elementary school to provide data to the system for reflection. The researcher was a behavior specialist at the elementary level in an adjacent county. The researcher collaborated with the selected site through regional meetings. The researcher and the selected site were in the same region as defined by NCDPI. The researcher attended trainings simultaneously with the selected site's PBIS coach and has communication about the selected site through regional and county-level trainings. The researcher and PBIS staff collaborated and shared information, strategies, and supports.

Significance of Study

This study was intended to further expand the knowledge of the long-term, intrinsic impacts of a SWPBIS program on student behaviors, the academic environment, and the total school environment. PBIS research typically indicates a reduction in suspensions for students and an increase in academic achievement. This study intended to examine the number of suspensions and office referrals that are occurring with a PBIS model fully implemented in the school and compare this to information prior to the implementation of PBIS. This study also examined the overall academic achievement of students prior to PBIS implementation and current academic achievement as indicated on the North Carolina EOG tests for third through fifth grades.

This study also examined teacher data as reported on the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey (NCTWCS) prior to PBIS implementation and throughout implementation, with specific focus given to Standards 4 and 6. Standard 4 specifically seeks teacher input on Managing Student Conduct. Standard 5 asks teacher perceptions of the ways that schools create and implement policies that address student conduct and the process of creating and ensuring a safe school environment. The two main components of Standard 4 ask teachers' perceptions of the school's ability to communicate policies about student conduct and school safety. Additionally, Standard 4 seeks teachers' opinions of the ability of school staff to enforce these policies and to ensure that schools are consistently safe. Standard 6 analyzes teacher reported data concerning school leadership. It should be noted that some questions changed throughout the years, and the researcher compiled questions based on questions and not a specific question number. For example, question 6a in 2010 may appear as 6c in 2012.

Lastly, this study examined the perceptions of students in regards to the student

behavior, academic concerns, and the overall school environment. The researcher utilized multiple instruments to collect data and compare the responses within each instrument to the other response. By providing a multi-faceted approach to data collection, this study attempted to provide a holistic understanding of the impact of PBIS on student behaviors at this elementary school.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In order to better understand PBIS, the researcher has provided a basic overview of PBIS. This chapter examines the literature related to PBIS and the implied components of such a system. The reader is provided the specific components of PBIS in order to make direct correlations to information provided in the chapter. This chapter examines how relationships, a key component of PBIS, can positively impact student suspensions, student behaviors, academic achievement, and safety within the school environment. Each subtopic in this chapter directly correlates to the impact of student behaviors in a school environment and how it directly impacts student achievement and school climate. A thorough understanding of PBIS is provided initially as the reader will be able to directly correlate PBIS to other research. For this reason, specific information about PBIS is provided prior to the literature review of behavior, relationships, academic achievement, and specific studies.

Research Questions

As part of this study, the researcher examined the following research questions.

1. What is the impact of PBIS at Smith Elementary on student behaviors?
2. What is the impact of PBIS at Smith Elementary on the academic environment?
3. What is the impact of PBIS at Smith Elementary on the school environment?

For the purpose of this case study, student behaviors are defined as ODRs, student attendance records, and student interactions with peers and with teachers. For the purpose of this case study, academic environment was defined by student academic achievement, specifically EOG tests. Additionally, instructional delivery was considered part of the academic environment. Instructional delivery was defined as the teacher's

ability to deliver material. School environment was defined as school-wide expectations and rules, student suspensions, expulsions, and acts of violence. Consideration to school safety, communication within the school setting, and the school's response to positive behavior were also included in the definition of school environment.

In order to adequately review all components of each research question, a literature review was completed coinciding with the order of research questions. The researcher provided a review of literature on student suspensions, student behaviors, academic achievement, and the school environment. Within this literature review, additional, supporting information about relationships and PBIS has been included.

Understanding PBIS

While PBIS and the Technical Assistance Center are sponsored by the Office of Special Education, PBIS is not a special education program (OSEP Center of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, 2011). PBIS has shown to be successful in a variety of settings, including the juvenile justice system. PBIS is made of up six core principles – a school-wide consensus in addressing behavior, a statement of purpose that is positively stated, behavior expectations that are positively stated and few in number, a process for teaching expectations to students, a means to display and maintain the behavior expectations, and a data monitoring system to address effectiveness of the program (Poulus, Beier, Ryder, Schindel, & Venit, 2011).

PBIS is a 3-5 year commitment to changing the school environment. It is a framework for changing schools, not a purchasable program (OSEP Center of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, 2011). It enables schools to create a common language, to establish commonality in rules and expectations, and a way to approach reinforcement of expectations (Poulus et al., 2011). PBIS is founded in evidence-based

practices and designed to fit the unique, specific needs of the school (Poulus et al., 2011). SWPBIS is an attempt at the school level to improve student academic and behavioral outcomes. PBIS provides a framework for schools to work towards to achieve desired academic and behavioral outcomes. PBIS is not a curriculum, program, or specific intervention. PBIS is a guide to making decisions. PBIS is an approach to choosing and implementing evidence-based practices for both academics and behavioral outcomes for students.

PBIS implementation includes school-wide procedures and processes intended for all students and all staff and in all settings (NCDPI, 2012a). School-wide behavior support programs operate on the basis that all school members are actively involved in teaching and reinforcing appropriate behaviors (Irvin et al., 2004). When such a setting is created and positive behaviors are reinforced, the number of students with serious behavioral problems will decrease and the school culture will improve (Irvin et al., 2004). PBIS is a complete school-wide prevention and intervention process that is intended to support all students' behavioral needs, including those with severe behavioral needs, while providing support to all staff (Dwyer & Osher, 2000). According to NCDPI, PBIS is a team-based approach that teaches and reinforces behavioral expectations using instructional techniques (NCDPI, 2012a). PBIS is a research-based, school-wide systems approach to improve school climate and create safer and more effective schools (NCDPI, 2012a). All students are exposed to a social skills curriculum during Tier 1. The delivery of this curriculum is decided upon at each school's discretion (Epstein et al., 2008). Each school's decision to implement PBIS is unique and specific to the dynamics represented at the specific site.

There are four main components to PBIS: data, measurable outcomes, practices,

and systems. Data drive decision making. The data ensure that measured outcomes are reaching desired outcomes. The practices chosen by the schools are evidence-based and attainable. The systems of PBIS support the chosen practices. Within the four elements, there are six embedded principles. There should be a continual implementation of academic and behavior interventions that are scientifically based. Data should be used to guide decision making and problem solving. Prevention of difficult behaviors is addressed through school environment. Prosocial behaviors should be explicitly taught to all students. Practices should be evidence-based and completed with fidelity and accountability. Student progress should be monitored continuously (PBIS.org, 2009). SWPBIS is a three-tiered framework for problem solving. Each tier serves a specific purpose, and it is implemented in order. The three tiers offer varying levels of support for students as they move throughout the tiers (Poulus et al., 2011). There are three levels of support services, including both prevention and intervention strategies (Scheuermann & Hall, 2008). The three tiers serve as a framework for school personnel to provide positive interventions for all students and more intense interventions for those who need more intense support (Scheuermann & Hall, 2008).

SWPBIS Implementation

SWPBIS is for an entire school or for an entire school district. Within this system, behavioral expectations are taught equitably with other curriculum topics. Students are explicitly taught three to five main behavioral expectations. These are positively stated and should be easily remembered.

A school PBIS team meets and determines these expectations and seeks out a minimum 80% buy-in from staff on these expectations. The school creates a matrix outlining expectations in each area of the school. The matrix is posted throughout the

school. After a consensus is reached concerning behavioral expectations with appropriate buy-in from staff, the team determines how expectations and routines are delivered to the students. Schools may opt to use a School-Wide Information System (SWIS) to collect data and graph office referral data. The data display incidents per day, month, time of day, specific behaviors, and by individual students (PBIS.org, 2009). By using a multi-tier and a data-driven approach to service delivery, schools are able to meet the various needs of students. This allows for differentiation, tailoring resources to meet the needs of all students. Through this methodology, all students are exposed to explicit teaching of behavioral expectations. Schools use research-based, scientifically supported interventions aimed at supporting the majority of students.

Student progress is monitored and adjusted as needed, based on data. By creating a cohesive structural framework, all adults use a common language, common practice, and consistent use of positive and negative reinforcement (PBIS.org, 2009). It is at this level that the school determines the expectation for all students: what all students are expected to know, understand, and demonstrate. The school also determines how goals are measured and a plan once goals are met (Module 1 PowerPoint, 2010).

Developing the Matrix

Schools establish specific behavioral expectations including rules, schedules, and specific environmental arrangements within the school setting. These are specifically delivered to students in all settings to prevent the onset of negative behaviors. Eighty percent of students should be able to identify the specific behavior expectations for each specific location. In order to display the expected behaviors for students, the team would create a matrix outlining the expectations (PBIS.org, 2009). Within the matrix, specific, observable behaviors would be noted in specific areas within the school environment

(Figure 1).

| Voice Levels 0 – Silent 1 – Whisper 2 – Speaking voice 3 – Outdoor voice | LCS Pre-K and Kindergarten SCHOOL WIDE EXPECTATION AND SETTING MATRIX | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| | Cafeteria | Recess | Bus |
| Be Responsible | Eat your own food Hands will only touch your food | Tell a grown-up if there is a <u>problem</u> . | Leave papers in book bag Keep aisle clear of backpacks and feet Report problems to the driver or aide immediately |
| Be Respectful | Voice level: 0 - 2 Raise your hand if you need help. | Watch out for others while you're playing Listen to the adults | Raise your hand if you have a question or problem Voice level: 0-2 Use language that is appropriate Respect the possessions of others Respect the personal space of others Keep the bus clean |
| Be There Be Ready | Wash your hands before eating Have your lunchbox and/or money in your hand | Listen for the whistle, stop playing, and line up Dress yourself to be outside | Be in assigned area before bus arrives Have your belongings and necessary supplies with you Board bus promptly and go directly to assigned seat |
| Follow Directions | Stand in line and wait patiently Remain seated until dismissed | Stay in line when walking in and out of the building. When in line, keep your hands by your side | Follow bus safety rules Follow bus loading and unloading procedure Listen to and follow the directions of adults Remain in assigned seat until arrival at destination |

| Voice Levels 0 – Silent 1 – Whisper 2 – Speaking voice 3 – Outdoor voice | LCS Pre-K and Kindergarten SCHOOL WIDE EXPECTATION AND SETTING MATRIX | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| | Cafeteria | Recess | Bus |
| Be Responsible | Eat your own food Hands will only touch your food | Tell a grown-up if there is a <u>problem</u> . | Leave papers in book bag Keep aisle clear of backpacks and feet Report problems to the driver or aide immediately |
| Be Respectful | Voice level: 0 - 2 Raise your hand if you need help. | Watch out for others while you're playing Listen to the adults | Raise your hand if you have a question or problem Voice level: 0-2 Use language that is appropriate Respect the possessions of others Respect the personal space of others Keep the bus clean |
| Be There Be Ready | Wash your hands before eating Have your lunchbox and/or money in your hand | Listen for the whistle, stop playing, and line up Dress yourself to be outside | Be in assigned area before bus arrives Have your belongings and necessary supplies with you Board bus promptly and go directly to assigned seat |
| Follow Directions | Stand in line and wait patiently Remain seated until dismissed | Stay in line when walking in and out of the building. When in line, keep your hands by your side | Follow bus safety rules Follow bus loading and unloading procedure Listen to and follow the directions of adults Remain in assigned seat until arrival at destination |

Figure 1. Example of School Matrix.

The leadership team would then guide decision making about how students receive instruction on behavior expectations. This is school specific and varies from school to school. School leadership would also make decisions on how students would be recognized for appropriate behaviors. This is also varied from school to school. PBIS is a framework for making school-based decisions (Module 1 PowerPoint, 2010).

SET Data

Data collection for PBIS addresses both short-term and long-term goals. Schools use the School-Wide Evaluation Tool (SET) to determine implementation at the school level. This is designed to assess and evaluate the foundational components of PBIS at the school level each academic school year. SET examines the features of PBIS that are in place in the school environment. SET helps determine the annual goals for PBIS. SET also helps evaluate and guide goals. SET is also used as a comparison from year to year. Information from SET is collected from artifacts, observations, and interviews of staff (minimum of 10) and students (minimum of 15) (PBIS.org, 2009). Artifacts include the discipline handbook, school improvement plans, PBIS action plan, and social skills plans. Artifacts are reviewed by trained observers. The results of SET are used to produce trend lines and show progress over time. The goal of each component within SET is 80% (Module 1 PowerPoint, 2010). SET is a research-validated instrument that results in a percentage representation of level of implementation (NCDPI, 2012b). SET measures specific components such as expectations defined, reward system, and district support. The chart then provides an overall implementation average. See Figure 2.

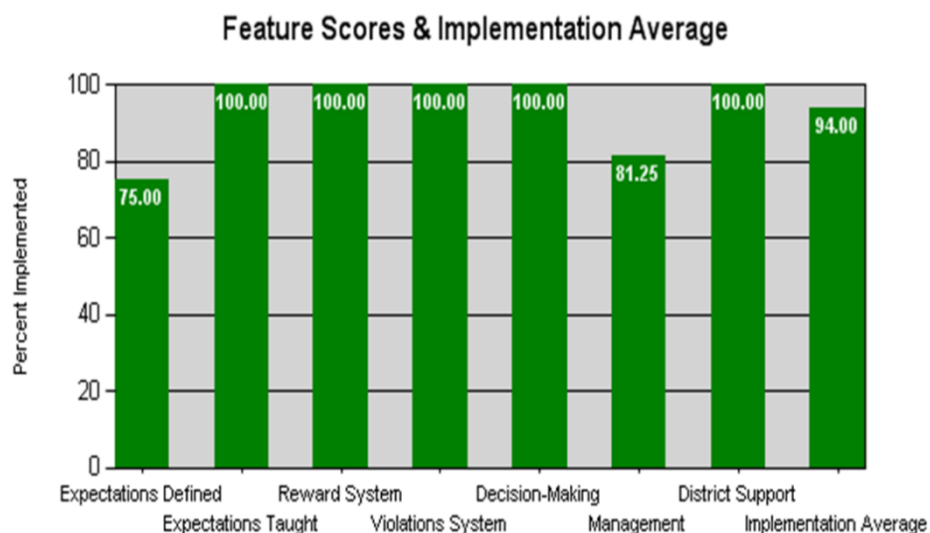


Figure 2. Sample Set Graph.

Data Collection

Schools also collect data from ODRs, achievement data, suspensions/expulsions, staff retention data, climate surveys, special education data, referrals data, and attendance records. These data are used to determine how strategies are impacting students and the school environment. These data are also used to measure specific data in the school environment (NCDPI, 2012a). Data can be displayed to compare year to year, across grade levels, gender, race, special populations, and to display academic achievement. ODRs can be evaluated to examine grades, locations, and incident type. The incident types correlate with NCWISE data. This information allows staff to analyze data and create goals in accordance with the data. This information is displayed through SWIS. This is used in collaboration with NCWISE data. Schools can collect office referral data using a form supplied by PBIS or NCWISE data to display office referrals by incident, location, ethnicity, and type of infraction. This allows staff to compare incidents with consideration to many components (NCDPI, 2012a).

By actively gathering and analyzing data concerning behaviors and proactively addressing needs, ODRs and incidents of negative behaviors should decrease. This decrease provides the potential for increased time on task and increased focus on academic concerns (NCDPI, 2012a).

Behavior Supports

In response to the misbehavior of students, many schools have begun implementing a school-wide positive behavior support system (Kaufman et al., 2009). Within PBIS, students experience supports based on their behavioral needs and their responsiveness to intervention. Tier 1 supports are for all students and staff and happen in all settings. The universal level typically works for 80% of all students (Batsche, 2010). The entire school staff is trained on the PBIS model (Crone, Hawken, & Bergstrom, 2007).

Behaviors such as conflict management, bullying prevention, respect, and cooperation are taught in all three tiers (Harvard Education, 2009). In the primary level of SWPBIS, all students are taught appropriate behaviors. PBIS is founded on the ideal that all children can demonstrate appropriate behaviors. It is the school's responsibility to identify the specific environmental conditions that best help students be successful. The school then decides what systems and resources are needed to enable such environmental conditions to be met. The goal of PBIS is to provide prevention strategies prior to negative behaviors occurring (PBIS.org, 2009).

If a student is not responsive, additional supports that are more intensive are provided. If a student does not respond to universal or school-wide behavior supports, students receive additional supports through a small group approach (Tier 2). Students in Tier 2 are students with at-risk behaviors. Tier 2 focuses on reducing the current number

of existing behaviors by focusing on problem behaviors. This is a direct approach to addressing problematic behaviors. Students often indicate the need for additional support as received in Tier 2 (Harvard Education, 2009). The distinguishing factors among the tiers are the amount of staff support, the frequency of social skills instruction, and the number of students included in each group (Harvard Education, 2009). Tier 2 is only implemented after a successful implementation of SWPBIS. With the addition of Tier 2, approximately 15% of students should learn needed skills and school expectations (Batsche, 2010).

If a student is nonresponsive to Tier 2, he/she receives an individualized behavior support (Tier 3). Within the third tier, supports are specialized, individualized, and are for high-risk students (PBIS Maryland, 2012). Tier 3 focuses on behaviors that are intense and have proven resistant to Tiers 1 and 2. Tier 3 focuses on the remaining 2-5% of student population (Batsche, 2010). Tier 3 is an intensive, individualized approach to addressing negative student behaviors.

Response to Behavior

According to a Practice Guide by the National Center for Educational Evaluation and Regional Assistance and What Works Clearinghouse, students who demonstrate negative behaviors can create an environment that is chaotic and impairs learning for all students (Epstein et al., 2008). In situations where there are inappropriate behaviors, there is a greater chance for violence to occur (Dwyer & Osher, 2000). Students who engage in misbehavior and socially inappropriate actions are more likely to experience failure in school and rejection by their peers (Scheuermann & Hall, 2008). However, there is much documentation that suggests that prevention and intervention can prevent violence and other misbehaviors in schools (Dwyer & Osher, 2000). Effective prevention

programs typically address a student's social, emotional, and academic needs (Dwyer & Osher, 2000). Interventions should be culturally sensitive, involve both family and community, be individualized to the specific student and carefully monitored (Dwyer & Osher, 2000). Schools are realizing that the most effective way to reduce behaviors and associated consequences is to incorporate a positive, proactive approach to school-wide discipline with high expectations and established systems of support (Dwyer & Osher, 2000). Such programs offer positive reinforcement for positive behaviors (Dwyer & Osher, 2000). A safe learning environment with appropriate support is beneficial for all students, while allowing for the provision of more intensive services for those who need extra support (Dwyer & Osher, 2000). Perhaps the most important component of any behavior management program is prevention. It is critical for educators to know and be able to implement proactive strategies to prevent misbehavior (Scheuermann & Hall, 2008).

Just as students have academic deficits, they may also have social, emotional, and/or behavioral deficits (Epstein et al., 2008). Social skills instruction is a means to explicitly teach appropriate behaviors and conflict management to all students (Dwyer & Osher, 2000). Social skills instruction should become a part of the daily routine in order to meet students' needs (Dwyer & Osher, 2000). Successful social skills instructional guides offer specific skill sets to guide students in problem solving and reducing the possibility of misbehavior (Dwyer & Osher, 2000). Social routines and expectations should be established in order to help students and adults make positive choices (Dwyer & Osher, 2000). Understanding the relationship dynamics in schools can also help students and teachers create a positive working environment.

Relationships

Many of the most effective preventions and interventions involve the entire learning community, including principals, teachers, support staff, families, and members of the community, all working together to establish positive relationships with students (Dwyer & Osher, 2000). Behavior is much more likely to be positive when relationships within the school community are trusting and supportive (Epstein et al., 2008). There is a positive correlation between positive teacher interactions and a student's social skill set, self-control, academic motivation, school engagement, and compliance with school rules and expectations. Conversely, there is a negative correlation between negative student-teacher interactions and a student's risk for academic failure. Teachers can demonstrate positive interactions by showing respect and genuine interest in students. Helping students improve social skills development can improve their attitudes to academics, decreasing behaviors (Epstein et al., 2008).

