12-2020

A Mixed Methods Study of Middle School Teachers' Perceptions of Schoolwide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports and Its Influence on Effective Implementation

Tiffany J. Baskin-Downs

A Mixed Methods Study of Middle School Teachers' Perceptions of
Schoolwide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports
and Its Influence on Effective Implementation

by Tiffany J. Baskin-Downs

This dissertation has been read and approved as fulfilling the partial requirement for the
Degree of Doctor of Education in Curriculum and Leadership.

Parul Acharya, Ph.D. Chair	Jennifer M. Lovelace, PhD Director, Doctoral Program in Education
Parul Acharya, PhD Methodologist	Brian Tyo, PhD Director, COEHP Graduate Studies
Japheth Koech, PhD Committee Member	Deirdre Greer, PhD Dean, COEHP Committee Member

A MIXED METHODS STUDY OF MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOLWIDE POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTIONS AND SUPPORTS AND ITS INFLUENCE ON EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION

by

Tiffany J. Baskin-Downs

A Dissertation
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for
the Degree of Doctor of Education
in Curriculum and Leadership
DEPARTMENT OF COUNSELING, FOUNDATIONS, AND LEADERSHIP

Columbus State University
Columbus, GA

December 2020

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my late father, James Coleman Baskin, and my daughters, Aunyé and Mattison Downs. My father was taken from us via the deadly COVID-19 virus. My father pushed me to strive academically and was very enthusiastic about me earning the first doctorate degree within the Baskin Family. His passing pushed me to complete this process instead of taking time off to mourn his death. Daddy, I miss you, rather we miss you immensely, and I hope that viewing this accomplishment from Heaven will bring you added joy.

To my wonderful daughters, I also dedicate this dissertation to the two of you. Both of you have been very patient with me through this process. Your words stating, "We want both of our parents to be 'Doctors'" always resound within my head when I feel overwhelmed. The two of you have endured cooking dinner, listening to Erykah Badu on repeat, having to ride home with peers after activities, and a couple of missed attendances to your sporting events due to me attending school. I love you and know that just like you encouraged me, I am encouraging you accomplish every goal seen and unseen. Kisses!

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

During this doctoral journey, I have endured a lot of roadblocks; however, with the grace of God, I have persevered. I would like to thank my dear mother, K. Yvonne Baskin, who watched my daughters every Wednesday as I traveled to class for 3 years, and was one of my proofreaders on countless papers, and my dissertation. Thank you for attending my first dissertation presentation, Prospectus, encouraging me and reminding me that all would be fine. Your support has helped me to get through this journey. I love you!

Stephanie Baskin-Mathews and Brittany Baskin, my dear sisters, I thank you for always expressing your delight with me pushing forward. The two of you made me laugh when I needed a break, dried my tears when I cried, danced with me when I needed to be silly, and provided a listening ear when I needed to vent. I love both of you!

Dr. Tara Billingslea, my friend, and Soror, thank you for assisting me with EVERYTHING!!! There is not enough space for me to detail all that you have assisted me with. You are a wonderful and thoughtful friend. When I started this dissertation journey, you began referring to me as Dr. Downs, well now the time has finally arrived. I love you!

Behavior Team, Team TK (Tawanna, Tawanda, Tara, Kim B, and Kim G), my friends, Sorors, and colleagues. This team has been absolutely amazing with supporting me with my research. Thank you for your consistent encouragement, and ceaseless provision through this process. I love all of you!!

My Baskin and Boston Family- The support given from these families is always endless. I love all of you!

Dr. Carolyn J. Jackson, my second set of eyes. Thank you, Dr. Jackson for proofing my writing and giving me the needed support and critiquing what I needed to get to this point. You are the BEST! I love you!

Dr. Benjamin Downs, my ex-husband, thank you for your support with my statistics classes, proofing and critiquing my writing, and supporting our girls through this process. I appreciate you! AGAPE

Dr. Paul Hackett, my initial advisor through the Ed.S. and Ed.D. process, thank you for your support and encouragement to apply for the doctoral program. I appreciate you!