The student-teacher relationship is at the center of many areas of student success (Scheuermann & Hall, 2008). These relationships affect academic success, dropout rates, misbehavior, and safety concerns (Scheuermann & Hall, 2008). Students with positive teacher interactions tend to have higher grades (Scheuermann & Hall, 2008). Supportive relationships help to create environments where a student in need can ask for help (Dwyer & Osher, 2000). In situations where students do not have an accessible adult, the probability of exhibiting misbehavior increases (Dwyer & Osher, 2000). For schools that implement PBIS successfully, the school environment should be one where expectations are clearly communicated, all students are informed of the expectations, most of the students are adhering to the school expectations, and supports are in place for those students who need additional support. In PBIS schools, accessibility to expectations,

knowledge, and adults who are willing to help should be readily available for all students.

Impact on Academic Achievement

“Nurturing and stable relationships with caring adults are essential to healthy human development beginning from birth” (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2006, p. 31). When children are allowed to develop secure attachments, there are specific benefits. Secure relationships and bonding can contribute to “positive social skills, multiple successful relationships at later ages and a sophisticated understanding of emotions, commitment, morality and other aspects of human relationships” (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2006, p. 47). Close and caring relationships between teachers and students can increase the chances that a student holding critical knowledge about another child or potentially violent situation will disclose that information sooner rather than later (Dwyer & Osher, 2000).

A review by Marzano (2003) revealed that teacher-student relationships are a critical factor in classroom management. Teachers who had high-quality relationships with students had 31% fewer discipline problems than other teachers (Scheuermann & Hall, 2008). Furthermore, students who exhibit high levels of inappropriate behaviors and low levels of socially acceptable behaviors are likely to experience school failure and peer rejection (Scheuermann & Hall, 2008). One commonly cited explanation among many of the students who eventually dropped out of school was the perception that teachers lacked interest in the students (Scheuermann & Hall, 2008). Furthermore, the importance of building relationships with children and youth—part of the school-wide foundation—cannot be overemphasized (Dwyer & Osher, 2000). Given the impact of positive, caring teacher-student relationships, it is important to examine the specific teacher behaviors that contribute to, or detract from, such a relationship (Scheuermann &

Hall, 2008).

Peer relationships are examined because evidence suggests that children's social behavior is closely correlated to both social success and academic success, and students who have problems in either of these areas may exhibit behavioral difficulties. Student peer relationships appear to be related to academic success, perhaps in part because high academic norms in the peer group increase motivation (Scheuermann & Hall, 2008). PBIS focuses on the behavioral component as part of the curriculum, just as other academic subject areas. Students are taught the school rules and social expectations (PBIS.org, 2012).

The more socially skilled students are, the more likely they are to experience academic and social success throughout school and life (Scheuermann & Hall, 2008). Longitudinal research has demonstrated that children's prosocial behavior plays an important role in both current and later academic and social success (Scheuermann & Hall, 2008).

Social and Emotional Learning

Joseph Durlak, professor emeritus at Loyola University Chicago and Roger Weisberg at UIC, and several graduate students conducted a meta-analysis of 213 evaluations of social and emotional learning programs (Social and Emotional Learning Research Group, 2011). In this study, over 270,000 students were involved from urban, suburban, and rural elementary and secondary schools. This study was completed in conjunction with the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), a not-for-profit organization. Social Emotional Learning and CASEL focus on evaluating programs that address youth social skills and promote the education of social and emotional learning. Based on the results of this study, students who received social

and emotional instruction, compared to students who did not receive social and emotional learning programs, had improved test scores and grades, including an 11-percentile point gain. Students had improved social and emotional skills; better classroom behavior; improvement with conduct misbehaviors, stress, and depression; and improvements concerning attitudes about themselves, others, and school. Based on these data, social and emotional learning programs have a positive impact on student behaviors and academics (Social and Emotional Learning Research Group, 2011). PBIS emphasizes that there are distinct connections between social and academic success. Behavioral expectations are emphasized, taught, remediated, and positively reinforced, just as any other academic area (PBIS.org, 2012).

Academic Achievement and Bullying

In a recent study concerning bullying and the impact of academic achievement, results suggest that victims of bullying must be considered when seeking to improve academic achievement (Juvonen, Wang, & Espinoza, 2011). The study used two multilevel modes to explore a correlation between those who are bullied and academic achievement (Juvonen et al., 2011). The study used self-reports and peer recommendations to determine the indicators associated with being bullied. Grade point average (GPA) and teacher ratings measured academic achievement. Participants were chosen from approximately 2,300 middle school students. A self-reported ethnicity showed that the school was ethnically diverse. Sixth-grade students were chosen from 11 public middle schools in Los Angeles. Students were selected from 99 classrooms based on the teacher's willingness to allow participation. All students received Title I funding. Students completed surveys, with parental consent. Based on survey completion and academic achievement, results showed there was a high level of inter-correlation ($r=.65$).

In this study, an only one point higher mean on self-perceived victimization resulted in a predicted 0.3 decline in GPA. Based on these results, bullying throughout the 3 years in middle school could account for an overall decrease in 1.5 letter grades in any given subject. This study is limited by the inability to make causal inferences about the bullying experiences (Juvonen et al., 2011). These data indicate that negative interactions and those who are victims of inappropriate behavior suffer academically. By recognizing that negative behavior directly correlates with academic achievement, schools can proactively approach the need to implement a behavior modification system to address these concerns. PBIS allows students to choose the framework that they choose to address these concerns (PBIS.org, 2012). PBIS can be described as the house, the framework for schools. It can be the roof under which all interventions, both academic and social, are housed. When there are negative student behaviors in the school environment, there is a direct correlation to decreased academic achievement. By implementing a program that proactively addresses student behavior, schools are better equipped to combat the decline in academic achievement. The main purpose of PBIS is to equip schools with the strategies and resources needed to implement an individualized approach to PBIS where all students and staff can be successful in all settings (PBIS.org, 2012).

Academic Achievement and Relationships

Relationships matter to students and in relation to academic achievement. Regardless of the setting, research indicates that students who have a positive relationship with at least one significant adult perform better in school. As found in the report, a positive relationship can positively impact student achievement and help decrease negative behaviors in students. Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (Tierney, Grossman,

& Resch, 2000) has supported, through one-one relationships, youth for more than 90 years. Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) programs pair an adult volunteer with a matched youth and typically meet 3-4 hours, three times per month for at least 1 year. Currently, BBBS maintains 75,000 matches across the United States. This study by Public/Private Ventures (P/PV) is the first scientifically credible evidence that the BBBS program has positive and social impacts of the lives of the youth involved. P/PV chose geographically representative sites for the evaluation. Samples began in October 1991 to February 1993. The selected sites for the survey represent typical regions in the United States and include Philadelphia, Rochester, New York, Minneapolis, Columbus, Ohio, Wichita Kansas, Houston, San Antonio, and Phoenix.

P/PV sought to provide reliable evidence that mentoring programs can positively impact young people by analyzing the BBBS program. The study examined youth between 10 and 16 years old, with 93% being between 10 and 14. Sixty percent of the participants were boys and more than half were of a minority group. Seventy percent of those in the minority group were African American. Nearly all lived with one parent, most often the mother. Others lived with a relative or guardian. Much of the sample included youth from low-income homes and those with a history of family violence and/or drug abuse. The purpose of this study was to compare behaviors of youth in the BBBS program with behaviors of those not involved in the program. The study was completed to determine if the relationship provided by BBBS made a positive, distinguishable difference in the lives of the matched youth.

Based on the findings of this study, youth involved in the BBBS program were 46% less likely to use drugs than those in the control group. Additionally, of the treatment group, those who were a minority were 70% less likely to use drugs than those

in the control group. The youth, Little Brothers and Little Sisters (LBLS), in the treatment group were 27% less likely to begin alcohol use during this time. Little Sisters (LS) who were in the minority group were about half as likely to use alcohol as those in the control group were. LBLS were almost one-third less likely to hit someone than those in the control group. LBLS skipped class half as many days as those in the control group, felt more informed about doing schoolwork, missed fewer classes, and showed gains in their GPA. Youth who feel more competent tend to perform better in school. Gains were strongest in the minority group of LS. Considering the family unit, those in the treatment group have improved quality of relationships with their parents, due to increased trust with the parental figure. This impact was seen the strongest for Caucasian Little Brothers (LB). Additionally, there were improvements with peer relationships with those involved in the treatment group. “The most notable results are the deterrent effect on initiation of drug and alcohol use and the overall positive effects on academic performance that the mentoring experience produced” (Tierney et al., 2000, date, p. 3). While small in number, the increase in GPA “is still very encouraging since non-academic interventions are rarely capable of producing effects in grade performance” (Tierney et al., 2000, p. 4). The purpose of BBBS is to provide a caring adult for the youth involved. These data indicate that students are positively impacted in multidimensional ways, including academic, regardless of academic interventions imposed on the students. Students benefit from the relationships. Academics improved irrespective of academic intervention, as this was not examined. The common factor among students was the introduction of a positive relationship. Students who are involved in positive relationships perform better in school (Tierney et al., 2000).

High School Dropout Statistics

Despite various efforts to improve classrooms and student supports, there is an increasing number of students who quit school. In a 2006 report by the Civic Enterprises, Peter Hart Research Associates and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, students report a variety of reasons for quitting school (Bridgeland, Dilulio, & Morison, 2006). Of the students surveyed, nearly half of all students said they left school because it was not interesting. Disengaged students are leaving the classroom. Nationally, almost one third of students are not graduating. Of the students leaving the classroom, attendance is often an indicator of those likely to quit. Sixty-five percent missed class frequently during the year prior to dropping out. Nearly 81% of students surveyed desired better teachers, and 75% wanted more individualized instructions. Seventy percent thought that extra time with the teacher would have improved the chances for graduation. Seventy percent of students felt that more supervision would improve the school setting. Sixty-two percent felt that improved classroom discipline was needed. Over half of students surveyed felt that their school did not do enough to make the learning environment feel safe. Sixty-two percent of students said that the school should do more to help students with problems that occur outside of the school (Bridgeland et al., 2006). Less than half of the students reported that they were contacted when absent. Nearly half (47%) said they left school because classes were not interesting. Sixty-nine percent of students reported that they did not feel motivated to work hard in school, but many would have liked to have been motivated to do better.

On the contrary, nearly 70% felt confident that they could have graduated if they had put forth the effort (Bridgeland et al., 2006). Sixty-six percent said they would have worked harder if it had been demanded of them. Students stated that aside from the

workload of high school, it was made increasingly more difficult because teachers were not available to help. Seventy percent of the students surveyed felt that additional time after school, Saturday school, summer school, and additional support from teachers would have decreased their chances for dropping out (Bridgeland et al., 2006).

Warning signs of dropout include poor academic achievement, behavior problems, disengagement, pregnancy, retention, transfers from school to school, and a difficulty in the ninth-grade year transition. However, as indicated by PBIS.org, students who are in a school where PBIS is implemented are less likely to have absences and more likely to be engaged in school. By creating a proactive approach for these students, it is possible for students to prevent students from leaving school by keeping them engaged and ensuring they feel safe at school. PBIS seeks to serve as prevention for academic and behavioral failures, poor attendance rates, and proactively responds to acknowledging student success (PBIS.org, 2012).

After reviewing the literature surrounding PBIS in schools and the claimed success of the program, the researcher examined the following questions at Smith Elementary by utilizing the following questions.

1. What is the impact of PBIS at Smith Elementary on student behaviors?
2. What is the impact of PBIS at Smith Elementary on the academic environment?
3. What is the impact of PBIS at Smith Elementary on the school environment?

For the purpose of this case study, student behaviors are defined as student suspensions, student attendance records, and student interactions with peers and with teachers. For the purpose of this case study, instructional delivery is defined as the teacher's ability to deliver material and the increase in instructional delivery time.

Student academic achievement was measured by state EOG testing scores. School environment is defined as school-wide expectations and rules, school safety, communication within the school setting, and the school's response to positive behavior.

North Carolina PBIS Implementation

North Carolina's PBIS implementation process began in 1997 when the State Board of Education began utilizing a statewide accountability program. This program was designed to measure academic achievement and growth in academic progress (Reynolds, Irwinn, & Algozzine, 2009). Since the inception of this program, North Carolina students have made significant academic gains, as report by the ABC Accountability Program. In accordance with No Child Left Behind (NCLB), schools began using research-based interventions in all academic areas (Reynolds et al., 2009).

As part of NCLB, states were also required to identify schools that continue to present as dangerous (Reynolds et al., 2009). Schools began implementing PBIS in order to meet the needs of students who were presenting academic and behavioral concerns. This was to help provide appropriate instruction to all students, including those with specific behavioral needs. The goals were to support academic needs and reduce negative behaviors (Reynolds et al., 2009).

North Carolina began reporting suspension data in PBIS schools in 2006. The number of ODRs has consistently decreased in K-6 schools since the 2006-2007 school year. In 6-9 schools, referrals have also consistently declined, aside from the 2007-2008 school year. For the high schools, there have been two increases in ODRs. However, there is a significantly fewer number of office referrals from the 2006-2007 school year to the 2010-2011 school year. Overall, schools that are implementing PBIS have seen a decrease in office referrals (NCDPI, 2012a).

The table below supports a calculation utilized by NCDPI and PBIS to calculate gained time for administrator, teacher, and instructional time through the reduction of office referrals. Table 1 and Figure 3 below provide two examples of gained time through the implementation of PBIS (NCDPI, 2012b).

Table 1

Value-Added Impact of PBIS in North Carolina from Reductions in Office Referrals

| School | Reduction | Administrator Time Gained (minutes) | Teacher Time Gained (minutes) | Instructional Time Gained (minutes) |
|-------------------|-----------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Supply Elementary | 53 | 530 | 1060 | 1590 |
| Wrightsboro | 64 | 640 | 1280 | 1920 |
| Green Valley | 76 | 760 | 1520 | 2280 |
| Oak Grove | 184 | 1840 | 3680 | 5520 |

In each of the above elementary schools, there was a reduction in office referrals. By reducing office referrals and using the aforementioned formula, the schools respectively, were able to gain back a large amount of time throughout the school year.

Table 3

Value-Added Impact of PBIS at Brunson Elementary School in Forsyth County from Reductions in Office Referrals

| | 2004-2005 Before PBIS Implementation | 2005-2006 After PBIS Implementation |
|---|---|--|
| Office Referrals | 263 | 156 |
| Administrator Time (20 minutes per referral) | 5260 minutes (88 hours/15 days) | 3120 (52 hours/9 days) |
| Teacher Time (30 minutes per referral) | 7890 minutes (132 hours/22 days) | 4680 (78 hours/13 days) |
| Suspensions | 49 | 41 |
| Administrator Time (30 minutes per suspension) | 1470 minutes (25 hours/4 days) | 1230 (21 hours/3 days) |
| Teacher Time (20 minutes per suspension) | 980 minutes (16 hours/3 days) | 820 (14 hours/2 days) |
| Total Time Gained | 17 days | |

Figure 3. Equation of Time Loss/Gained.

The figure above provides information concerning a specific elementary that was able to gain 17 days' worth of time during the school year, with the implementation of PBIS.

North Carolina ODRs in PBIS Schools

North Carolina ODRs per 100 remain below the national average in elementary and middle schools for PBIS schools. The high schools remain below the national average, with the removal of an outlier. The outlier school reported ODR rates more than twice that of the next highest school. Additionally, this school reported ODRs seven times more than the national average. This school reported ODRs nine times more than other PBIS high schools in North Carolina (NCDPI, 2012a). See Figure 3.

North Carolina ODR Averages

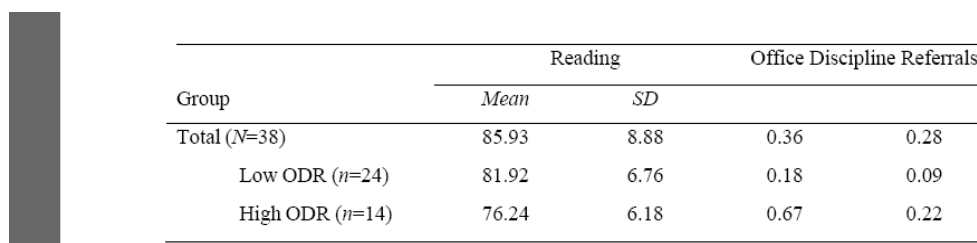
North Carolina PBIS schools have also experienced academic achievement higher than the state average. Schools with suspension rates below the North Carolina average also had academic achievement in the above average range. Additionally, these schools met expected growth, high growth, and AYP targets (NCDPI, 2012a).

According to the NCBIS initiative evaluation report (NCDPI, 2012c), there is a difference in average reading scores in schools that have fewer ODRs. This directly coincides with Figure 3. Fewer office referrals allows for a greater amount of instructional time, positively impacting reading scores.

EOG reading scores and rate of ODRs per day per 100 students were available for 38 schools. The average percent of students reading at mastery (Level III or IV) was 86, and the average ODR rate was 0.36; the correlation between these scores was statistically significant ($r=-0.45, p < .05$) suggesting that higher achievement was evident in schools with lower rates of ODRs. To further investigate this relationship, there was a

comparison in achievement in schools ($n=24$) with below average ODRs to that in schools ($n=14$) with above average ODRs (see Table 2). EOG reading scores ($M=81.92$, $SD=6.76$) in schools with low rates of ODRs were statistically significantly higher ($t=2.58$, $df=36$, $p < .01$) than those ($M=76.24$, $SD=6.18$) in schools with high rates of ODRs.

Comparison of Reading Achievement and ODRs



| Group | Reading | | Office Discipline Referrals | |
|-----------------|---------|------|-----------------------------|------|
| | Mean | SD | | |
| Total (N=38) | 85.93 | 8.88 | 0.36 | 0.28 |
| Low ODR (n=24) | 81.92 | 6.76 | 0.18 | 0.09 |
| High ODR (n=14) | 76.24 | 6.18 | 0.67 | 0.22 |

Figure 4. Office Discipline Referrals and Test Scores.

The above figure indicates that the lower the number of office referrals, the higher the reading score.

Case Study

This research was conducted as a mixed-methods case study. Case study is appropriate for a researcher to utilize when examining a problem that requires thoughtful, explicit exploration (Creswell, 2009). The combination of data sources provides more insight than a single source (Yin, 2009). By utilizing a case study approach, the researcher can better appreciate the specific, unique occurrences at the one location. Case study methodology allows for both quantitative and qualitative approaches to inquiry (Creswell, 2009). In case studies, the researcher is often examining the explanatory questions related to the specific events (Yin, 2009).

While there is ongoing data collection at the state and national levels surrounding

PBIS, the researcher completed this as a single-case study. By selecting a single case, the researcher can examine a single, significant theory (Yin, 2009). By examining the data at Smith Elementary, the researcher can use this information in relation to the current data to determine if Smith Elementary is representative of the expectations of a PBIS school.

Understanding PBIS at this specific site and the impact that PBIS has had on the students and staff requires the researcher to systematically review the data and the persons involved. Both quantitative and qualitative data that are site specific allowed the researcher to utilize a multi-faceted approach to understand the impact of PBIS at this site. Quantitative data have been collected from the time of implementation and are collected at least annually at Smith Elementary.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Overview

In this chapter, the researcher has described the methodology used in this case study conducted at Smith Elementary. The researcher has described the problem that led to the need for a case study, the site selection, the instruments that were used in the study, the procedure for collecting data, the analysis of the data, and the delimitations and limitations of the study.

Problem

Negative behaviors are prevalent in the school environment. Such behaviors can negatively impact the learning environment by taking away instructional time. After reviewing the status of the PBIS program at the selected rural elementary school in North Carolina, the literature surrounding PBIS, behavior modification theory, social skills training, and student-teacher interactions, the following research questions were created. These questions guided the research process.

Research Questions

1. What is the impact of PBIS at Smith Elementary on student behaviors?
2. What is the impact of PBIS at Smith Elementary on the academic environment?
3. What is the impact of PBIS at Smith Elementary on the school environment?

For the purpose of this case study, student behaviors were defined as ODRs, student attendance records, and student interactions with peers and with teachers. For the purpose of this case study, academic environment was defined by student academic achievement, specifically EOG tests. Additionally, instructional delivery was considered part of the academic environment. Instructional delivery was defined as the teacher's

ability to deliver material. School environment was defined as school-wide expectations and rules, student suspensions, expulsions, and acts of violence. Consideration to school safety, communication within the school setting, and the school's response to positive behavior were also included in the definition of school environment.

Site Selection

According to the North Carolina School Report Card information, at the time of the study, Smith Elementary was a K-6 school serving 529 students. The district average was 561 students, and the state average was 499 students. Smith Elementary followed a traditional calendar and was a Title I school. The school had 240 students who were considered low income, equaling 45.54% of their population. Smith Elementary was eligible for school-wide Title I status. The class size for Smith Elementary was the same or slightly above the state average. Smith Elementary was recognized for the 2011-2012 school year as a school of distinction, with 80-90% students on grade level. The school met 17 of 17 annual measurable objectives and met their attendance target. Most teachers at Smith Elementary had 10 or more years teaching experience (71%). One-fifth of the teachers (20%) had 4-10 years teaching experiences, only 9% had 3 or fewer years teaching. Of the 32 teachers at Smith Elementary, 46% had advanced degrees, and seven teachers were Nationally Board Certified teachers.

School implementation of a program such as PBIS often takes many years to complete. At Smith Elementary, at the time of this study, PBIS had been implemented for 6 years. Student suspension for Smith Elementary, per 100 students, averaged 6.43 short-term suspensions for the 2011-2012 school year. Short-term suspensions were 10 days or less. There were no long-term suspensions (longer than 10 days) and no expulsions. Despite current low numbers, which presented as minimal behavior and

discipline concerns, the researcher wanted to examine the impact of PBIS on the personnel involved. Historically, PBIS has been known for reducing ODRs. While the reduction of ODRs is typically positive, the researcher wanted to examine the specific impact on the students and teachers. School safety, school discipline, and overall academic achievement must be examined not only by ODRs. The researcher wanted to review a site that had positive results from PBIS data to determine if there had been an impact on the lives of the individuals at the school. The researcher wanted to know if students enjoyed school, felt safe at school, and felt like they were learning at school. The researcher wanted to learn if teachers felt safe, felt as though they were able to teach, and felt supported. This information cannot be determined by reviewing ODRs. Even PBIS data do not delve into the personal components of those individuals involved as would a case study.

Study Design

This project used a mixed-methods approach to research. This method combined both qualitative and quantitative forms of research (Creswell, 2009). The idea of a mixed approach began in 1959 when researchers Campbell and Fisk combined methods to study the psychological traits of individuals (Creswell, 2009). With the mixed-methods approach, both predetermined and emerging methods are employed for data collection. The research uses both open- and close-ended questions. There are multiple types of data collected to include all possibilities. There was also statistical and text analysis of data (Creswell, 2009). The qualitative component was a way to understand how individuals and unique situations relate to a social problem or concern (Creswell, 2009). This information is usually gathered in a setting relevant to the individual and the problem being examined. In this study, data were gathered by the researcher and examined for

themes, with the researcher offering explanations about the data. The quantitative component allowed for examination of the relationships between variables. These variables were measured with instruments and analyzed using statistical procedures (Creswell, 2009). This project was a case study set at a specific school. A case study is a method of research which allows the researcher to delve into a specific event (Creswell, 2009).

Prior to the study, the researcher gained permission from the district's superintendent (Appendix A) and from the school principal (Appendix B). Historical data were collected and found to be relevant to all three research questions. For the quantitative data, analysis conducted included descriptive statistics. In this process, the data were analyzed for trends through frequencies and percentages. Means and standard deviations were also examined. Teachers received a letter for participation in the study (Appendix C). For the qualitative component, the focus group interviews were transcribed and analyzed using Hycner's (1985) method of analysis. The transcriptions were then coded and categorized in order to identify themes.

Instruments

Surveys were also administered. Permission was acquired from students' parents (Appendix D). Surveys can be useful to collect data in order to examine the data in a quantitative fashion. Surveys can be used to gain participants' perceptions of specific programs or changes (Worthen, Sanders, & Fitzpatrick, 2011). The researcher created a case-specific survey (Appendix E). The researcher then created a correlation for the teacher survey questions with the research questions (Appendix F). Additionally, the researcher developed student survey questions (Appendix G) and created a correlation of questions with the research questions (Appendix H). PBIS data collection tools and the

North Carolina Teacher Working Condition Survey results were utilized by the researcher. This information provided insight into trends and was used in comparison with the qualitative component of the research. NCWISE/Powerschool discipline data and EOG tests were also used to analyze discipline and behavioral trends at the specific site. Focus groups were used to gain additional perspective of participants. Focus groups allow for interactions among individuals and can “stimulate them to state feelings, perceptions, and beliefs that they would not express if interviewed individually” (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007, p. 27). Focus groups also allow individuals to avoid pressures about stating beliefs, as could occur in an individual interview (Gall et al., 2007). The researcher created focus group questions (Appendix I). The researcher then created a correlation of focus group questions with each research question (Appendix J)

Procedure

Prior to beginning this project, the researcher obtained permission from the superintendent of the district and then from the principal of the school involved. The researcher also had communication with the PBIS regional coordinator for this district and with the county’s PBIS coach who worked specifically with this school. The researcher had recently completed trainings with the regional director and the district PBIS coach to gain a better understanding of the PBIS model. The researcher received support from both the regional director and the district PBIS coach.

Surveys

The researcher created a survey for the teachers and for the students. The researcher worked through several drafts of the survey. Originally, the researcher created a survey with approximately 35 questions with various types of questions. This survey was sent to teachers in the county in which the researcher is employed. This county is

adjacent to the county where Smith Elementary is located. The teachers had no connections to Smith Elementary and were unaware of the school where the research was conducted. The teachers were not involved in PBIS at their respective schools. The teachers were sent the surveys to review and not collect responses on the surveys. The teachers provided feedback about the length of the survey, the repetitiveness of some of the questions, and spelling and grammatical errors. The researcher applied the feedback and completed a second, significantly shorter survey with 15 questions. The teachers shared they would not enjoy taking the survey due to the length of the questions and the requirements to answer open-ended questions. Teachers felt that questions were still repetitive. The researcher created a third version of the survey, completely abandoning the first two drafts. The researcher removed all open-ended questions, except for two options to provide comments. The researcher additionally removed any questions related to area taught, number of years taught, or other identifiable information to ensure complete anonymity. Comments were not required. Within the five questions, the teachers were able to use a Likert scale to rate multiple components related to the student behaviors, academic concerns, and the school environment. As defined in the glossary of *Educational Research* (Gall et al., 2007), a Likert scale is “a measure that asks individuals to check their level of agreement with various statements about an attitude object (e.g., strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree or strongly agree)” (p. 41). Teacher feedback on the third draft was the improvement in length, the compacted approach applied through the rating scale, and the straightforward questions. The survey questions were validated by the regional director and district PBIS coach prior to administering the survey. Written permission was collected from the teachers at Smith Elementary. The survey was administered using SurveyMonkey, an online survey

instrument. The survey link was sent through an email to the school personnel. All teachers were invited to participate in the survey. Survey data helped the researcher determine teacher perceptions of student behaviors, academic concerns and achievement, and the impact on the school environment that has occurred using the PBIS system.

The researcher used a similar method when creating the survey for the students. The student survey was provided to all students in third through sixth grades. The students in kindergarten through second grades were not given a survey. The researcher could not ensure that it would be completed anonymously for the students who would not be able to read a survey or be able to complete using a computer without assistance. Additionally, asking teachers to complete a written survey with dictated responses was not feasible. The researcher created several drafts of the student survey. The researcher sent the student survey to a set of teachers not in the county of Smith Elementary for review. The teachers provided feedback about the length of the survey, the language used to describe the questions, and the open-ended responses to the questions. A teacher allowed her own child to review the survey. Her child is in fifth grade and is identified in the Academically/Intellectually Gifted program. Her child questioned the meaning of several words on the survey. The researcher created a revised version of the survey. The survey had five questions where students rate statements using a Likert scale with understandable language or chose from a list. Responses from the survey that were answered strongly agree or agree were considered positive responses. Those answers of strongly disagree or disagree were considered negative responses. Those questions that were answered no opinion were not considered positive or negative. Percentages of positive and negative responses were collected and enabled the researcher to better understand teacher and student perceptions of the program.

There were two response boxes on the survey for student responses. The question asked about why/why not a student follows rules at school and what rewards the student would like to be able to earn at school. This information was provided to the school for future planning and was not analyzed as part of this study. The regional director, PBIS coach, and principal validated the questions prior to administration.

Focus Groups

Focus group questions were created with consideration to the survey questions. The focus group questions allowed for a deeper understanding of survey responses (Appendix G). Originally, 10 teachers were to be randomly selected for invitation into the focus group. Two sessions of focus groups were to be conducted. However, the principal felt that she should open the focus groups to all staff. For this reason, any staff member who chose to participate did so. There were three focus groups. The first focus group had eight participants. The second focus group had seven participants and the third group had nine. According to a guide published by Elliot and Associates (2005), a focus group should be between six and 10 participants, with eight being the ideal number. Written permission was obtained prior to completing the focus group. The sessions were expected to last approximately 30-45 minutes and were conducted at the school. However, the average focus group length was approximately 20 minutes. The focus group allowed for an additional level of data and a way to better understand teacher perceptions. This further validated the information collected in the Teacher Working Conditions Survey, school safety survey, NCWISE/Powerschool data, and the information collected from PBIS data by providing insight into the teacher perceptions. This information was used in comparison to the teacher responses from this school on Standards 4 and 6 of the NCTWCS. Qualitative data responses that were similar to

quantitative responses provided validity into the impact of PBIS. The researcher conducted the focus groups and then they were transcribed. The focus group responses were then coded for themes. By having various sources of data, the data were triangulated; occurrences in multiple sources provide validity to any findings. The focus groups allowed the researcher to add an additional level of data to the study.

Office Discipline Data

Data were collected from the school on specific ODRs. Referrals were coded based on type of incident. These data were compared over time throughout the implementation of PBIS. Additionally, the types of office referrals were displayed in a table. Discipline records of the school prior to implementation were collected in order to show a trend of behaviors prior to PBIS, during implementation, and at full implementation of PBIS.

North Carolina EOG Data

Data collected by NCDPI was utilized. The researcher used EOG tests for the previous 5 years for students in third through fifth grade. There was a comparison of scores from the beginning of the implementation of PBIS until the present. For the 2012-2013 school year, the state issued a renormed test.

Smith Elementary Demographics

Demographic information from the school was collected from NCDPI School Report Card Page. This information provided additional information to the specifics of Smith Elementary and how Smith Elementary compared to other schools in the district and the state.

Additional Instruments

The researcher also used information collected through the Teacher Working

Conditions survey for the past 7 years. The focus was on Standards 4 and 6. Specific questions about the ability to instruct students, academic achievement, school climate, school safety, and overall environment questions were used to generate survey questions. The researcher compared this information to the information collected through surveys, focus groups, and interview questions. The researcher compared scores from all instruments prior to PBIS to current scores to note the impact of the PBIS implementation at this school. Information collected through the PBIS data collection tools was also utilized. Data included PBIS SET data and the PBIS School Safety Survey. Specific questions that related to survey questions and focus groups were compared for similarities in responses.

Data Analysis

Information taken from surveys, PBIS data, and interviews was analyzed. Trends over the years since implementation were thought to indicate a decrease in negative behaviors, a decrease in office referrals, an increase in attendance, and an increase in academic achievement. This study examined data to determine if there were quantitative changes in the data and the teacher perceptions and student perceptions of the role of PBIS in these changes. Quantitative data were examined for trends over a 6-year period. These data included suspensions, attendance, EOG scores, and the analysis of two researcher-created surveys. Qualitative data were analyzed using the Hycner's (1985) method of data analysis. The focus groups were first transcribed and examined for commonality. Themes were identified. Next, the data were examined based on individual responses. From there, data were examined in relation to each research question. Any repetition or areas of redundancy were removed. Data were clustered based on relevant meaning found within the transcriptions. Themes were once again

generated. According to Hycner's (1985) methodology, a second interview is often needed to validate responses. However, the researcher did not conduct a second interview as part of this case study. Lastly, a composite narrative was written concerning the focus group responses (Hycner, 1985).

Delimitations

Although a large percentage of staff, school personnel, and students were offered the opportunity to be involved, this study only accessed personnel at one school. If this study were to be replicated at other schools utilizing PBIS or another behavior modification system, the results may be different. Additional analysis of data completed at additional schools could be completed to give clarity to the performed analysis. Additional involvement by previous teachers, members of the PBIS team, and parents could have added additional information and insight into this specific case study.

Limitations

This study was limited by the uniqueness of the school and the number of students, staff, and administrators present at the school. Staff turnover potentially influenced the impact of the PBIS program. Personal opinions, philosophies, and pedagogy also could have affected the implementation of any program and this study. Community values and parental involvement could have affected this study. Student personalities, family support, and implementation of the PBIS program could have varied based on the population observed.

Summary

Upon the completion of data collection and analyses, the conclusions were compared to data collected from DPI and PBIS data. The researcher examined the results for commonality from all sources. Data from interviews and focus groups provided

additional evidence of specifics related to impact of a behavior modification system, specifically related to those involving interactions of students.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Explanation of Results

Introduction

PBIS has been implemented in schools across the nation. The impact of this positive behavior intervention has been researched at various ages, stages of implementations, and across demographics. The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of PBIS using a more holistic approach. Typically, PBIS success or failure is dependent upon the reduction or lack of ODRs and SET data. However, for this study, the researcher wanted to better understand if the principles of PBIS were being generalized into the school culture and if there were multiple evidences of a positive impact. For this study, the researcher sought to analyze the impact of PBIS on student behaviors, academic environment, and school environment. In this case study, the researcher defined student behaviors as suspensions, attendance, and student interactions with peers and teachers. For the purpose of this study, the researcher defined academic environment by academic achievement, specifically EOG tests and the ability of teachers to engage in instructional delivery. Lastly, the researcher defined school environment by suspension data, acts of violence, acknowledgement, and participation of school-wide expectations, communication, and the school's response to positive behavior.

Chapter 4 provides data concerning each research question. Each question and objectively defined components are discussed through a variety of sources. A brief introduction of the source is followed by analyses of the data. Finally, a summary, including findings from that data source is provided.

Setting

During the time of data collection, there were no major events that the researcher was aware of that could have influenced results or the interpretation of results. During

the time of data collection, there were no noted personnel or staff changes. There were no specific budget cuts, specifically concerning PBIS. Additionally, during the time of data collection there were no school-wide budget cuts that the researcher was made aware of which could have affected results. However, during the time that the data was being collected at the school level, prior to this case study, there was a principal change. At both the state and county level there have been budget cuts through the years from 2009 to present that could have potentially affected staff change and the allotted budget for such programs as PBIS. Nonetheless, PBIS is a countywide initiative; and the researcher was informed that since implementation occurred, the program has not suffered budgetary loss. Based on data collected from the Department of Public Instruction on this school, there has been some teacher turnover, higher than the district and state level. It is possible that new staff may not have been as familiar with the school-wide expectations as former staff. New staff could have also entered the building unaware of the culture and had to choose the level of adaptation they were willing to undergo to mesh into this school's culture.

Demographics

Smith Elementary is a prekindergarten through sixth-grade school that follows a traditional calendar. The school is located in western North Carolina and is considered a Title I school. The school presents as a relatively newer building and is equipped with modern technologies. Based on information from the NCTWCS, most teachers feel they have equipment necessary to complete their jobs. All classrooms have computers and internet access. There is evidence of a variety of technologies in the classrooms. As noted from administration, there is an appropriate amount of parental support and involvement. Most teachers at this school are female. While all teachers are highly

qualified in their specific areas, 34% of the 32 classroom teachers have advanced degrees. Additionally, eight are National Board Certified teachers. The school has a school counselor on staff and the support of a district-wide PBIS coach.

Data Collection

The researcher gathered historical data from a variety of resources including attendance records, ODRs, suspension records, SET data, NCTWC surveys, and EOG test scores. Additionally, the researcher conducted a teacher survey with 18 participants. This is 56% of the teacher population. The researcher also conducted a student survey of third through sixth graders, gathering 64 responses. Lastly, the researcher conducted three focus groups with a total of 24 participants, equally 75% of the teacher populations. Each survey was administered once. The student survey was administered on paper and then answers were put in by hand into SurveyMonkey. The teacher survey was delivered via an emailed link to a survey in SurveyMonkey. The focus groups were held at the school at one location. The focus groups were recorded and then transcribed. Originally, in Chapter 3, the researcher indicated that repeated ANOVAs would be completed. However, the surveys were only administered once. For this reason, a repeated test of any kind would not be appropriate. The administrator felt that the staff would be more responsive to only one survey as the district sends surveys out frequently and typically receives little response. The student survey required parental permission and time from instruction for delivery. The researcher and the administration decided that one survey would be sufficient.

Research Question 1

The researcher will address each research question with a variety of sources. The researcher will introduce the data source and then the findings of that data. For Research

Question 1, the researcher will address the impact of PBIS on student behaviors. The researcher will provide information on ODRs across grade levels and locations. The researcher will also provide attendance information across the respective years. Lastly, the researcher will include information gathered from the student and teacher perception surveys and focus groups.

Suspension Data

Below is a table of suspensions, divided by grade over a 4-year period. There are no district or state comparisons as the purpose of this comparison is to note the delta over the respective period. Throughout the years there appears to be a decline of referrals. From the 2010-2011 school year to the 2013-2014 school year, there has been a 61.8% decrease in referrals. Frequencies of student ODRs are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Frequency of ODRs from 2009-2014

| | 2009-2010 | 2010-2011 | 2011-2012 | 2012-2013 | 2013-2014 |
|-------|---------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Total | Did not submit PBIS ODR data | 317 | 273 | 228 | 196 |

NCDPI uses a formula, mentioned previously in Chapter 2 to determine time lost or gained due to office referrals or the lack thereof. Table 3 presents the total time lost by teacher, administrator, and instructional time, as well as the total number of minutes and days lost due to office referrals. Days were rounded to the nearest whole number. Days were based on a 6.5-hour day. The below table indicates that due to the decrease in office referrals, teachers and administrators have been able to reduce loss of time. Additionally, there has been a decrease in the loss of instructional time. Comparatively,

combined loss of time of teachers, administrators, and instructional time has decreased by 19 days since implementation of PBIS. This directly correlates with the responses of teachers in the teacher perception survey. In question 2h and 4o, teachers responded to questions concerning PBIS and an increase in instructional time. Respectively, teachers agreed 83.3% and 77.78% that PBIS has increased instructional time.