Ms. Julia Burnett, our graduate Superwoman. Julia, no matter the question, detail, or need; you have always been professional, patient, kind, and proficient. I appreciate you!

Dr. Deirdre Greer, Dean of College of Education and Health Professions, and Dr. Japheth Koech, eLearning Specialist, my committee members. Thank you for guiding me with just enough sternness to keep me from throwing in the towel. Your dedication to me reaching my goal is valued beyond measure. I appreciate both of you!

Last, but certainly not least, Dr. Parul Acharya, my Dissertation Chair and Methodologist. Thank you for the long meetings, phone calls, and endless revisions of each chapter. Dr. A., you have stretched me and pushed me to excel in ways that I never thought I could reach. Your dedication is unmatched. Not only did you support me academically, but you also showed your softer side when I had brain aneurysm surgery and during the period of losing my father to COVID-19. And, to the Henry County Cohort, I absolutely adore, respect, and LOVE YOU!

ABSTRACT

The use of a multi-tiered system of supports framework has been of growing interest in addressing issues related to disruptive behaviors and school suspensions. The purpose of this mixed-methods sequential, explanatory study was to examine middle school teachers' perceptions (behavioral expectations defined, behavioral expectations taught, and an ongoing system for rewarding behavioral expectations) of their efforts toward implementing Schoolwide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports with fidelity in two middle schools within an urban school district located in Georgia. Data analyses included descriptive statistics, homogeneity of variance Levene's test, *t*-tests, factorial analysis, a one-way analysis of variance, post-hoc tests, frequencies and percentages of suspension, and coding to discover themes from focus group responses. Findings were that teacher participants who were SWPBIS members were assumed were assumed to be more knowledgeable and to know more about policy knew more about policy and procedures than non-SWPBIS members. The results indicated that there was statistically significant difference in years of full-time teaching experience between 6 – 10 years and 11 to 15 years and between 11 to 15 years and more than 20 years. In-school and out-of-school suspensions in M. N. Middle School were less than those in C. M. Middle School to a statistically significant degree, and students received fewer suspensions. Focus group findings showed that the majority of participants held high expectations for student behavior. A review of the results implied that schools with increased disruptive behaviors and suspensions may be motivated to adopt a discipline program. The implications for positive social change are dependent on middle school teachers effectively using SWPBIS with fidelity to improve students' behavior.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Lists of Tables x

Lists of Figures xiv

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION 1
- Background of the Problem 7
- Statement of the Problem 11
- Purpose of the Study 15
- Research Questions and Hypotheses 16
- Methodology Overview 19
- Delimitations and Limitations 22
- Definitions of Terms 24
- Significance of the Study 30
- Summary 32

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE 36
- Theoretical Framework 36
- Historical Overview and Legislation Background of SWPBIS 45
  - Elementary and Secondary Education Act 46
  - The Individual with Disabilities Education Act 47
  - No Child Left Behind Act 48
  - Every Student Succeeds Act 51
- Response to Intervention to Intervention and SWPBIS 52
  - Tier 1: High-quality Classroom Instruction, Screening, and Interventions 53
  - Tier 2: Targeted Interventions 54
  - Tier 3: Intensive Interventions and Comprehensive Evaluations 55
- Behavioral Expectations Defined 55
- Behavioral Expectations Taught 56
- Ongoing Reward Behavioral Expectations 58
- PBIS and Social and Emotional Learning 59
- Restorative Discipline and Suspensions 60
- Types of Suspensions 61
- Suspensions and Student Outcomes 63
- Interventions to Control Student Behavior 64
- Suspensions and School Absences 68
- Teacher Perceptions of Buy-in Towards SWPBIS Implementation 69
- Teacher Efficacy and Emotional Status of Children 77
- Culturally Responsive PBIS 80
- Implementing SWPBIS with Fidelity 81
- Barriers to SWPBIS Implementation 83
- Criticisms about the SWPBIS Program 84
- Gaps in the Literature 85
- Summary 86