Table 3

Total Amount of Time Lost Due to Office Referrals (Minutes and Days)

| | 2009- 2010 | 2010- 2011 | 2011- 2012 | 2012- 2013 | 2013- 2014 |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| # of ODR | Did not submit | 317 | 273 | 228 | 196 |
| Teacher Time Loss (minutes) | | 3170 | 2730 | 2280 | 1960 |
| Administrator Loss (minutes) | | 6340 | 5460 | 4560 | 3920 |
| Instructional Time Loss (minutes) | | 9510 | 8190 | 6840 | 5880 |
| Total Minutes | | 19,020 | 16,380 | 13,680 | 11,760 |
| Total Days | | 49 | 42 | 35 | 30 |

Teachers also responded agree or strongly agree that PBIS has been beneficial in reducing the number of suspensions. Teachers responded to two separate questions concerning the reduction of suspensions, with 94.44% agreement in one question and 94.64% in the additional question. Teacher perception and data both indicate a decrease in the number of suspensions. The same question was repeated twice in the survey to check to see if teachers responded the same each time. For suspensions and expulsions, each number is the average number per 100 students. Short-term suspension is defined as

10 days or less and long-term suspension is defined by more than 10 days. Data, including definitions, were acquired from the NCDPI School Report Card website. Rates of suspensions between 2009 and 2014 are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Suspension Rates between 2009 and 2014

| | 2009- 2010 | 2010- 2011 | 2011- 2012 | 2012- 2013 | 2013- 2014 |
|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Short-Term Suspension (average per 100 students) | 7 | 6.67 | 6.43 | 3.45 | 6.91 |
| Long Term Suspensions (average per 100 students) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Expulsions | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Enrollment and Attendance Data

Table 5 presents enrollment data and attendance spanning 4 years. These data are important as previously mentioned literature supports that when students have better behavior and are engaged in school, attendance is higher. Enrollment for Smith Elementary has averaged approximately 520 students. Overall delta from the 2008-2009 school year to the 2013-2014 school year is +30 students. As indicated by the table below, attendance rate was already very high. Since the implementation of PBIS, there has been a delta of +/- 1% over a 5-year period. Enrollment and attendance information was acquired from the NCDPI School Report Card website. Despite the relatively small change in attendance, the teacher perception survey, teachers agreed approximately 72% on two separate questions that PBIS improved attendance. Despite no major changes, this does not address the work teachers put forth into getting kids to come to school or

any incentives that are in place to encourage attendance. This school historically offers incentives for attendance that may or may not be related to PBIS. The researcher did not inquire about these incentives during the case study.

Table 5

Enrollment and Attendance Rates between 2009 and 2014

| | 2009-2010 | 2010-2011 | 2011-2012 | 2012-2013 | 2013-2014 |
|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Enrollment | 526 | 525 | 529 | 521 | 523 |
| Attendance | 96% | 96% | 97% | 96% | 96% |

Survey Responses from Teachers for Impact of PBIS on Student Behavior

A majority of teachers agreed that school attendance has improved because of PBIS (13, 72%), and most agreed that students benefit because of PBIS (16, 89%). A majority of teachers agreed that PBIS helps objectively measure student behavior (14, 78%), and that PBIS has improved communication (15, 84%). A majority of teachers agreed that PBIS helped reduce suspensions (17, 94%). Suspension data support the reduction of office referrals.

A majority of teachers agreed that they felt safe at the school (18, 100%). A majority of teachers agreed that their school is a safe place for students and teachers (18, 100%). A majority of teachers agreed that PBIS has helped reduce suspensions (ISS and/or OSS) (17, 94%). This correlates to the actual decline in suspensions and office referrals as reported by the school. This is not only a teacher perception; data support this as a reality for this school. A majority of teachers agreed that PBIS improved academic achievement (13, 72%). For the purpose of this case study, academic

achievement was defined through the examination of EOG test scores. For that area, there has been a decline in academic achievement, despite teacher perception of improved academics. This does not take into consideration any achievements or successes measured through benchmarking, district-wide assessments, or the success that teachers see students make on a day-to-day basis. A majority of teachers agreed that they have a good relationship with most of their students (18, 100%). A majority of teachers agreed that students treat each other with respect (15, 84%). A majority of teachers agreed that PBIS has helped reduce bullying (14, 78%). A majority of teachers agreed that PBIS has reduced student disrespect (14, 78%), fighting (13, 72%) vandalism (12, 66%), and bullying (13, 72%). A majority of teachers agreed that PBIS has improved student-student interactions (14, 78%) and student-teacher interactions (15, 63%). Frequencies and percentages for the teachers' responses to the impact of PBIS on student behaviors are presented in Table 6. While the ODRs do not account for specific behaviors as mentioned in the survey, there has been an overall decline in office referrals. One can deduce that through the reduction of disrespect, fighting, vandalism, and bullying; and an increase in positive interactions, there would be a lesser need for teachers to submit an ODR.

Table 6

Frequencies and Percentages of Teacher Responses to Student Behaviors on Researcher Created Survey

| | % agree | % neutral | % disagree |
|---|---------|-----------|------------|
| 2c) School attendance has improved because of PBIS. | 72 | 28 | 0 |
| 2d) Students benefit because of PBIS | 89 | 11 | 0 |
| 2i) PBIS helps teachers objectively measure student behavior. | 78 | 17 | 6 |
| 2j) PBIS has improved communication | 83 | 11 | 6 |
| 2k) PBIS has helped reduce suspensions (ISS and/or OSS) | 94 | 6 | 0 |
| 3a) I feel safe at this school | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| 3b) PBIS has improved academic achievement | 72 | 22 | 6 |
| 3c) Students treat each other with respect | 83 | 11 | 6 |
| 3e) PBIS has helped reduce suspensions (ISS and/or OSS) | 94 | 6 | 0 |
| 3f) Our school is a safe place for students and teachers. | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| 3i) I have a good relationship with most of my students | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| 3j) Most teachers have positive interactions with students. | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| 3k) Most teachers have good reactions with students. | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| 3m) PBIS has helped reduce bullying. | 78 | 22 | 0 |
| 3p) PBIS has improved attendance. | 72 | 28 | 0 |
| 4a) Reduced student disrespect | 78 | 11 | 6 |
| 4b) Reduced fighting | 72 | 22 | 0 |
| 4c) Reduced vandalism | 67 | 22 | 6 |
| 4e) Decreased bullying | 72 | 17 | 6 |
| 4g) Improved student-student interactions | 78 | 11 | 6 |
| 4h) Improved student-teacher interactions. | 83 | 11 | 0 |
| 4j) Decreased suspensions. | 72 | 22 | 0 |
| 4m) Increased school safety. | 72 | 22 | 0 |

Note. Due to rounding error, not all percentages may sum to 100.

The above survey takes into consideration many of the facets that PBIS claims to address upon implementation: components such as school safety, improved attendance, improved academic achievement, and overall better relationships. Many times this information is only examined through a quantitative approach utilizing PBIS-developed methods of analysis. By translating the above components into a survey, administering it separately from the typical PBIS material, the researcher felt that it would be possible to gain a better understanding into how teachers truly felt about PBIS. Based on the above survey, many teachers either agree or strongly agree that PBIS is positively affecting the

school environment.

Student Behaviors Composite Score (Teachers)

A composite score was created from the 23 related survey questions for teachers' perceptions of student behaviors with the implementation of the PBIS. Responses from the 23 Likert-scaled response were given a numerical coding, with strongly disagree=1 and strongly agree=5. Taking an average of the Likert-scaled responses allowed the researcher to interpret teachers' collective perceptions. Scores for teachers' perceptions of student behaviors ranged from 3.39 to 5.00, with $M=4.21$ and $SD=0.48$. Due to the mean response falling between agree and strongly agree, teachers were generally favorable with the positive impact of the PBIS on student behavior. Means and standard deviation for teachers' perceptions of impact of PBIS on student behavior are presented in Table 7.

Table 7

Means and Standard Deviations of Teacher Perceptions of Impact of PBIS on Student Behavior

| Composite Scores | Min. | Max. | M | SD |
|--|------|------|------|------|
| Impact of PBIS on student behaviors (teachers) | 3.39 | 5.00 | 4.21 | 0.48 |

Survey Responses from Students for Impact of PBIS on Student Behavior

As similar to the reason for the teacher perception survey, the researcher sought to better understand student perception concerning PBIS. Aside from basic questions for the SET, student perceptions are not often taken into consideration when the success or failure of PBIS is being studied. The researcher sought to create a student-friendly survey addressing many of the notable factors of PBIS and the surveying of the students

to see their opinion. The questions were generic in nature, not specific to PBIS. For example, a majority of students agreed that teachers treat them fairly (58, 91%) and that they want to come to school (50, 78%). A majority of students agreed that they have friends at school (60, 97%); and the majority of students agreed that they enjoy coming to school (51, 80%), they try to follow the rules at school (62, 97%), and they are rewarded for good behavior (43, 67%). A majority of students neither agreed nor disagreed that most students misbehave at school (32, 50%). A majority of students agreed that they have a good relationship with most of their teachers (57, 89%). A majority of students agreed that they feel safe at school (61, 95%). These components directly correlate to the components of PBIS. Most students answered favorably concerning their school environment.

A majority of students had sometimes seen other students bullied or mistreated (36, 56%), but most reported that they had never bullied other students (57, 89%). A majority of students had never been bullied at school (41, 64%). A majority of students had not hit or threatened to hit another student (59, 92%). A majority of students indicated that they sometimes used profanity and/or inappropriate language at school (35, 55%). A majority of students indicated they were sometimes disrespectful to teachers (35, 55%). A majority of students never hit or threatened to hit teachers (61, 95%). A majority of students sometimes made fun of others at school (32, 50%). A majority of students indicated that sometimes students received ISS or OSS for negative behavior (42, 66%). A majority of students never said bad things about others on Facebook and/or Twitter (37, 58%). A majority of students never said bad things about others using cell phones (37, 58%). A majority of students sometimes had good attendance (38, 59%).

Frequencies and percentages for the students' responses to the impact of PBIS on student

behaviors are presented in Table 8. These results are indicative of PBIS and a successful implementation. The researcher wanted to examine such data to see how students really felt about school. If students hated school, were fearful of coming to school, and did not feel as though they were able to learn, it could be deduced that PBIS was not working. However, for the majority, students feel good about coming to school and are not fearful.

Table 8

Frequencies and Percentages of Student Responses to Student Behaviors

| Demographic | % agree | % neutral | % disagree |
|---|---------|-----------|------------|
| 2a) Teachers treat students fairly. | 91 | 8 | 2 |
| 2b) I feel safe at school. | 95 | 3 | 2 |
| 2c) I try to follow the rules at school. | 97 | 3 | 0 |
| 2d) I am rewarded for good behavior. | 67 | 16 | 13 |
| 2e) I want to come to school. | 78 | 17 | 5 |
| 2h) I have friends at this school. | 97 | 0 | 3 |
| 2i) I enjoy coming to school. | 80 | 17 | 3 |
| 2l) A lot of students misbehave at school. | 20 | 50 | 30 |
| 2m) I have a good relationship with most of my teachers. | 89 | 8 | 3 |
| 5a) I have seen other students bullied or mistreated. | 38 | 56 | 3 |
| 5b) I have bullied other students. | 2 | 6 | 89 |
| 5c) I have been bullied at school. | 3 | 28 | 64 |
| 5d) I have hit or threatened to hit another student. | 0 | 5 | 92 |
| 5e) Students use profanity and/or inappropriate language (bad words) at school. | 6 | 55 | 36 |
| 5f) Students are disrespectful to teachers | 2 | 55 | 41 |
| 5g) Students hit or threaten to hit teachers. | 0 | 2 | 95 |
| 5h) Students make fun of others at school. | 3 | 50 | 41 |
| 5j) Students receive ISS or OSS for negative (bad) behavior. | 6 | 66 | 23 |
| 5l) Students say bad things about others on Facebook and/or Twitter. | 8 | 25 | 58 |
| 5m) Students say bad things about others using cell phones. | 8 | 30 | 58 |
| 5n) Most students are at school most of the time. Most students have good attendance. | 36 | 59 | 2 |

Note. Due to rounding error, not all percentages may sum to 100.

This survey once again indicates that there has been a successful implementation of interventions into the school settings. Students feel safe; like they can learn at school; and have, overall, good relationships with peers and students. Since the researcher did not ask specifically about PBIS in the questions, one must only deduce that the positive

impacts are in correlation to PBIS. However, it cannot be ruled out that another form of intervention, school culture, and teacher expectations could not have been the driving force. Nonetheless, since this information directly correlates with teacher perceptions of PBIS, the researcher deduced that it was in relation to PBIS.

Student Behaviors Composite Score (Students)

A composite score was created from the 21 related survey questions for students' perceptions of student behaviors with the implementation of the PBIS. Responses from the Likert-scaled response were given a numerical coding with multiple types of questions being asked. Possible scores ranged from 1 to 3, with I do not know the rules=1 and I know all the rules=3. Possible scores ranged from 1 to 3, disagree=1 and agree=3. Possible scores ranged from 1 to 3, with I do not feel safe=1 and I feel safe=3. Possible scores ranged from 1 to 3, with 1=never and 3=all the time. Taking an average of the Likert-scaled responses allowed the researcher to interpret students' collective perceptions. A score of 2 corresponded with a neutral response. Scores for students' perceptions of student behaviors ranged from 1.67 to 2.90, with $M=2.53$ and $SD=0.19$. Due to the mean response falling between Neutral and Agree, students were generally favorable with the positive impact of the PBIS on student behavior. Means and standard deviation for students' perceptions of the impact of PBIS on student behavior are presented in Table 9.

Table 9

Means and Standard Deviations of Students Perceptions of Impact of PBIS on Student Behavior

| Composite Scores | Min. | Max. | M | SD |
|--|------|------|------|------|
| Impact of PBIS on student behaviors (students) | 1.67 | 2.90 | 2.53 | 0.19 |

Focus Group Qualitative Analysis

The focus group interviews were transcribed and analyzed using Hycner's (1985) method of analysis. The interviews were uploaded into NVivo 10 to aid in the organization of data. The interviews were read and reread to gain familiarity with the narrative. The researcher then began to break up the narrative utterances into chunks and organize them into delineated units of meaning. Next, the researcher clustered the codes into associated categories. Using the clusters, the researcher uncovered themes that reflected the experiences of the participants. These themes are explained with excerpts from the focus group data integrated into the analysis. After implementing a school-wide program, the participants of the focus groups identified three main themes that explicated student behavior. The participants identified the themes as accountability, empowers students, and increases positive behaviors. As seen in the comments made during the focus groups, the instructional staff can directly link what they see and hear students doing to the behavioral curriculum they employ as part of the PBIS system.

Accountability. A major theme noted by a majority of the participants was that of accountability. The students are explicitly taught the PBIS curriculum.

With the kids, they'll always say, "I'll be safe;" "I'll be responsible." I think in the kids' terms, it all ties in to a giant overlap because they think of their safety as

“I’m not supposed to go down the hall” or “I’m not supposed to go down the slide backwards,” or “I’m not supposed to with my cafeteria tray,” “I’m supposed to keep my hands to myself,” which are all the habits that are taught through the Time to Teach and through the Happy Kids, which all overlap or weave through PBIS.

So I’m thinking that, I think like [teacher X] too, but I think the kids think about those things, because those are the things, we talk to them about. Those are practices we talk about, like how to handle themselves in the lunchroom, and those safe actions.

And the Seven Habits puts more accountability on them too. Whereas Time to Teach is more like “this is what it looks like, this is what it sounds like.” But the Seven Habits is like what you said, [it] gives accountability.

Teachers indicted that students displayed an increased awareness of their behaviors, the impact of those behaviors upon others, and their individual responsibility for their behavioral choices. They had a well-defined idea of the rules and expectations and were able to know when they or a peer had committed an infraction, as well as the consequences for that behavior. Teachers stated,

One of the things I like about it and this is the first school with been with PBIS, is that it empowers students to know that they have the opportunity to choose to be safe, to be responsible, and to be a learner. I make those choices. So even when I have kids write notes that they need to talk to somebody and somebody said this because it’s disrespectful, or somebody is saying these words to them and they feel so empowered. They know they need to talk to somebody to make a better choice, and they know it's not acceptable. So instead of internalizing it, they

know that this is not an environment that condones this, somebody needs to help.

Because nobody heard his (sic) say those words, so let me bring it to your attention. So I feel that somebody who is not empowered would not do that.

Somebody who is not aware of what the expectations are would not do that. I like seeing kids taking the responsibility of holding other people accountable of better behavior.

As the participant indicated, students have become a part of the PBIS system. They understand what behaviors are acceptable in the school environment and which behaviors are not. Another teacher remarked,

I notice all kinds of things. I was doing reading group this week and one of the kids popped up and said, “Oh, they were thinking ‘win/win,’” which is one of the habits that we tie in with PBIS, when everybody can win a situation. “Win/win” it is a compromise basically, how can everybody come out a winner in that situation. So, I think they’ve internalized it because we’ve done it so much and so well and so throughout, because I think we do focus on it. It’s not just like we randomly pick them, every month it’s a focus and everybody is expected to focus on that for a month, and then the next month. We’ve been doing it for several years now and it’s incorporating Happy Kids with the PBIS, they are really starting to internalize it.

The students have learned the verbiage to use to describe behavior and use it to explain their behavior or what they see happening around them. They have internalized the behavioral expectations of the PBIS system and are comfortable utilizing them. It also gave the students a frame of reference so that when they were not meeting expectations they could be held accountable. For example, a teacher stated,

I keep my charts up, and I can point to them on my board and I can say, in August “you told me when you were a good listener here is what you're doing, and you're not doing that right now.” And they are like “Oh, we're not keeping our hands still, “or “We are not focusing on the teacher.”

Another teacher chimed in and said,

I have the chart too, with the four rules, and I say, “Which class rule do you think you broke?” And they can just tell you. It might say just be a good learner, or be responsible or be respectful but they know what all of those mean, and they can say be responsible. So they connect with it so they do know. The knowledge students learned, combined with the control they felt, enabled them to make positive behavioral decisions and choices and also to acknowledge when they do not meet expectations. It gave teachers a reference point to use when redirecting behavior. The standards are constant and utilize the PBIS system and prompts. This enabled teachers to hold students accountable for behavioral expectations that the students have been explicitly taught. This enabled the teachers to remind students of appropriate behavior, often by simply pointing to the chart, and not interrupting the flow of instruction.

The teachers also feel empowered by the curriculum. The behavioral definitions are operationalized and can be used as a point of reference when dealing with behavioral issues. One of the participants remarked,

I like what it does for kids; it makes them more reflective too. I think we can get different kids and we can ask them to reflect on their behavior and they can pinpoint which one of those things on the matrix they were not adhering too. And I like the fact that you know, the whole concept, like if they are not good in math

that we teach it. And it gives us an opportunity to really do what we say we've been learning. We have them reevaluate their behavior and learn from it, it's just not a punitive element. They have always got an opportunity to learn from their behavior even if it's a consequence. So I like that atmosphere.

This PBIS framework enables students to be involved in reflective thought and analysis of their behavior. Because of this, they are able to hold themselves accountable in a way that is positive and promotes personal growth. Participants remarked, "We have them reevaluate their behavior and learn from it, it's just not a punitive element" and "it gives us an opportunity to really do what we say we've been learning." The PBIS environment has taught them how to hold themselves and others accountable but to do so in a way that is helpful.

Empowers students. Several of the participants spoke of the positive impact PBIS had on student agency. Students felt empowered, especially in situations where they required aid. They were given the words they needed to communicate clearly.

I think it has because I think it gives them the verbiage to be able to use, whereas if they weren't hearing the discussions that we were having or the expectations that we were having, I don't know that they would have the means to communicate to one another.

"You are doing this and that is being proactive" or "you are listening to me first before you are saying something," so they've picked up on those habits and they know that those go with expectations.

The students were able to articulate and explain how they were able to make positive choices; and that if something negative occurred, rather than internalizing the incident, they could identify the behavior as unacceptable and challenge the peer engaged in the

behavior.

The students are required to be responsible for their behaviors. They have clear expectations that are set and do not change. This stability enables them to focus their energy into academics and behavior. The participants liked the fact that students were given power, they were explicitly taught that they were responsible for their behavior, and that they could control themselves. The students were also taught to remind and help each other meet behavioral expectations. The curriculum also taught students to stand up for what they felt was correct and not to be influenced or pushed around by others.

Increases positive behaviors. The focus group participants noted that they had observed an increase in positive behavior throughout the school. Students felt equipped to handle themselves and their peers and, thus, were able to make appropriate behavioral choices. Participants noted, “We’ve had nothing that would be unsafe. Even the upper grades, it’s down so much. Even before that, we have had [fewer] fights.” They credited PBIS and said, “it kind of stops it before it gets to safety”; in other words, they are able to address the behaviors before safety is a concern. They also noted that “we [the school as a whole] have decreased our office referrals as well.”

The focus groups were able to provide some specific insight and dialogue into teacher perceptions concerning PBIS. Teachers were able to talk about what aspects of PBIS they felt were effective and helpful. The researcher also learned additional programs such as the 7 Healthy Habits of Happy Kids that have been integrated into the PBIS hierarchy of interventions.

This research study gave teachers the opportunity to dialogue about PBIS. Some participants discussed consistency and others discussed empowerment; regardless, teachers for the most part felt as if the program was effective and aided them in the

classroom setting. Overall, the teachers reported positive impacts on student behavior and achievement.

Research Question 2

The researcher will address each research question with a variety of sources. The researcher will introduce the data source and then the findings of that data. For Research Question 2, the researcher will address the impact of PBIS on the academic environment. The researcher will provide information on academic achievement, specifically EOG tests for Grades 3-6 over time. Lastly, the researcher will include information gathered from the student and teacher perception surveys and focus groups concerning ability to engage in instructional delivery.

EOG Test Scores

Below is a table depicting EOG test scores over a 4-year period. These tests are administered by NCDPI each year. These data should be considered as valid due to the tests being administered by an outside entity across the State of North Carolina.

Table 10

Smith Elementary EOG Scores

| | 2009-2010 | 2010-2011 | 2011-2012 | 2012-2013 | 2013-2014 |
|-------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| 3rd grade reading | 67.7% | 71.2% | 68.4% | 42.7% | 76.4% |
| 3rd grade math | 85.5% | 76.8% | 84.3% | 58.7% | 76.3% |
| 4th grade reading | 76.7% | 71.6% | 72.7% | 46.0% | 61.5% |
| 4th grade math | 86.1% | 81.2% | 88.2% | 46.0% | 68.0% +<5% |
| 5th grade reading | 75.4% | 63.9% | 69.5% | 41.3% | 51.1% +<5% |
| 5th grade math | 92.3% | 83.5% | 87.1% | 40.0% | 50.0% +<5% |
| 6th grade reading | 67.2% | 83.3% | 83.3% | 50.8% | 46.5% +<5% |
| 6th grade math | 91.5% | 95.6% | 90.1% | 52.5% | 67.2% |

With consideration given to the dramatic decrease in scores, the researcher felt it necessary to provide information as to who these scores compared to the district and state level. Table 11 provides this information by grade for school, district, and state for the 2012-2013 school year.

Table 11

Comparison of EOG Scores

| 2012-2013 | Reading 3rd | Math 3 rd | Reading 4th | Math 4th | Reading 5th | Math 5th | Reading 6th | Math 6th |
|---------------------|----------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|
| Smith Elementary | 42.7% | 58.7% | 46% | 46% | 41.3% | 40% | 50.8% | 52.5% |
| District | 41.9% | 40.8% | 41% | 46.3% | 38% | 48.7% | 45.4% | 34.9% |
| State | 45.2% | 46.8% | 43.7% | 47.6% | 39.5% | 47.7% | 46.4% | 38.9% |

Table 11 indicates that despite extremely low scores, the scores were comparable with those of the district and state levels. Scores, with the exception of fourth-grade math and fifth-grade math, were higher than the district's average scores. Smith Elementary scored higher than the state average in third-grade math, fourth-grade reading, fifth-grade reading, sixth-grade reading, and sixth-grade math. Having the additional information provides greater insight into these seemingly low test scores.

PBIS is often associated with improved behaviors that create a better learning environment for students. It should be noted that the year 2012-2013 was a renorming year for the state and typically all schools saw significant drops in test scores. It should also be noted that 2013-2014 included levels 3, 4, and 5. Overall, scores declined over the 4 years despite implementation of PBIS and a reduction in ODRs. Aside from the third-grade reading scores, there has been a decline in scores since 2009. Prior to the renorming year, aside from sixth-grade reading, most grade levels saw a decline in scores. Those who did not decline made less than 2% improvement between the years.

NCTWCS

According to the website <http://www.ncteachingconditions.org>, the NCTWCS is an anonymous statewide survey of licensed school-based educators to assess teaching conditions at the school, district, and state levels. Administration of NCTWCS first began in 2002 as part of the Governor's Teacher Working Conditions Initiative. Surveys are conducted biennially. Smith Elementary completed NCTWC from 2008, 2010, 2012, and 2014. The researcher considered a variety of questions that correlated with researcher questions and were repeated over the years. The below questions are most related to the topics explored in Research Question 2.

Table 12

NCTWCS Results

| Year of Administration | 2008 | 2010 | 2012 | 2014 |
|---|-------------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Q2.1F- Teachers have sufficient instructional time to meet the needs of all students. | no correlating question | 85.7% | 51.4% | 80% |
| Q2.1C Teachers are allowed to focus on educating students with minimal interruptions. Q2.1D on the 2008 survey. | 88% | 88.1% | 75% | 85.7% |

The above percentages are calculated based on those who chose agree or strongly agree. The researcher took questions from the 4 years of administration of the survey, created a table of corresponding questions, and noted the percentages of those in agreement. For both questions, there has been an overall decline in teacher perceptions of their ability to meet the needs of students and their ability to educate students with minimal distractions. There was a considerable decline, dropping over 30% in the 2

years between 2010 and 2012, in teachers' ability to meet the educational needs of students. Additionally, there was nearly a 13% drop in teachers' perception of their ability to educate students with minimal disruptions during the same period of 2010-2012. The researcher had further questions concerning the events of this time, specifically if there were other factors that would have influenced this dramatic drop. One thought was the introduction of Common Core. However, Common Core was not implemented in North Carolina until after June 2012. This survey would have been administered prior to the inception of Common Core Standards. There is no other explanation for this, aside from possible increased expectations due to the implementation stages of PBIS. The researcher was given no other anecdotal records or information concerning possible staff changes or occurrences during this time that would warrant such a significant change in teacher's perceptions.

In response to the two above-mentioned questions, the researcher inquired through the Teacher Perception survey concerning instructional time and classroom interruptions. In the Teacher Perception survey, administered once at the school level, 88.8% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that PBIS had increased instructional time (Question 2H). A similar question was asked (4o) concerning PBIS and increased instructional time. In response to that specific question, 77.78% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that PBIS had positively affected the school. Teachers were also surveyed concerning their ability to teach without distractions. Of teachers surveyed, 82.5% agreed or strongly agreed they were able to teach without negative behavioral interruptions. A response of 82.5% of teachers is comparable to the 85.7% of teachers who responded to the NCTWC survey in the spring of 2014. This directly correlates to the reduction of ODRs and the potential for earning time back into the school day.

Through the reduction of ODRs, teachers are better able to spend time in their classrooms teaching.

A majority of teachers agreed that students benefit because of PBIS (16, 89%). A majority of teachers agreed that they feel like they can teach without negative behaviors interrupting the classroom (14, 78%). A majority of teachers agreed that PBIS has helped improve academic achievement (13, 72%). A majority of teachers agreed that PBIS has helped increase instruction time in the classroom (14, 78%). A majority of teachers agreed that PBIS has increased work effort of students (12, 67%). Frequencies and percentages for the teachers' responses to the impact of PBIS on academic environment are presented in Table 13. As earlier mentioned, academic achievement was only defined and analyzed based on EOG tests for this case study. Table 13 examines teacher perceptions concerning PBIS and the academic environment.

Table 13

Frequencies and Percentages of Teacher Responses to Academic Environment

| Demographic | % agree | % neutral | % disagree |
|--|---------|-----------|------------|
| 2d) Students benefit because of PBIS. | 89 | 11 | 0 |
| 3d) I feel like I can teach without negative behaviors interrupting the classroom. | 78 | 6 | 11 |
| 3l) PBIS has helped improve academic achievement. | 72 | 22 | 6 |
| 3o) PBIS has helped increase instruction time in the classroom. | 78 | 17 | 6 |
| 4d) Increased work effort of students. | 67 | 22 | 6 |
| 4f) Increased attendance. | 72 | 22 | 0 |
| 4i) Improved academic achievement. | 67 | 17 | 11 |

Note. Due to rounding error, not all percentages may sum to 100.

Academic Environment Composite Score (Teachers)

A composite score was created from the seven related survey questions for teachers' perceptions of the impact of the PBIS on the academic environment. Responses from the Likert-scaled response were given a numerical coding, with strongly disagree=1 and strongly agree=5. Taking an average of the Likert-scaled responses will allow the researcher to interpret teachers' collective perceptions. Scores for teachers' perceptions of the impact of the PBIS on the academic environment ranged from 2.57 to 5.00, with $M=4.01$ and $SD=0.69$. Due to the mean response falling between agree and strongly agree, teachers were generally favorable with the positive impact of the PBIS on academic environment. Means and standard deviation for teachers' perceptions of impact

of PBIS on academic environment are presented in Table 14.

Table 14

Means and Standard Deviations of Teacher Perceptions of Impact of PBIS on Academic Environment

| Composite Scores | Min. | Max. | M | SD |
|---|------|------|------|------|
| Impact of PBIS on academic environment (teachers) | 2.57 | 5.00 | 4.01 | 0.69 |

Survey Responses from Students for Impact of PBIS on Academic Environment

Most students agreed that teachers can teach without students misbehaving (28, 44%). A majority of students indicated that sometimes it was hard to learn in class because students were not listening to the teachers (44, 69%). Frequencies and percentages for the students' responses to the impact of PBIS on academic environment are presented in Table 15.

Table 15

Frequencies and Percentages of Students Responses to Academic Environment

| Demographic | % agree | % neutral | % disagree |
|--|---------|-----------|------------|
| 2j) My teachers can teach without students misbehaving. | 44 | 39 | 16 |
| 5i) It is hard to learn in class because students are not listening to the teachers. | 9 | 69 | 17 |

Note. Due to rounding error, not all percentages may sum to 100.

Academic Environment Composite Score (Students)

A composite score was created from the two related survey questions for students' perceptions of academic environment with the implementation of the PBIS. Responses

from the Likert-scaled response were given a numerical coding, with multiple types of questions being asked. Possible scores ranged from 1 to 3, with I do not know the rules=1 and I know all the rules=3. Possible scores ranged from 1 to 3, disagree=1 and agree=3. Possible scores ranged from 1 to 3, with I do not feel safe=1 and I feel safe=3. Possible scores ranged from 1 to 3, with 1=never and 3=all the time. A score of 2 corresponded with a neutral response. Taking an average of the Likert-scaled responses allowed the researcher to interpret students' collective perceptions. Scores for students' perceptions of academic environment ranged from 1.00 to 3.00, with $M=2.20$ and $SD=0.50$. Due to the mean response falling between neutral and agree, students were generally favorable with the positive impact of the PBIS on academic environment. Means and standard deviation for students' perceptions of impact of PBIS on academic environment are presented in Table 16.

Table 16

Means and Standard Deviations of Students' Perceptions of Impact of PBIS on Academic Environment

| Composite Scores | Min. | Max. | M | SD |
|---|------|------|------|------|
| Impact of PBIS on academic environment (students) | 1.00 | 3.00 | 2.20 | 0.50 |

Focus Group Qualitative Analysis

After analysis of the focus group responses, the researcher was able to identify several themes. The themes included positive impact, saves time, and creates a positive leaning environment.

Positive impact. Members of Focus Groups 1 and 2 spoke about the positive impact of PBIS in the school system and noted that “[the students] are on task more than

not.” The students felt responsible for their behavior and academics. Statements included

[In the] “data notebook,” they have a goal-setting piece in there, we track any kind of data, spelling test, class grades, they graph in different ways, they go back and reflect on how they are doing and set new goals for each nine weeks. So there is a lot of accountability of “before this was my grade, but now my grade is here and this is my goal.” And we did all that with the “data notebook,” which has “this is where I am, this is my goal, and when you put all that together, this is what has worked.”

Using the notebook was a collaborative event. The student recorded data throughout a 9-week period and used the information in conjunction with their teachers to see where they had done well and where they needed to improve. The ability to quantify their actions helped them to understand the impact of behavior upon their academic achievement. The students also used the notebooks to illustrate positive changes in behavior and academics to teachers and parents during conferences. The student sits down with the parents and teachers to say, “this is where I was, this is what I think happened here, and look how much I’ve improved in this area.”

Saves time. Teachers in Focus Groups 1 and 2 reported that use of PBIS helped them conserve time in their classrooms. They believed that they needed to spend less time managing behavior and were able to spend more time engaged in pedagogy. They were able to focus on the academic lesson rather than a series of behaviors that kept the class off track and unable to move forward. Comments from the group included

But I think it might have reduced some time that we would’ve talked about some piddly things. Where you wasted this 10 minutes where you dealt with that

behavior, because you taught those expectations at the beginning of the year. I think it has decreased that.

I think I spend less time fussing, and redirecting. Because they know the expectation and they know when it's not exactly what to do, and I don't have to waste time figuring that out.

Because they know the expectation and they know when it's not exactly what to do, and I don't have to waste time figuring that out.

The teachers noticed that the time that they might have lost getting students settled and ready to learn or time they spent managing small behavior issues had been reduced. The students were aware of the expectations and could comply. The two groups also spoke about the time they gained because they did not have to create a behavior management system for their classrooms.

It's been a good. [Before PBIS], was trying to do these things on my own, but you were always trying to come up with positive ways to reward and reinforce.

So I liked the fact that we have a school-wide program now that I'm not trying to come up with everything myself. I hope that, I'm in kindergarten, but I hope that you know other people see it when they move up that they've had that start the same way. So I feel like it's more of an organized structure to do stuff that I was already trying to do.

The structure of the program that was created, freed the participants to focus on teaching and managing the classroom rather than attempting to create plans for behavior management. One of the participants stated,

But the nice thing is that people have organization lessons for us and they provide us with the means to do. So we don't have to hunt for everything, we've got our

resources there and it makes it quicker and we don't have to spend as much time. Having preplanned behavioral lessons enabled the participants to easily incorporate the ideas of PBIS without having to spend valuable planning or instruction time. One of the participants said, "It just really helps to know that I don't have to plan these huge big things." Because it was a school-wide behavioral system, students were familiar with expectations, and they all worked together towards common goals. The participants felt this helped the students buy into the program. A teacher remarked,

I just agree, with being in schools before where there is not a school-wide discipline plan, where there is not school-wide rewards and I definitely prefer whatever you call it, I like that we are all working towards the same goal. Like right now we are all working together to go to the movies and the park, and every kid in the school at the beginning of the nine weeks has the same chance to go.

Everybody has an equal chance and it's not, really and truly, the administration? The teachers liked that every student had a chance to earn a reward and participate in the program. Another way participants were able to save time was to teach PBIS in the beginning of the school year. One of the participants indicated,

Those are the hallway expectations, and bathroom expectations, and we do put a lot of time in it at the beginning of the year but hopefully it pays off and we don't have to go back and keep reteaching hallway expectations and lunchroom expectations.

Another participant noted, "At the beginning of the year, we all start out by teaching certain lessons, for hallway behavior, classroom behavior, playground behavior, and so that we start out with consistent rules throughout the school." This early investment of time ended up saving time for the instructors. Everyone was able to learn the

expectations and understand how they were supposed to behave. Later in the year, students generally needed only a slight reminder to remember appropriate behaviors. The above focus group quotes and responses, in regards to Research Question 2, indicated that teachers were favorable to PBIS. They indicated that they found that the program saves time and levels the playing field. The participants felt that PBIS created commonality and cohesion amongst teachers and in the school environment. The expectations were school-wide, and any teacher was able to comment or intervene in any setting, creating a uniform behavioral system that was understood by all members of the school community.

Research Question 3

The researcher will address each research question with a variety of sources. The researcher will introduce the data source and then the findings of that data. For Research Question 3, the researcher will address the impact of PBIS on school environment. The researcher will provide information on suspensions, acts of violence, school safety, and school-wide expectations. Lastly, the researcher will include information gathered from the student and teacher perception surveys and focus groups concerning safety, communication, and the school's response to positive behavior.

SET Data

SET data is a component of PBIS to measure validity and fidelity of the program, specifically during the early stages of implementation. SET data is collected by an outside rater, who enters the school and collects data based on the below components.

Table 17

SET Data at Smith Elementary

| Area Observed | 2009-2010 | 2010-2011 | 2011-2012 | 2012-2013 | 2013-2014 |
|------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Expectations Defined | Began PBIS – no reporting | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Expectations Taught | | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Reward System | | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Violations System | | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Decision Making | | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Management | | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| District support | | 50% (no budget allocated for PBIS) | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Implementation Average | | 93% | 100% | 100% | 100% |

The above data are important when considering this school in a case study and the overall impact of PBIS. Having a high rate of fidelity determined by a reliable source adds to the validity of data collected within this study.

The researcher inquired via the Teacher Perception Survey concerning school-wide rules and expectations. One hundred percent of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that there are specific school-wide expectations. This directly correlates to the 100% SET scores achieved by the school.

Acts of Violence

Below is a table indicating acts of violence. The number of acts of violence at each school is reported to the state. In order to be determined as an act of violence, the event must meet certain criterion. This is not based on the evaluation of the event by school staff but by state-determined criterion to better be able to compare across schools and districts.

Table 18

Acts of Violence at Smith Elementary

| | 2009-2010 | 2010-2011 | 2011-2012 | 2012-2013 | 2013-2014 |
|------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Acts of Violence | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |

The above table indicates that the acts of violence have been consistently low throughout the years.

NCTWCS

Once implementation has been established with fidelity, the researcher examined a state-administered survey to look for changes throughout the respective years. The researcher took questions from the 4 years of surveying and examined for any major deltas in the information.

Table 19

Student Survey Results

| Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about managing student conduct in your school. | | | | | |
|---|-------------------------|------|-------|-------|-------|
| | | 2008 | 2010 | 2012 | 2014 |
| a. Students at this school understand expectations for their conduct. | no correlating question | | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| b. Students at this school follow rules of conduct. | no correlating question | | 100% | 97.1% | 94.4% |
| c. Policies and procedures about student conduct are clearly understood by the faculty. | no correlating question | | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| d. School administrators consistently enforce rules for student conduct.//Q5.1.E | | 94% | 100% | 97.1% | 100% |
| e. School administrators support teachers' efforts to maintain discipline in the classroom. /Q5.1.F | | 94% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| f. Teachers consistently enforce rules for student conduct. | no correlating question | | 100% | 97.1% | 94.4% |
| g. The faculty work in a school environment that is safe. /Q3.1F (2008) | | 97% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Q7.1D The school leadership consistently supports teachers./ Q2.1H | | 94% | 100% | 100% | 94% |
| Q.10.6 overall my school is a good place to work and learn. /Q7.2 (2008) | | 91% | 92.9% | 91.7% | 97.1% |

The above table represents responses through 8 years, considering the 2008 survey was administered with consideration given to the previous years. It should be noted that there was staff turnover during that period and one change in administration. It should be noted that even prior to implementation, 100% of teachers either agreed or strongly agreed that students understand the school expectations. However, since 2008, spanning the time of implementation, teachers felt that only 94.4% of the students follow rules. This is a decline from the 2008 survey where teachers felt that 100% of the students followed rules. The reason for this decline is not specifically known, but it could be due to the increased awareness of rules and expectations. Teachers may now hold students more accountable for rules, whereas previously they were not. Coinciding with this theory is data which indicate that 100% of teachers agree or strongly agree, since 2008, that policies and procedures are understood by students. Another decline in agreement was found in the statement that teachers consistently enforce rules for student conduct. Initially, in 2008, teachers agreed 100% that teachers enforced rules. Throughout the years, it dropped to 97.1% to 94.4% in 2014. One possible theory can be applied to this specific decline. It is possible that teachers are more aware of the consistent expectations and are more keenly aware of those who stray from the rules. Despite the belief that all teachers are not consistently following rules, teacher perceptions of administrators consistently enforcing rules has improved. In 2008, only 94% of teachers agreed that administrators consistently enforced rules. However, by 2014, 100% of teachers surveyed felt that administration consistently enforced rules. Another positive improvement is the teacher perception of administration's support of teacher efforts. In 2008, only 94% of teachers felt they received the support of administration, as compared to the 100% in 2014; this is in contrast to the belief that

school leadership supports staff consistently. There was no operational definition provided to distinguish between school leadership and administration. Nonetheless, in 2008, 94% of teachers agreed that school leadership supports staff consistently. That increased in 2010 and 2012 to 100% and then fell in 2014 to 94%.