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY 87
Research Design 88
Role of the Researcher 89
Participants and Sampling 90
Instrumentation 93
Data Collection 98
Data Analysis 105
Summary 110

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS 111
Research Questions and Hypotheses 111
Demographics 115
Descriptive Analysis 117
Inferential Analysis 121
Findings 123
Research Question 1 123
Research Question 2 125
Research Question 3 127
Research Question 4 129
Research Question 5 134
Research Question 6 137
Research Question 7 141
Research Question 8 144
Research Question 9 151
Research Question 10 174
Research Question 11 174
Summary 184

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION 187
Quantitative Results Summary 188
ANOVA Results of ISS and OSS 190
Qualitative Results Summary 190
Mixed-Methods Results 195
Limitations of the Study 200
Recommendations for Future Research 201
Study Implications 205
Conclusion 208

REFERENCES 211

APPENDICES 235
Appendix A: School Evaluation Tool (SET) 236
Appendix B: Focus Group Questions and Protocol 239
Appendix C: Letter for Principals 240
Appendix D: 2017-18 Frequency Table of OSS Data 242

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Percentage of Students Receiving ISS and OSS by Grade Level (2017-18).....11

Table 2. Race/Ethnicity of Students Receiving ISS and OSS (2017-18) 12

Table 3. Special Education/General Education Students (2017-18).....12

Table 4. Percentage of ISS and OSS (2017-18).....12

Table 5. Percentage of Schools Reporting Corporal Punishment and Percentage of Children Attending Schools Using Corporal Punishment by State (2011-12) 66

Table 6. SET Features and Mean Interobserver Agreement for Seven Key Features 98

Table 7. Schoolwide Evaluation Tool Matching Guide.....104

Table 8. Gender of Teacher Participants.....115

Table 9. Ethnicity of Teacher Participants.....116

Table 10. Age of Teacher Participants.....116

Table 11. Years of Employment with the School District and Years of Teaching Experience.....117

Table 12. Frequency of Behavioral Expectations Defined 118

Table 13. Frequency of Behavioral Expectations Taught.....120

Table 14. Frequency of Ongoing System for Rewarding Behavioral Expectations 122

Table 15. Summary of Constructs for Cronbach's Reliability 123

Table 16. Descriptives for Behavioral Expectations Defined and SWPBIS Team Member.....125

Table 17. Independent Samples *t*-Test for Behavioral Expectations Defined 125

Table 18. Descriptives for Behavioral Expectations Defined and SWPBIS Team Member.....127

Table 19. Independent Samples *t*-Test for Behavioral Expectations Defined 127

Table 20. Descriptives for Ongoing System for Rewarding Expectations and SWPBIS Team Member 129

Table 21. Independent Samples *t*-Test for Ongoing System for Rewarding Expectations and SWPBIS Team Member 129

Table 22. Welch's Test of Behavioral Expectations Defined 131

Table 23. One-way ANOVA for Behavioral Expectations Defined and Years of Full-time Teaching Experience 132

Table 24. Descriptives for Behavioral Expectations Defined and Years of Full-time Teaching Experience 132

Table 25. Test of Homogeneity of Variances for Behavioral Expectations Defined and Years of Full-time Teaching Experience 132

Table 26. One-way ANOVA for Behavioral Expectations Defined and Years of Full-time Teaching Experience 133

Table 27. Games-Howell Post-hoc Test of Behavioral Expectations Defined 134

Table 28. One-way ANOVA for Behavioral Expectations Taught and Years of Full-time Teaching Experience 136

Table 29. Descriptives for Behavioral Expectations Taught and Years of Full-time Teaching Experience 136