School safety and feeling the school is a good place to work and learn are other factors coincided in the NCTWCS. In 2008, only 97% of teachers agreed that the school was a safe environment. However, in the subsequent years, 2010, 2012, and 2014, 100% of teachers agreed that the school was a safe environment. Additionally, there was improvement in how teachers felt about the overall atmosphere of work. In 2008, only 91% of teachers agreed that the school was a good place to learn and work. This increased slightly in 2010 to 92.9% but fell back to 91.7% in 2012. However, there was a dramatic increase to 97.1% in 2014.

Despite having multiple years of data for the NCTWCS, the researcher inquired about several specific questions via the Teacher Perception Survey. The researcher related specific questions to the last administration of the NCTWCS in order to note any major changes in responses.

Table 20

NCTWCS Results

| | 2014 | Teacher Perception Survey Questions | | |
|---|-------|--|---|-----------|
| c. Policies and procedures about student conduct are clearly understood by the faculty. | 100% | 2b – Staff understand PBIS framework – 94.4% | | |
| f. Teachers consistently enforce rules for student conduct. | 94.4% | 3n – 100% | | |
| g. The faculty work in a school environment that is safe./ Q3.1F (2008) | 100% | 3a – 100% | 3f – 100% | 4f – 100% |
| Q7.1D The school leadership consistently supports teachers./ Q2.1H | 94% | 4n – 100% | 2g – PBIS committee supports teachers – 94.4% | |

The researcher related the first set of questions concerning understanding of rules and PBIS framework, as they should be relatively similar. If a teacher understands the PBIS framework at a school such as this, it is acceptable to conclude he/she would know the rules of the school, as they should be the same. However, only 94.4% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that they understood the framework. The survey was administered mid-year, which would have compensated for any new teachers to the school.

The second set of questions concerns teachers enforcing rules. In the NCTWCS survey, 100% agreed or strongly agreed teachers enforce rules consistently. However, in the Teacher Perception Survey, 94.4% agreed or strongly agreed. The researcher

specifically inquired about consistency of rules throughout the school environment. The researcher inquired about the teacher (self/me), all/most teachers, and administration. The table below has the results for each category at a variety of places throughout the school setting.

Table 21

Consistency of Rules – Teacher Perception Survey

Rules and expectations are consistent in the following locations:

| | For me (self) | All/most teachers | Administration |
|---------------|---------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Classroom | 100.00 | 94.12 | 100.00 |
| Hallway | 94.12 | 47.06 | 94.12 |
| Bathroom | 94.12 | 47.06 | 94.12 |
| Playground | 94.12 | 70.59 | 94.12 |
| Buses | 58.82 | 52.90 | 70.59 |
| Before school | 52.94 | 41.18 | 64.71 |
| After school | 52.94 | 35.29 | 64.71 |

Most teachers self-reported that they are consistent in their own classrooms, in the hallways, bathrooms, and playground. However, a substantial drop occurs on the buses, before school and after school. Most teachers reported that all or most of the teachers at Smith are consistent in the classrooms and most are consistent on the playground. There is a substantial decrease, to 47.06%, of consistency in the hallway and bathroom. Playground is significantly lower than classrooms yet much higher than hallways and bathrooms.

Despite teachers having little involvement on the bus, teachers reported more consistency on the bus than in the hallway and bathrooms. There remained a significant

decrease in perceived consistency in the before and after school time. Not including hallway and bathroom, one possible explanation for the decrease in perceived consistency in the bus and before school and after school time could be teacher involvement.

Teachers are typically not involved aside from loading/unloading buses. The decline in perceived consistency before and after school could be related to teachers on duty and a frequent changing of teachers. Teachers may rotate duties and therefore not have a consistent person in place during these times. However, there remains school-wide expectations that should be followed by all staff in these settings.

Perceived perception of administration's consistency remains high in most areas, including classrooms, hallways, bathrooms, and playground. However, there is a significant decrease in perceived consistency on the bus and during before and after school times. During the duration of this case study, there has not been an assistant principal, which could account for some inconsistencies when an assistant principal is present. Bus times should also consider any special populations of students who require specialized transportation in order to access their education. It is common for these students to have longer bus routes and exhibit negative behaviors during this route. Suspension is not always an option for such students, specifically if the transportation is part of their individualized education plans and is needed to access the educational setting. To be removed from the bus could possibly cause some of the students to miss school, counting as a suspension day for that student. The legalities surrounding exceptional children and buses are not always well understood by staff. Additionally, if students are served in a before or after school daycare problem, teachers may observe these students but not support these students directly. Before and after school activities at Smith Elementary may vary compared to other schools. The researcher was not made

aware of any specific occurrences or reasons for any perceived inconsistencies during this time.

Teacher Turnover Rate Data

Smith Elementary has historically had a very low teacher turnover rate, aside from the 2012-2013 school year. Historically, teacher turnover rate has been well below the district and state turnover rate, excluding the 2012-2013 school year.

Table 22

Teacher Turnover Rate

| Teacher Turnover Rate | 2008-2009 | 2009-2010 | 2010-2011 | 2011-2012 | 2012-2013 | 2013-2014 |
|-----------------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Smith Elementary | 3% | Not reported | 3% | 0% | 16% | 6% |
| District | 6% | 11% | 6% | 6% | 12% | 8% |
| State | 10% | 11% | 10% | 12% | 13% | 13% |

Table 22 shows a dramatic increase in the teacher turnover rate in the year 2012-2013. The district also doubled the turnover rate, whereas the state only increased by 1%. These data, in consideration with the other data sources, indicate that the 2012 and 2013 years were those of greater difficulty for the school. There was one act of violence during this time. EOG test scores plummeted this year. It should be noted that the scores were comparable to the district and state averages. On the NCTWCS, teachers indicated a huge decrease in the agreement that teachers have sufficient time to teach with minimal disruptions. There was an additional decline in teacher agreement that they had adequate time to focus on educating students. While the NCTWCS would not be representative of the inception of Common Core Curriculum, as it was administered in the spring of 2012 and Common Core was not accepted in North Carolina until June 2012, there may have

been anticipated changes of an upcoming curriculum. It was also the year of renorming for the tests. Despite the changes of Common Core, the 2014 NCTWCS had an increase in teacher agreement for teaching students without interruption and the ability to meet the needs of students. To summarize, the 2012 NCTWC was representative of that year and the previous year. Much discord was represented in the survey. It was a year of renorming for the test, Common Core was quickly approaching, and PBIS was in full swing. By the end of the 2012-2013 school year, the school experienced a 16% teacher turnover rate. Test scores were very low, but comparable to the districts. Short-term suspensions were at an all-time low. The school had an administration change in the 2010-2011 year. By the reporting year of 2014, test scores had improved and teacher perception of ability to teach and meet needs of students had increased. Additionally, percentages of teacher agreement had increased in the statements of administrators consistently enforce rules and the feelings of the school seeing an overall good place to learn and work, since the decline of both responses during the 2012 reporting year.

Survey Responses from Teachers for Impact of PBIS on School Environment

A majority of teachers agreed that the school environment has been positively impacted by PBIS (16, 89%). A majority of teachers agreed that students benefit because of PBIS (16, 89%). A majority of teachers agreed that some teachers/staff are more consistent with PBIS than others (12, 67%). A majority of teachers were glad that the school uses PBIS (17, 94%). A majority of teachers agreed that the PBIS team communicates effectively with staff members (17, 95%). A majority of teachers agreed that PBIS is effective in increasing instructional time (15, 83%). A majority of teachers agreed that PBIS has improved communication (15, 83%). A majority of teachers agreed that PBIS is implemented with consistency throughout the school (15, 83%). All teachers

agreed that there are specific school-wide expectations and rules (18, 100%). A majority of teachers agreed that PBIS data are shared with stakeholders (17, 94%).

All teachers agreed that they felt safe at the school (18, 100%). All teachers agreed that the school is a safe place for students and teachers (18, 100%). Most teachers agreed that they are expected to handle negative behaviors in the classroom and not send students to the office (9, 50%). A majority of teachers agreed that PBIS has helped reduce bullying (14, 78%). All teachers agreed that they are supported when dealing with students behaviors (18, 100%). A majority of teachers agreed that teachers communicate better because of PBIS (13, 72%).

A majority of teachers agreed that PBIS reduced student disrespect (14, 78%). A majority of teachers agreed that PBIS reduced fighting (13, 73%). A majority of teachers agreed that PBIS reduced vandalism (12, 66%). A majority of teachers agreed that PBIS improved student-student interactions (14, 78%). A majority of teachers disagreed that PBIS increased teacher stress (10, 56%). A majority of teachers agreed that PBIS improved school morale (14, 78%). A majority of teachers agreed that PBIS increased school safety (13, 73%). A majority of teachers agreed that PBIS has been a positive experience for the school (17, 94%). A majority of teachers agreed that PBIS has improved communication (14, 78%). Frequencies and percentages for the teachers' responses to the impact of PBIS on school environment are presented in Table 23.

Table 23

Frequencies and Percentages of Teacher Responses to School Environment

| Demographic | % agree | % neutral | % disagree |
|--|------------|--------------|---------------|
| 2a) School environment has been positively impacted by PBIS. | 89 | 11 | 0 |
| 2d) Students benefit because of PBIS. | 89 | 11 | 0 |
| 2e) Some teachers/staff are more consistent with PBIS than others are. | 67 | 33 | 0 |
| 2f) I am glad that our school uses PBIS. | 94 | 6 | 0 |
| 2g) The PBIS team communicates effectively with staff members. | 94 | 6 | 0 |
| 2h) PBIS is effective in increasing instructional time. | 83 | 11 | 6 |
| 2j) PBIS has improved communication. | 83 | 11 | 6 |
| 2m) PBIS is implemented with consistency throughout the school. | 83 | 11 | 6 |
| 2n) There are specific school-wide expectations and rules. | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| 2o) PBIS data is shared with stakeholders. | 94 | 6 | 0 |
| 3a) I feel safe at this school. | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| 3f) Our school is a safe place for students and teachers. | 50 | 22 | 0 |
| 3g) Teachers are expected to handle negative behaviors in the classroom and not send students to the office. | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| 3m) PBIS has helped reduce bullying. | 72 | 22 | 6 |
| 3n) Teachers are supported when dealing with student behaviors. | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| 3q) Teachers communicate better because of PBIS. | 72 | 22 | 6 |
| 4a) Reduced student disrespect. | 78 | 11 | 6 |
| 4b) Reduced fighting. | 72 | 22 | 0 |
| 4c) Reduced vandalism. | 67 | 6 | 6 |
| 4g) Improved student-student interactions. | 78 | 11 | 6 |
| 4k) Increased teacher's stress. | 22 | 17 | 56 |
| 4l) Improved school morale. | 78 | 17 | 0 |
| 4m) Increased school safety. | 72 | 22 | 0 |
| 4n) Been a positive experience for our school. | 94 | 0 | 0 |
| 4o) Improved communication. | 78 | 17 | 3 |

Note. Due to rounding error, not all percentages may sum to 100.

School Environment Composite Score (Teachers)

A composite score was created from the 25 related survey questions for teachers'

perceptions of the impact of the PBIS on school environment. Responses from the Likert-scaled response were given a numerical coding, with strongly disagree=1 and strongly agree=5. Taking an average of the Likert-scaled responses allowed the researcher to interpret teachers' collective perceptions. Scores for teachers' perceptions of the impact of the PBIS on the school environment ranged from 3.60 to 4.92, with $M=4.14$ and $SD=0.42$. Due to the mean response falling between agree and strongly agree, teachers were generally favorable with the positive impact of the PBIS on school environment. Means and standard deviation for teachers' perceptions of impact of PBIS on school environment are presented in Table 24.

Table 24

Means and Standard Deviations of Teacher Perceptions of Impact of PBIS on School Environment

| Composite Scores | Min. | Max. | M | SD |
|---|------|------|------|------|
| Impact of PBIS on school environment (teachers) | 3.60 | 4.92 | 4.14 | 0.42 |

Survey Responses from Students for Impact of PBIS on School Environment

A majority of students knew all the rules for the classroom (55, 86%). A majority of students knew all the rules for the bathroom (62, 67%). A majority of students knew all the rules for the hallways (63, 98%). A majority of students knew all the rules for the cafeteria (57, 89%). A majority of students knew all the rules for the gym (54, 84%). A majority of students knew all the rules for the buses (49, 77%). A majority of students knew all the rules for the computers (53, 83%). A majority of students knew all the rules for the playground (57, 89%). A majority of students agreed that teachers treat them fairly (58, 91%). A majority of students agreed that they feel safe at school (61, 95%). A

majority of students agreed that they try to follow the rules at school (62, 97%). A majority of students agreed that they were rewarded for good behavior (43, 67%). A majority of students agreed that they want to come to school (50, 78%). A majority of students agreed that they followed the rules at school (59, 92%). A majority of students disagreed that those who follow the rules did not get rewarded (40, 63%), meaning students who follow the rules do get rewards. Most students agreed that their teachers could teach without students misbehaving (28, 44%). A majority of teachers rewarded their students for good behavior (47, 73%). A majority of students agreed that they learned about good behavior at school (58, 91%). A majority of students indicated that they were sometimes rewarded for good behavior (50, 78%).

A majority of students indicated that they felt safe in the classrooms (59, 92%). A majority of students indicated that they felt safe in the hallways (54, 84%). A majority of students indicated that they felt safe in the bathrooms (52, 81%). A majority of students indicated that they felt safe in the gym (58, 91%). A majority of students indicated that they felt safe in the cafeteria (58, 91%). A majority of students indicated that they felt safe in the office (54, 84%). A majority of students indicated that they felt safe in the classrooms (59, 92%). A majority of students indicated that they felt safe on the playground (45, 70%). A majority of students indicated that they felt safe during school events (59, 92%). A majority of students indicated that they felt safe on the bus (48, 75%). A majority of students indicated that they felt safe before school (59, 92%). A majority of students indicated that they felt safe after school (59, 92%). A majority of students indicated that they felt safe when the teacher was there (59, 92%). A majority of students indicated that they felt safe when the teacher was not there (33, 52%). A majority of students indicated that they felt safe when alone with other students (39,

61%).

A majority of students had sometimes seen other students bullied or mistreated (36, 56%). A majority of students had never bullied other students (57, 89%). A majority of students had never been bullied at school (41, 64%). A majority of students had hit or threatened to hit another student (59, 92%). A majority of students indicated that they sometimes used profanity and/or inappropriate language at school (35, 55%). A majority of students indicated that they were sometimes disrespectful to teachers (35, 55%). A majority of students never hit or threatened to hit teachers (61, 95%). A majority of students indicated that they sometimes made fun of others at school (32, 50%). A majority of students indicated that they were sometimes rewarded for making good choices (36, 56%). A majority of students indicated that they sometimes were able to help choose rewards (37, 58%). Frequencies and percentages for the students' responses to the impact of PBIS on school environment are presented in Table 25.

Table 25

Frequencies and Percentages of Student Responses to School Environment

| Demographic | I know all the rules | I know most of the rules | I do not know the rules |
|---|-------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1a) How well do you know the rules for classroom? | 86 | 13 | 0 |
| 1b) How well do you know the rules for bathroom? | 67 | 3 | 0 |
| 1c) How well do you know the rules for hallways? | 98 | 0 | 2 |
| 1d) How well do you know the rules for cafeteria? | 89 | 9 | 0 |
| 1e) How well do you know the rules for gym? | 84 | 16 | 0 |
| 1f) How well do you know the rules for buses? | 77 | 17 | 3 |
| 1g) How well do you know the rules for computers? | 83 | 14 | 2 |
| 1h) How well do you know the rules for playground? | 89 | 8 | 2 |
| Demographic | Agree | Neither Agree or Disagree | Disagree |
| 2a) Teachers treat students fairly. | 91 | 8 | 2 |
| 2b) I feel safe at school. | 95 | 3 | 2 |
| 2c) I try to follow the rules at school. | 97 | 3 | 0 |
| 2d) I am rewarded for good behavior. | 67 | 16 | 13 |
| 2e) I want to come to school. | 78 | 17 | 5 |
| 2f) I know the rules at school. | 92 | 3 | 0 |
| 2g) Students who follow the rules do not get rewarded. | 22 | 14 | 63 |
| 2j) My teachers can teach without students misbehaving. | 44 | 39 | 16 |
| 2k) Teachers reward students for good behavior. | 73 | 16 | 9 |
| 2n) We learn about good behavior at school. | 91 | 8 | 0 |
| Demographic | I feel safe | I feel safe sometimes | I do not feel safe |
| 4a) I feel safe in the classrooms. | 92 | 5 | 2 |
| 4b) I feel safe in the hallways. | 84 | 14 | 2 |
| 4c) I feel safe in the bathroom. | 81 | 13 | 5 |
| 4d) I feel safe in the gym. | 91 | 6 | 2 |
| 4e) I feel safe in the cafeteria. | 91 | 8 | 2 |
| 4f) I feel safe in the office. | 84 | 9 | 6 |
| 4g) I feel safe on the playground. | 70 | 19 | 8 |
| 4h) I feel safe during school events. | 92 | 5 | 2 |
| 4i) I feel safe on the bus. | 75 | 13 | 6 |
| 4j) I feel safe before school. | 92 | 2 | 3 |
| 4k) I feel safe after school. | 92 | 3 | 3 |
| 4l) I feel safe when the teacher is there. | 92 | 2 | 2 |
| 4m) I feel safe when the teacher is not there. | 52 | 30 | 14 |
| 4n) I feel safe when I am alone with other students. | 61 | 30 | 9 |

(continued)

| Demographic | All the time | Sometimes | Never |
|---|--------------|---------------------------|----------|
| 5a) I have seen other students bullied or mistreated. | 38 | 56 | 3 |
| 5b) I have bullied other students. | 2 | 6 | 89 |
| 5c) I have been bullied at school. | 3 | 28 | 64 |
| 5d) I have hit or threatened to hit another student. | 0 | 5 | 92 |
| 5e) Students use profanity and/or inappropriate language (bad words) at school. | 6 | 55 | 36 |
| 5f) Students are disrespectful to teachers. | 2 | 55 | 41 |
| 5g) Students hit or threaten to hit teachers. | 0 | 2 | 95 |
| 5h) Students make fun of others at school. | 3 | 50 | 41 |
| 5k) Students are rewarded for making good choices. | 34 | 56 | 19 |
| Demographic | Agree | Neither Agree or Disagree | Disagree |
| 8) Students get to help choose rewards. | 19 | 58 | 19 |

Note. Due to rounding error, not all percentages may sum to 100.

School Environment Composite Score (Students)

A composite score was created from the 35 related survey questions for students' perceptions of school environment with the implementation of the PBIS. Responses from the Likert-scaled response were given a numerical coding, with multiple types of questions being asked. Possible scores ranged from 1 to 3, with I do not know the rules=1 and I know all the rules=3. Possible scores ranged from 1 to 3, disagree=1 and agree=3. Possible scores ranged from 1 to 3, with I do not feel safe=1 and I feel safe=3. Possible scores ranged from 1 to 3, with 1=never and 3=all the time. A score of 2 corresponded with a neutral response. Taking an average of the Likert-scaled responses allowed the researcher to interpret students' collective perceptions. Scores for students' perceptions of school environment ranged from 1.80 to 2.91, with $M=2.67$ and $SD=0.17$. Due to the mean response falling between neutral and agree, students were generally favorable with the positive impact of the PBIS on school environment. Means and

standard deviation for students' perceptions of impact of PBIS on school environment are presented in Table 26.

Table 26

Means and Standard Deviations of Students' Perceptions of Impact of PBIS on School Environment

| Composite Scores | Min. | Max. | M | SD |
|---|------|------|------|------|
| Impact of PBIS on school environment (students) | 1.80 | 2.91 | 2.67 | 0.17 |

Focus Group Qualitative Analysis

The researcher found two themes that related to this research question. The themes were uniformity and supportive environment.

Uniformity. One of the major impacts mentioned by all three focus groups was the uniformity of the program. Although individual teachers could make the systems fit their classrooms, the overarching behaviors and rewards were consistent. Three teachers made the following comments.

Well, we have the Turtle charts outside our classrooms, for when other teachers or anyone notices that the class has been doing well. And, if they do well, we'll collect those, and there is some sort of a reward for our class afterwards, sometimes it is eat lunch in the room, extra recess, that kind of thing.

I can praise my kids all day long but when they get praise by another teacher that knows what is expected, it's like a present. This week, I've had a teacher come in about four times and tell me that "[Teacher X] said . . ." and I've said that too but I think that they just feel so supported and taken care of. Because yeas they have me, but then they have all these other people who are care.

I think one thing that is differentiated, even though in all grades, every classroom earns tickets; different measures earn you a ticket in that classroom. Like what would earn you a ticket in my classroom would probably not earn you a ticket in a 6th grade classroom. It is differentiated that way, but it is the same system, and we all follow the same rules and the same pledge, and the same system. I think it is differentiated as far as classroom based on how you can earn the tickets.

Employing a universal currency of turtles and tickets, students and teachers could all measure behavior. It was clear and easy to identify positive behaviors. Because the base-level behavioral expectations were the same across classrooms and grade levels, any adult who noticed a student behaving appropriately could reward that student. To remind students about the expectations and uniformity, students “have the pledge that we say; along that, we say ‘one to the flag.’ And we also have the chart, the pubs chart of expectation into his hallway, cafeteria, bathroom, etc., that we go over with the kids.” Thus, a variety of methods are used to remind students about the behaviors and to keep the systems and expectations uniform. The reward system was an effective tool and aided in creating uniformity. Turtle charts were used to let other adults notice good behavior. The first teacher stated,

And then we have the Turtle system in the hallway when an adult sees a class doing what they are supposed to be doing, and then can get a Turtle, block classes, P.E., art, and music. Then there is a goal, when they reach that goal they get whatever [they voted on].

Another participant supported her statement and said,

Well, we have the Turtle charts outside our classrooms, for when other teachers or

anyone notices that the class has been doing well. And if they do well, we'll collect those and there is some sort of a reward for our class afterwards, sometimes it is eat lunch in the room, extra recess, that kind of thing.

They were followed by a third teacher who reinforced what others indicated previously.

I can praise my kids all day long but when they get praise by another teacher that knows what is expected, it's like a present. This week, I've had a teacher come in about four times and tell me that "[Teacher X] said . . ." and I've said that too but I think that they just feel so supported and taken care of. Because yeas they have me, but then they have all these other people who are care.

One of the participants noted the importance of an adult other than the teacher observing and rewarding instances of good behavior. The turtle charts could be turned in to reward the class as a whole. In the classroom, teachers employed tickets that students could turn in for prizes to reward positive behavioral choices. This intervention was individualized on a classroom level. Each teacher set up behavior that earned rewards. Rewards included extra recess, popcorn, pajama day, extra computer time, and similar rewards. There are also success celebrations in relation to attendance and tardiness. Thus, uniformity was maintained because each teacher employed a ticket economy; the differences laid in the actions that earned the reward. Thus, students could receive both short-term and long-term rewards. The immediate rewards were earned through tickets, while larger rewards were noted and earned through ongoing behaviors. One of the participants remarked, "Inside our classrooms, we give tickets for children who are displaying good behaviors. They collect their tickets, and then every month we get to turn in their tickets and order something with their tickets from the token store."

Supportive environment. The PBIS system was designed to be simple and to

foster an environment that would be supportive of students. Students were taught to be responsible and help each other. An example mentioned in one of the focus groups was “But really, if you get a new child who comes in, the other children almost take responsibility for that, to teach them, these are tickets and we get tickets then we do this.” In essence, they “teach each other. It’s like ‘you can’t do that, because that’s a rule’, ‘be respectful,’ so they fill [each other] in.” It becomes the norm for students to guide each other. The supportive environment enabled students to feel safe and reflect on their behaviors. One of the participants noted,

And you ask them, even the kids who’ve been there, “were you being responsible,” “did you get that how done.” So they have to start analyzing what they are doing, but with just four rules being simple, they have to think about it in all aspects of their lives.

The physical environment also supported student with tangible reminders such as “posters all around the schools, reminders. We can say we are going to the bathroom and right here tells us what we are supposed to do.” Students also constantly hear it being spoken about and reinforced through planned lessons.

The focus groups also spoke about setting clear expectations to aid in student success. This is done through using solid communication and having simple rules that are easily explained. The expectation created by using the PBIS system was that no matter the setting, people, or time of day, expectations were the same. The rules were visible as reminders and enforced by all members of the community.

One of the teachers said, “I know when we get new students in, I have a student who came in these year and as we did those lessons and I had to have conversation with him about your know these are our expectations here.” Another teacher recalled a few

bumps that were straightened out with communication.

It was tough, because what was OK on the bus at one place was not OK on the bus at another place. It took a while for us, and I think these lessons helped us. I know when we get new students in, I have a student who came in this year and as we did those lessons and I had to have conversation with him about you know these are our expectations here. But that wasn't the expectations from where you came and that helps. And I know we've decreased our office referrals as well.

Fostering student behavior success was obviously an important goal for the PBIS program. One of the participants mentioned the work involved in creating standard expectations across school settings. Although it was challenging, in the end the work was worth it.

Summary

The results of the study have been reported in Chapter 4. Overall, the qualitative information supported the use of PBIS in the school setting. Teachers liked the program and felt that students understood behavioral expectations more clearly due to its use. They anecdotally reported few incidents of inappropriate behavior. Overall, the teachers found it easier to redirect student behavior and increased levels of student engagement in the academic setting.

Chapter 5 consists of an in-depth discussion of the results. Areas for further research are identified and the information contained in this research study are placed into context employing the literature that is currently available to the researcher.

Chapter 5: Conclusions, Discussions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of PBIS, a behavior intervention, on the students and staff at an elementary school in a rural town in North Carolina. Typically, PBIS is associated with lowering ODRs, equating to improved academics. The purpose of this study was to examine the holistic impact on students and staff with regard to student behaviors, academic environment, and school environment. For the purpose of this case study, student behaviors are defined as student suspensions, student attendance records, and student interactions with peers and teachers. For the purpose of this case study, instructional delivery is defined as the teacher's ability to deliver material and an increase in instructional delivery time. Student academic achievement is measured by state EOG testing scores. School environment is defined as school-wide expectations and rules, school safety, communication within the school setting, and the school's response to positive behavior. By collecting such data, the researcher gained insight into the impact PBIS is having at this specific school.

Data were collected from a variety of sources. The researcher used information from SET (PBIS specific), NCTWCS, EOG scores, attendance records, ODRs, teacher survey, student survey, and three teacher focus groups. Additional demographic information was taken from the NCDPI website.

Restatement of Problem

Student misbehavior has historically been a problem for teachers and administrators in schools across the nation. Inappropriate behavior continues to be of concern. NCDPI's data on behavior indicate that in North Carolina specifically, student misbehavior is a continuing concern. In the year 2012-2013, there were 300 students

with disabilities removed to an alternate school setting (NCDPI, 2013). Despite it being a decrease from previous years, in 2013-2014, over 11,000 students in the state of North Carolina were removed from their traditional learning environments (NCDPI, 2013).

When students misbehave, instructional time is lost, teacher time is lost and administrator time is lost. As previously mentioned, there is an estimated 10 minutes for administrators, 20 minutes for teachers, and an additional 30 minutes of instructional time lost for each office referral. For such reasons, schools sought and continue to seek for a solution to deal with problem behaviors and to keep students in schools.

PBIS is a system of interventions aimed at preventing negative student behaviors. It is not a specifically designed curriculum (NCDPI, 2011). PBIS has become known as an approach to help schools “define and operationalize [their] structures and procedures” (Sugai et al., 2002, p. 19). PBIS is a framework for implementation that is intended to address academic and behavioral needs of students. PBIS focuses on the need for data collection during the implementation stage and continued monitoring of data throughout the process (PBIS Maryland, 2012). While each school implements PBIS differently, it serves as a framework for interventions and systems to address student misbehavior. Additionally, PBIS focuses on rewarding positive behavior for students. Many schools design forms of minor and major offenses, specifically outlining what is dealt with in the classroom and what is dealt with in the office. This component is one reason for the basis of this case study. The researcher was interested to see teacher responses to such as system. Obviously, with a system like this in place, there should be a decrease in office referrals, as PBIS claims. The researcher wanted to know more about the teachers’ responses to this – were they pleased with this process or were they resentful to be dealing with more problems in the classroom; were there just as many problems but with

fewer going to the office? Information from this case study, including multiple member focus groups, did not have results that mentioned concerns. Based on information from multi-year reportings from the NCTWC survey and the teacher perception survey, teachers feel support and that there is a consistency in addressing behaviors.

PBIS also addresses explicit social skills lessons. Teachers in the focus groups referenced daily lessons and specific procedures that can be referenced throughout the year. As mentioned in the literature review in Chapter 2, Joseph Durlak, professor emeritus at Loyola University Chicago, Roger Weisberg at UIC, and several graduate students conducted a meta-analysis of 213 evaluations of social and emotional learning programs (Social and Emotional Learning Research Group, 2011). In their study, over 270,000 students were involved from urban, suburban, and rural elementary and secondary schools. This study was completed in conjunction with CASEL, a not-for-profit organization. Social Emotional Learning and CASEL focus on evaluating programs that address youth social skills and promote the education of social and emotional learning. Based on the results of this study, students who received social and emotional instruction, compared to students who did not receive social and emotional learning programs, had improved test scores and grades, including an 11-percentile point gain. Students had improved social and emotional skills; better classroom behavior; improvement with conduct misbehaviors, stress, and depression; and had improvements concerning attitudes about themselves, others, and school. Based on this data, social and emotional learning programs have a positive impact on student behaviors and academics (Social and Emotional Learning Research Group, 2011). PBIS emphasizes that there are distinct connections between social and academic success. Behavioral expectations are emphasized, taught, remediated, and positively reinforced, just as any other academic

area (PBIS.org, 2012). This appears to correlate with the components of PBIS and the explicit social skills lessons. However, it should be noted that this school also has integrated other programs in conjunction with specific PBIS lessons. It would be difficult to separate the impact of these individual programs on the students at Smith Elementary. Regardless of the program, data indicate that there are fewer office referrals, high attendance but with relatively no change over the years, and satisfied teachers. There has been a decrease in EOG test scores. Based on the CASEL study and additional PBIS data, academics should have improved. It is unclear as to why there has not been a consistent improvement in scores.

Schools are learning that a proactive approach to social skill deficits and negative behavior can be beneficial. They are finding pro-activeness to be the most effective way to reduce suspension and address negative behaviors (Dwyer & Osher, 2000). Effective schools are implementing school-wide campaigns that establish high expectations and provide support for socially appropriate behavior (Dwyer & Osher, 2000). By implementing systems and creating school-wide expectations, school culture will slowly change over time. Students will become more accustomed to the expectations, and teachers will learn the systems as well. Over time, it will become the new norm for the school, as it appears to have at Smith Elementary.

Interpretation of the Findings

A plethora of historical data was included in this case study as the researcher felt it was important to provide a holistic approach to understanding the impact of PBIS. In many situations, data are limited to ODRs and test scores. Attendance may be examined. However, the researcher wanted to provide other opportunities to examine teacher and student perception of these components. Based on ODRs, there has been a reduction in

referrals and, by the formulaic approach of DPI, a recouping of lost time by the reduction of office referrals. With the aforementioned formula, each teacher lost 10 minutes per referral, each administrator lost 20 minutes, and an overall 30 minutes of instructional time was lost. By reducing the number of office referrals, time was not lost and instead was used for its set purpose. Test scores have not been positively impacted by PBIS, based on percentages of students showing competency. There has been a decline in overall scores. This is evidenced in both district and state for the renorming year. However, PBIS does not appear to have a significant impact on test scores. Attendance has remained relatively the same throughout the years with only a 1% delta. There appears to be no significant changes despite PBIS. School expectations are clearly defined as assessed by SET data, NCTWCS, teacher perception survey, and student perception survey. With those various types of data included, it appears that PBIS has been implemented with fidelity.

Teachers reported in both the NCTWC and teacher perception survey that they feel the school is a safe place to work. Students also reported feeling safe at school. Most teachers reported PBIS to be a positive experience for the school and that it has helped improve communication.

Through the usage of multiple data sources, the researcher sought to gain a deeper perspective into the lives of those experiencing PBIS on a regular basis. Much data surrounding PBIS is quantitative in nature and does not account for individual perception or response. The researcher explicitly chose to include such data in order to determine the holistic impact of PBIS. Aside from the quantitative data, the focus groups provide a unique perspective. Comments concerning PBIS were positive in nature, crediting much success to PBIS. Most teachers felt that it did not increase stress but has been an overall

positive experience. While PBIS can serve as the framework to a limitless amount of interventions, it seems to have provided stability and consistency and fostered a proactive school culture.

Limitations

There are specific limitations to this study. There were a limited number of participants in the teacher study which may not be indicative of the total school staff. Additionally, the student survey was limited to Grades 3-6. The researcher limited the survey to these grades due to the ability to read and the need to ensure confidentiality. The study was limited to the usage of paper and pencil in order to make the delivery more reasonable for teachers. It was determined that the county had no policy on the usage of surveys from outside sources, requiring each student to return a permission slip. The school staff and researcher felt this limited the number of student participants due to having no incentive to participate. The delivery of the survey was paper and pencil, which allowed to teachers to administer to students without disruption to the daily learning environment. Additionally, the lack of repetition of surveys is a limitation to the information collected. While there was a high percentage of participation in the focus groups, they were completed only one time. By collecting data with limited number of times, in one isolated event, there is limited information to be gleaned. Finally, research was collected from only one school. Additional research needs to be completed in similar schools using PBIS with a comparable date of implementation to add validity to this study.

Recommendations

Selecting a school with a higher percentage of behavioral concerns may indicate a greater impact of the implementation of PBIS. The number and severity of behavioral

infractions at Smith Elementary prior to and throughout the implementation of PBIS were minimal, leaving the impact of PBIS as minimal.

Selecting two schools with similar demographics, county-level support and teacher factors, and implementing two separate sets of interventions could provide insight into the impact of PBIS. At its roots, PBIS is a set of specific interventions with a curriculum to explicitly teach expectations, coupled with an incentive-based program. While there is a formulaic approach to the implementation of PBIS with fidelity and validity checks throughout the process, future research could compare the results with a school implementing a specific program. This may provide insight as to whether it is the usage of PBIS or if it is the intentional, school-wide implementation of a program.

Research on the inclusion of additional support services would be beneficial when seeking the impact of PBIS. Future research should consider the inclusion of services such as school-based mental health services, the number of counselors available at the school, those students involved in outside mental health counseling, and those students involved with the Department of Juvenile Justice. Such factors should be considered when considering the scope of impact on a behavioral intervention such as PBIS. Future research should include documentation of parental involvement at the school, utilization of system-wide behavioral supports, and number of students placed at an alternative setting. The removal of students to alternative placements is not always noted in suspension logs. For example, a student may be placed at a day treatment facility and have no suspension record. A school may also choose to place a student with a long history of behavioral infractions at the alternative setting due an infraction that would typically be viewed as minimal. This may address the number of students who are nonresponsive to an invention such as PBIS.

Research on the inclusion of additional support services would be beneficial when seeking the impact of PBIS. Future research should consider the inclusion of services such as school-based mental health services, number of counselors available at the school, those students involved in outside mental health counseling, and those students involved with the Department of Juvenile Justice. Such factors should be considered when considering the scope of impact on a behavioral intervention such as PBIS.

Implications

Smith Elementary was a relatively safe school prior to the implementation of PBIS. The level of violence was well below the state and national average. The school is a recently built school in a community with a low crime rate and a high percentage of parental involvement. The school also has adequate resources, as indicated by teachers in the NCTWC survey across several years. The county that Smith Elementary is in is supportive with multi-layers of behavioral support. Additionally, there are a PBIS coach, behavior liaison, and counselors available. The county also has an alternative program and a day treatment facility available.

Research supports that an intentional program such as PBIS can help reduce ODRs and address the majority of students' behavioral needs (NCDPI, 2012a). In the BBBS study, there is research to indicate that a relationship-based approach to student behavior will address academic achievement and overall negative behaviors. This approach is very individualized, and a specific amount of one-to-one time is included in this relationship. In this approach, there are no prescribed lessons the big brother/sister imparts on the younger brother/sister. In programs such as PBIS, there is not a required amount of time allotted for relationships. Despite this component, other research and case studies are indicative of the positive impacts of relationships.

During the case study at Smith Elementary, multiple additional programs were mentioned by focus group participants. These programs could potentially be integrated by a school with no inclusion of PBIS lessons or PBIS infrastructures (matrix, success celebrations, etc.). Additionally, a school could initiate a mentor/mentee program similar to that of the BBBS program or a social/emotional program that does not incorporate a set of school-wide expectations. Such programs would address the relationship component. These relationships could mimic the BBBS program. The investment of time, especially with difficult students, could offer a return of the same magnitude.

With further study of the PBIS program, there appears to be lacking a relationship component. There are set expectations, set guidelines, and set lessons. However, there are no specific guidelines that the researcher was made aware of or heard mention of concerning relationships and time investment by teachers with students. As students are nonresponsive to the school-wide rules and expectations, a more intensive plan is set forth. Small groups are implemented to address the behavioral concerns, and individual plans are created as needed. However, there is no intentionality given to relationship development.

On the surface, the researcher assumed that there was relationship development based on the improved behaviors of the students. There was a deduction that negative behaviors were specifically replaced for students. Students are not engaging in the negative behaviors. However, more information needs to be gathered on how students at the top of the triangle, the top 3-5% of students who are nonresponsive to the school-wide plan, are being taught replacement behaviors.

The researcher did not hear teachers report about relationship development. School culture presents as positive because it is safe. However, the absence of negative

behaviors does not equate into positive, healthy relationships. Students who participated in the survey reported good relationships with teachers and peers. However, because the student survey was limited to a small population of students and required a parent signature, this population may not be representative of the whole.

Considering Smith Elementary was a relatively safe school prior to the implementation of PBIS, the generalizability of this study is limited. This study lends itself to further discussion of the impact of PBIS. While teacher and student perception is positive, teacher turnover rate reached its highest point, attendance had relatively no change, and test scores declined. Short-term suspensions had an overall decline but did increase throughout the years of implementation. Acts of violence remained at zero. Teacher satisfaction at the school increased and decreased depending on the specificity of the question. It appears the school is safer, but teachers are still struggling to meet the needs of students with interruption. Upon further study, interruptions could be operationally defined to gain a better understanding. These specific components create questions of the impact PBIS has had on Smith Elementary. There appears to be mixed results with this program. ODRs are down. There is a decrease in loss of instructional time, yet EOG tests are at record lows. However, teachers are pleased and credit PBIS for increasing academic achievement.

Because research indicates that consistency, clear expectations, and relationships are all components of improved behavior, it is hard to separate the impact of each. However, one must ask, Would any program that creates a sense of consistency and clearly outlines the rules or a relationship-based program have the same impact on students? At Smith Elementary, the staff have employed several programs and meshed the programs into the preexisting PBIS framework. It is impossible to separate the

impact of the variety of programs on students at Smith Elementary. Further study needs to be given to school-wide programs of 7 Healthy Habits of Healthy Kids, mentor programs, and other school-wide behavior management programs. A comparison of such programs might give indication towards a specific component of PBIS that others lack. Consideration should be given to programs that set specific expectations but lack the PBIS lessons/curriculum. This was referenced multiple times by teachers and is not always found within school-wide rules and systems. As CASEL found, explicit teaching of social/emotional components directly impacts student behavior. Research of a program that uses an explicit social/emotional curriculum but lacks the school-wide expectations and matrix should be compared to a PBIS-type program. At this time, the researcher is unclear as to a specific factor that is responsible for the decrease of office referrals. The researcher remains unclear as to how, quantitatively, PBIS positively impacted Smith Elementary, aside from the reduction of office referrals. Qualitatively, teachers and students are happy and feel supported. Consistency and explicit teaching appear to be positive, based on those surveyed and interviewed. While perception is positive, there is a lacking of supporting quantitative data. Further inquiry is needed to determine the impact of PBIS at Smith Elementary and to generalize about other schools implementing PBIS.