Table 30. Test of Homogeneity of Variances for Behavioral Expectations Taught and Years of Full-time Teaching Experience 137

Table 31. ANOVA for Behavioral Expectations Taught and Years of Full-time Teaching Experience 137

Table 32. Descriptives for Ongoing System for Rewarding Behavioral Expectations and Years of Full-time Teaching Experience 139

Table 33. Test of Homogeneity of Variances for Ongoing System for Rewarding Behavioral Expectations and Years of Full-time Teaching Experience 139
Table 34. One-way ANOVA for Ongoing System for Rewarding Behavioral Expectations and Years of Full-time Teaching Experience.....140
Table 35. ANOVA for Ongoing System for Rewarding Behavioral Expectations and Years of Full-time Teaching Experience 140
Table 36. Group Statistics for ISS 142
Table 37. *t*-Test Results for ISS.....143
Table 38. C. M. Middle School Statistics for ISS and OSS Total Days Summary 2017-18 and 2018-19 144
Table 39. Group Statistics for OSS.....145
Table 40. *t*-Test Results for OSS 146
Table 41. C. M. Middle School ISS and OSS Data 2017-18.....146
Table 42. C. M. Middle School ISS and OSS Data 2018-19.....147
Table 43. M. N. Middle School Statistics for ISS and OSS Total Days Summary 2017-18 and 2018-19 149
Table 44. M. N. Middle School Statistics for ISS and OSS Data 2017-18 149
Table 45. M. N. Middle School Statistics for ISS and OSS Data 2018-19 150
Table 46. Focus Group Demographics 152
Table 47. Frequency of Themes.....153
Table 48. Joint Display of School Evaluation Tool Matching Guides/Survey Questions and Focus Group Questions.....153
Table 49. Joint Display Table: Comparison of ISS and OSS with Focus Group 177
Table 50. Comparison of SWPBIS Perceptions with Quantitative ANOVA Results 179

Table 51. Comparison of Quantitative SWPBIS Perceptions with *t*-Tests Results.....183

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Joint display to facilitation integration of quantitative and qualitative research 22

Figure 2. Vroom's expectancy theory of motivation: Core theoretical constructs 44

Figure 3. School suspension and student outcomes 65

Figure 4. G*power analysis 92

Chapter I

Introduction

The use of a multi-tiered system of supports framework has been of growing interest in addressing issues related to disruptive behaviors and school suspensions (Bradshaw, Pas, Debnam, & Johnson, 2015; Darling-Hammond, Flook, Cook-Harvey, Barron, & Osher, 2019; Lewis, McIntosh, Simonsen, Mitchell, & Hatton, 2017). The Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) model has received considerable attention and interest in American schools. Bradshaw et al. (2015) examined the adoption—and implementation of PBIS in 31 high schools randomly assigned to implement PBIS in a randomized trial. The researchers explored the extent to which baseline rates of disruptive behaviors (i.e., bullying), and other school-level indicators of disorder were associated with the adoption of the multi-tiered PBIS framework over the course of two years. Multilevel analyses on the longitudinal implementation data indicated that schools with higher baseline rates of bullying generally implemented PBIS with greater fidelity over time. A review of the results indicated that schools with increased disruptive behaviors and suspensions from bullying may be particularly motivated to adopt PBIS. However, other baseline indicators of behavior disorder were generally not associated with PBIS implementation (Bradshaw et al., 2015).

Lewis et al. (2017) provided a rationale and overview of Schoolwide Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (SWPBIS) as a comprehensive framework to support children and youth with emotional/behavioral disorders. SWPBIS is an applied science that seeks to enhance students' quality of life and to minimize problem behavior in classrooms (Bradshaw et al., 2015). SWPBIS is an evidence-based systems approach designed to create and maintain positive school climate where teachers can teach, and

students can learn (Alter & Vlasak, 2014). The framework focuses on providing proactive intervention strategies regarding school discipline problems. The use of schoolwide systems of support to address challenging social and emotional issues has been established in approximately 20,000 schools across the United States and 19 other countries worldwide (Lewis et al., 2017). The systems approach of SWPBIS is guided by evidence-based behavioral interventions across a continuum according to documented student need. The existing research is robust with respect to universal or Tier I interventions and supports. However, less is known about the impact on students who are at high risk of manifesting a disability and those who are currently being served under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004; Lewis et al., 2017).