Limitations

There are specific limitations to this study. There were a limited number of participants in the teacher study which may not be indicative of the total school staff. Additionally, the student survey was limited to Grades 3-6. The researcher limited the survey to these grades due to the ability to read and the need to ensure confidentiality. It was determined that the county had no policy on the usage of surveys from outside

sources, requiring each student to return a permission slip. The school staff and researcher felt this limited the number of student participants due to having no incentive to participate. The delivery of the survey was paper and pencil which allowed to teachers to administer to students without disruption to the daily learning environment. Additionally, the lack of repetition of surveys is a limitation to the information collected. While there was a high percentage of participation in the focus groups, they were completed only one time. By collecting data with limited number of times, in one isolated event, there is limited information to be gleaned. Finally, research was collected from only one school. Additional research needs to be completed in similar schools using PBIS with a comparable date of implementation to add validity to this study.

The research appears to be inconclusive due to the limitations of this study. There needs to be further research to address several components. At the onset of this case study, the researcher made several assumptions which proved false. The researcher assumed that no other programs were being utilized in conjunction with PBIS. The researcher assumed that PBIS and the PBIS curriculum were the only school-wide initiatives throughout the duration of implementation and specifically during the time of inquiry. The researcher at the time of inquiry did not seek answers to questions concerning the additional programs when mentioned during the focus groups. The researcher would have ideally inquired about the acquisition and specific need for these programs. It is unclear as to whether these were district initiatives or if there was a specific need that these were designed to meet. However, upon further examination, there does not appear to be a relationship component. Despite hearing several programs mentioned, the researcher remains unclear concerning the utilization of these programs. Additionally, the researcher made the assumption of an embedded relationship

component. The researcher assumed that the PBIS curriculum would lend itself to further relationship development with the students and teachers. While behaviors improved and classroom management perception improved, there was no distinct mentioning of relationships. Perception of relationships appears to have improved as negative behaviors declined. However, despite surveys and focus groups, teachers were not reportedly intentional about relationship development with students.

The researcher remains inquisitive of the widespread implementation. The researcher wishes to know if the attraction to PBIS, as opposed to other programs that could potentially be as effective, is the all-inclusive approach to school-wide management. This question arises after systematically examining the impact of PBIS. PBIS may be the system that includes the blueprint for school implementation, whereas other programs may only provide the theory. Having a premade set of forms to complete, examples to follow, and state and national support may lure schools into implementation. At this time, the researcher remains unclear if other programs that have explicit social skills instruction and/or relationship-based models would deliver the same results as PBIS.

Summary

Based on data from multiple sources, over a 6-year time for many of the sources, PBIS appears to have positively affected Smith Elementary. While Smith Elementary was not a crime-filled school prior to PBIS, discipline referrals and suspensions were considerably higher than they currently are. Despite the movement of many discipline problems back into the classroom and not the office, teachers maintain they feel supported and they enjoy coming to work. Teachers and students both report feeling safe at school. Based on focus group responses and SET data, there seems to be a high level

of buy-in, and there is a 100% implementation score over multiple years. PBIS typically boasts improvement in a reduction of ODRs, improved attendance, and overall improved academic achievement. Most references of PBIS address improving school culture as well. For this school, attendance remained the same with only a 1% delta over multiple years. With attendance beginning relatively high at 96%, there was a smaller margin for improvement than a school with a very low attendance rate. Academic achievement for this study was limited to EOG test scores over a 6-year period. While scores declined, they did stay comparable with the district scores. Other measurements of academic achievement were not included in this study. Lastly, based on student and teacher responses, teachers and students are happy to be at school and feel safe at school. Teachers, when asked specifically about the impacts of PBIS, responded positively concerning behavior, relationships, attendance, and academic achievement. Teachers and students attribute success to PBIS. It appears that PBIS has been positive for Smith Elementary in many ways. It is unclear the impact the additional programs had on this case study's results.

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Appendix A
Superintendent Letter Research Site

Dear Superintendent of Selected District,

Thank you for your interest in my dissertation study entitled “A Case Study of the Impact of PBIS on Student Behavior.” I appreciate your support as I strive to complete my doctorate degree in Curriculum and Instruction at Gardner Webb University. As was previously shared in emails, this study will involve teachers, students, and the principal at the selected site. PBIS data collected by the PBIS district coordinator will be used from the selected school. Teachers will be asked to participate in an online survey and focus groups. Data collected from the Teacher Working Condition Survey, conducted by NCDPI will be used. Data such as attendance records, ODRs, and EOG scores will also be collected and reviewed.

All information collected will remain confidential and anonymous. Written permission will be obtained from all staff involved. All student data collected will remain anonymous. Written parent and student permission will be obtained prior to student involvement. Dr. Sydney Brown, chair of my dissertation committee, will be available to answer any questions you may have concerning the requirements of Gardner-Webb. You may contact Dr. Brown at skbrown@gardner-webb.edu. If you agree to allow this study to be completed in the respective school, please indicate by signing below.

Signature of Superintendent
Thank you for your time and consideration.

Amber Halliburton
ahalliburton@burke.k12.nc.us

Appendix B

Principal Letter Research Site

Dear Principal of Selected School,

Thank you for your interest in my dissertation study entitled “A Case Study of the Impact of PBIS on Student Behavior.” I appreciate your support as I strive to complete my doctorate degree in Curriculum and Instruction at Gardner Webb University. As was previously shared in emails, this study will involve teachers and students at your school. Staff will be asked to participate in an online survey and focus groups. Data collected from the teacher working condition survey, conducted by will be used. School data such as attendance, ODRs, and EOG scores will also be reviewed. All information collected will remain confidential and anonymous. Written permission will be obtained from all staff, students, and parents of involved students. Dr. Sydney Brown, chair of my dissertation committee, will be available to answer any questions you may have concerning the requirements of Gardner-Webb. You may contact Dr. Brown at skbrown@gardner-webb.edu. If you agree to allow this study to be completed in your school, please indicate by signing below.

Signature of Principal

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Amber Halliburton

ahalliburton@burke.k12.nc.us

Appendix C

Teacher Letter Research Site

Dear Teacher:

My name is Amber Halliburton and I am a doctoral candidate at Gardner-Webb University. I am currently finishing the requirements for my degree by completing a dissertation researching the impact of PBIS on students and teachers. I will be researching this topic at your school only. You have been selected to participate in this study as a teacher at this school.

As a research participant, you will be asked to take part in a focus group interview. This will be in addition to any data collected by the PBIS coordinator and data collected for PBIS. All information collected will be kept completely confidential. You may choose to leave the study at any time without consequence. No teacher names or information will be collected or used for this study other than to state permission. No teacher names or identifying information will be used in the research report.

Please respond to this letter by selecting one of the following options.

_____ I agree to participate in the research study.

_____ I do not agree to participate in the research study.

Signature: _____

Thank you for your time. If you have any questions, you may contact me by email at ahalliburton@burke.k12.nc.us or by phone at 828-430-1197.

Sincerely,
Amber Halliburton

Appendix D

Letter of Consent for Survey

Consent Form: The Impact of PBIS

I am conducting research on the impact of PBIS on your child's school. I am investigating this because the research will help educators make informed decisions about PBIS practices and guide decision-making in meeting student's needs. If you decide to participate, your child will be asked to participate in an online survey. The survey has eight questions. Questions ask your child's opinion of his/her school experience.

There are no risks to students in this study. All information is confidential, and no person or school will be identified in the study. Students will not be asked to share their name or any other personal information in the survey. Student responses will be used for the purpose of this study. Additionally, the school PBIS team will be given a summary of student responses. North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Committee, and Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports will receive a copy of the final report.

If you choose for your child to participate, there will be no rewards for participating. If you choose for your child to not participate, there will be no consequences. If you choose for your child to participate, they may choose to answer any, all, or none of the questions presented in the survey. There will be no consequences for non-completion. As all responses are anonymous, you may not ask to have your student's response withdrawn, as there is no way to identify which response is your child's response.

If you would like to know more about this project, feel free to contact me at XXXX or email me at XXXXX. This project has been approved by the Institutional Review Board at Gardner-Webb University. Information on Gardner-Webb University's policy and procedure for research involving humans can be obtained from Dr. Doug Eury at Gardner-Webb University.

You will get a copy of this consent form. You may also request a copy of the survey prior to consent.

Amber Halliburton
Ed.D. Candidate, Gardner-Webb University

I give permission for my child _____ to
complete an online survey.

Signed:

Date: _____

I do not give permission for my child _____ to
complete an online survey.

Signed:

Date: _____

Appendix E

Teacher Survey Questions

Teacher Survey Questions

1. How many years have you been working at this school?

- ☐ 0-2
- ☐ 3-5
- ☐ 6-8
- ☐ 9-11
- ☐ 12+
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

2. Please answer the following questions.

Strongly
Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly
Agree

a. School
environment has
been positively
impacted by
PBIS.

b. Teachers
understand the
PBIS
framework.

c. School
attendance has
improved
because of
PBIS.

d. Students
benefit because
of PBIS.

e. Some
teachers/staff
are more

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|----------------------|----------|---------|-------|-------------------|
| consistent with PBIS than others. | | | | | |
| f. I am glad that our school uses PBIS. | | | | | |
| g. The PBIS team communicates effectively with staff members. | | | | | |
| h. PBIS is effective in increasing instructional time. | | | | | |
| i. PBIS helps teachers objectively measure student behavior. | | | | | |
| j. PBIS has improved communication. | | | | | |
| k. PBIS has helped reduce suspensions (ISS and/or OSS). | | | | | |
| l. I receive/have received adequate training on PBIS. | | | | | |

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--|----------------------|----------|---------|-------|-------------------|
| m. PBIS is implemented with consistency throughout the school. | | | | | |
| n. There are specific school-wide expectations and rules. | | | | | |
| o. PBIS data is shared with stakeholders. | | | | | |

3. Please respond based on your experiences in your current position.

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Disagree |
|---|----------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------|
| a. I feel safe at this school. | | | | | |
| b. PBIS has improved academic achievement. | | | | | |
| c. Students treat each other with respect. | | | | | |
| d. I feel like I can teach without negative behaviors interrupting the classroom. | | | | | |
| e. PBIS has helped reduce suspensions (ISS and/or | | | | | |

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Disagree |
|---|----------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------|
| OSS). | | | | | |
| f. Our school is a safe place for students and teachers. | | | | | |
| g. Teachers are expected to handle negative behaviors in the classroom and not send students to the office. | | | | | |
| h. PBIS has been implemented with high fidelity. | | | | | |
| i. I have a good relationship with most of my students. | | | | | |
| j. Most teachers have positive interactions with students. | | | | | |
| k. Most teachers have good relationships with students. | | | | | |
| l. PBIS has helped improve academic achievement. | | | | | |

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Disagree |
|--|----------------------|----------|---------|-------|-------------------|
| m. PBIS has helped reduce bullying. | | | | | |
| n. Teachers are supported when dealing with student behaviors. | | | | | |
| o. PBIS has helped increase instruction time in the classroom. | | | | | |
| p. PBIS has improved attendance. | | | | | |
| q. Teachers communicate better because of PBIS. | | | | | |
| 4. PBIS has: | | | | | |
| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| a. Reduced student disrespect. | | | | | |
| b. Reduced fighting. | | | | | |
| c. Reduced vandalism. | | | | | |
| d. Increased work effort of students. | | | | | |

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--|----------------------|----------|---------|-------|-------------------|
| e. Decreased bullying. | | | | | |
| f. Increased attendance. | | | | | |
| g. Improved student-student interactions. | | | | | |
| h. Improved student-teacher interactions. | | | | | |
| i. Improved academic achievement | | | | | |
| j. Decreased suspensions. | | | | | |
| k. Increased teacher's stress. | | | | | |
| l. Improved school morale. | | | | | |
| m. Increased school safety. | | | | | |
| n. Been a positive experience for our school. | | | | | |
| o. Improved communication. | | | | | |

5. Rules and expectations are consistent in the following locations:

| | Classroom | Hallway | Bathroom | Playground | Buses | Before school | After school |
|----------------------|-----------|---------|----------|------------|-------|------------------|-----------------|
| For me | | | | | | | |
| All/Most teachers | | | | | | | |
| Administration | | | | | | | |

Appendix F

Correlation of Teacher Survey with Research Questions

| Teacher Survey Question | RQ 1 | RQ 2 | RQ 3 | Demographics | NCTWCS4 | NCTWCS6 | PBIS Implemen- tation |
|-------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|--------------|---------|---------|-----------------------------|
| 1 | | | | X | | | |
| 2a | | | x | | | | |
| 2b | | | | | | X | X |
| 2c | x | | | | | | |
| 2d | x | x | x | | x | | |
| 2e | | | x | | | x | X |
| 2f | | | x | | | x | |
| 2g | | | x | | | x | X |
| 2h | | | x | | x | x | |
| 2i | x | | | | x | | |
| 2j | x | | x | | x | x | |
| 2k | x | | | | x | | |
| 2l | | | | | | | X |
| 2m | | | x | | | | X |
| 2n | | | x | | | | X |
| 2o | | | x | | | x | |
| 3a | x | | x | | x | | |
| 3b | x | | | | x | | |
| 3c | x | | | | x | | |
| 3d | | x | | | | x | |
| 3e | x | | | | x | | |
| 3f | x | | x | | x | x | |
| 3g | | | x | | | x | |
| 3h | | | | | | | X |
| 3i | x | | | | x | | |

| | | | | | | |
|----------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3j | x | | | x | | |
| 3k | x | | | x | | |
| 3l | | x | | | | |
| 3m | x | | x | x | | |
| 3n | | | x | | x | |
| 3o | | x | | x | | |
| 3p | x | | | | | |
| 3q | | | x | | x | |
| 4a | x | | x | x | | |
| 4b | x | | x | x | | |
| 4c | x | | x | x | | |
| 4d | | x | | | | |
| 4e | x | | | x | | |
| 4f | | x | | | | |
| 4g | x | | x | x | | |
| 4h | x | | | x | | |
| 4i | | x | | | | |
| 4j | x | | | x | | |
| 4k | | | x | | x | |
| 4l | | | x | | x | |
| 4m | x | | x | x | x | |
| 4n | | | x | | x | |
| 4o | | | x | | x | |
| 5a (me) | | | x | | x | X |
| 5b(all) | | | X | | x | X |
| 5c (admin.) | | | X | | x | X |

Appendix G

Student Survey Questions

Student Survey Questions

1. How well do you know the rules for each of these places:

| | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| I know all of the rules | I know most of the rules | I do NOT know the rules |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|

Classroom

Bathroom

Hallways

Cafeteria

Gym

Buses

Computers

Playground

Do you follow the rules? Why or why not?

2. Please answer the following questions about yourself and your school.

| | | |
|----------|------------------------------|-------|
| Disagree | Neither agree or disagree | Agree |
|----------|------------------------------|-------|

a. Teachers treat
students fairly.

b. I feel safe at
this school.

c. I try to follow
the rules at
school.

d. I am rewarded
for good
behavior.

e. I want to
come to school.

Disagree

Neither agree or
disagree

Agree

f. I know the
rules at school.

g. Students who
follow the rules
do not get
rewarded.

h. I have friends
at this school.

i. I enjoy coming
to school.

j. My teachers
can teach
without students
misbehaving.

k. Teachers
reward students
for good
behavior.

l. A lot of
students
misbehave at
school.

m. I have a good
relationship with
most of my
teachers.

n. We learn
about good
behavior at
school.

3. I am rewarded for good behavior.

☐ Never

- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Always/A lot

How are students rewarded for good behavior?

4. How do you feel in these areas at your school:

I feel safe. I feel safe sometimes. I do not feel safe.

In the
classrooms.

In the hallways.

In the bathroom

In the gym.

In the cafeteria.

In the office.

On the
playground.

During school
events.

On the bus.

Before school.

After school.

When the
teacher is there.

When the
teacher is not
there.

When I am alone
with other
students.

5. Please answer the following questions about your school.

| | Never | Sometimes | All the time |
|---|-------|-----------|--------------|
| a. I have seen other students bullied or mistreated. | | | |
| b. I have bullied other students. | | | |
| c. I have been bullied at school. | | | |
| d. I have hit or threaten to hit another student. | | | |
| e. Students use profanity and/or inappropriate language (bad words) at school. | | | |
| f. Students are disrespectful to teachers. | | | |
| g. Students hit or threaten to hit teachers. | | | |
| h. Students make fun of others at school. | | | |
| i. It is hard to learn in class because students are not listening to the teachers. | | | |
| j. Students receive ISS or OSS for negative | | | |

Never

Sometimes

All the time

(bad) behavior.

k. Students are rewarded for making good choices.

l. Students say bad things about others on Facebook and/or Twitter.

m. Students say bad things about others using cell phones.

n. Most students are at school most of the time. Most students have good attendance.

6. All of my teachers have the same rules and expectations for me.

☐ Yes

☐ No

7. How do students learn the school rules? Select all that apply.

☐ Teachers tell students the rules.

☐ Rules are posted in the school.

☐ The principal teaches the rules.

☐ We talk about the rules.

☐ We are reminded about the rules.

☐ The rules are posted in the classroom.

☐ Students just know the rules.

☐ We don't learn about the rules.

8. Students get to help choose rewards.

☐ Yes.

☐ No

☐ Sometimes

Appendix H

Correlation of Student Survey Questions with Research Questions

| Student Survey Questions | RQ1 | RQ2 | RQ3 | Demographics | PBIS Implementation |
|--------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|--------------|------------------------|
| 1 | | | X | | x |
| 2a | x | | X | | |
| 2b | x | | X | | |
| 2c | x | | X | | |
| 2d | x | | X | | |
| 2e | x | | X | | |
| 2f | | | X | | x |
| 2g | | | X | | |
| 2h | x | | | | |
| 2i | x | | | | |
| 2j | | x | X | | |
| 2k | | | X | | |
| 2l | x | | | | |
| 2m | x | | | | |
| 2n | | | X | | x |
| 3a | | | X | | |
| 4a | | | X | | |
| 5a | x | | X | | |
| 5b | x | | X | | |
| 5c | x | | X | | |
| 5d | x | | X | | |
| 5e | x | | X | | |
| 5f | x | | X | | |
| 5g | x | | X | | |
| 5h | x | | X | | |

| | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|---|
| 5i | | x | | |
| 5j | x | | | |
| 5k | | | X | |
| 5l | x | | | |
| 5m | x | | | |
| 5n | x | | | |
| 6 | | | X | |
| 7 | | | X | x |
| 8 | | | X | x |

Appendix I

Focus Group Questions

Focus Group Questions

1. Describe how your school implements/uses PBIS.
2. How has PBIS impacted you as a teacher?
3. Describe the impact PBIS has on student relationships.
4. How has PBIS impacted instructional time?
5. How has PBIS impacted academic achievement?
6. How has PBIS affected school safety?
7. How are students rewarded for positive behaviors?
8. How are students taught school expectations?
9. Is there anything else you would like to add about PBIS?

Appendix J

Correlation of Focus Group Questions and Research Questions

| Focus Group Questions | RQ1 | RQ2 | RQ3 | NCTWCS4 | NCTWCS6 |
|-------------------------|-----|-----|-----|---------|---------|
| 1 | | | X | | x |
| 2 | x | x | X | x | x |
| 3 | x | | | x | |
| 4 | | x | | x | x |
| 5 | | x | | x | x |
| 6 | x | | X | x | |
| 7 | | | X | | x |
| 8 | | | X | | x |
| 9 - additional comments | | | | | |