A review of the results implied that schools with increased disruptive behaviors and suspensions from bullying may be particularly motivated to adopt PBIS. However, other baseline indicators of behavior disorder were generally not associated with PBIS implementation (Bradshaw et al., 2015). Brown (2018) suggested that numerous schools struggle with student behavior. Some schools have selected the option to implement behavior intervention programs intended to increase educational seat time and decrease office discipline referrals (ODR). Brown examined the implementation of a SWPBIS program by planning and implementing a SWPBIS program. In addition, Brown evaluated and analyzed data on the perceptions and practices of teachers and administrators who implemented the SWPBIS program.

Brown (2018) studied the perceptions of teachers and a school administrator regarding the system's impact on classroom management plans, school climate, and student behavior. Data were collected in the case study through structured, face-to-face interviews with an administrator and several teachers. Data were gathered from one

school site that experienced a decline in ODR over the past few years since the program's inception (Brown, 2018). Study participants represented various grade levels and departments; each having worked at the school during the beginning stages of SWPBIS planning and implementing the program. A review of the main findings revealed significant factors that influenced the implementation at the school. Some of the barriers, impediments for this initiative from participants' perspective, and several factors promoted or impeded the implementation of SWPBIS system (Brown, 2018).

A growing body of research supports the effectiveness of SWPBIS with regard to reducing referrals, suspensions, and expulsions and increasing student and staff attendance, connectedness (Darling-Hammond & Cook-Harvey, 2018; Mental Health America, 2019), academic achievement, emotional regulation, and school safety (Bradshaw, Horner, Sugai, & Anderson, 2010; Bradshaw, Mitchell et al., 2010; Horner et al., 2009; Horner et al., 2010; Waasdorp & Leaf, 2012). Additional research studies in elementary and middle schools have demonstrated an impact of SWPBIS on the reduction of in-school suspensions (ISS) and out-of-school suspensions (OSS; Childs et al., 2015; Gray et al., 2017; McIntosh, Gion, & Bastable, 2018). Horner et al. (2009) posited that six criteria could be useful in the adoption of evidence-based practices supported by data on the effectiveness of such practices of SWPBS. These researchers acknowledged multiple systems within a three-tiered behavior support framework. If public schools employed qualified, trained, and knowledgeable personnel, then behavior problems may decrease, and prosocial behavior among students may increase.

Bradshaw et al. (2010) recognized that SWPBIS is a widespread, schoolwide prevention approach implemented in over 9,000 schools across the nation to reduce disruptive behavior problems. SWPBIS is applied through behavioral, social learning,

and organizational behavioral principles to reduce disruptive behavior in classrooms and schools. The major goal of SWPBIS is to modify school environments by creation of behavioral systems and procedures that promote positive change in student behavior with a focus on what teachers do. The researchers utilized archival data from a five-year longitudinal study that utilized a randomized controlled study design to assess SWPBIS effectiveness in 37 elementary schools (Bradshaw et al., 2010). The study examined the influence of staff training on implementing SWPBIS with fidelity. In addition, the focus was on ISS, OSS, ODR, and academic performance of students. The results of the school-level longitudinal analyses showed that schools in which teachers were trained to implement SWPBIS with high fidelity experienced significant reduction in student suspensions and office discipline referrals compared to schools where teachers were not trained in SWPBIS (Bradshaw et al., 2010).

The earlier study of Bradshaw, Waasdorp, and Leaf's (2012) data corroborated with the present study's findings that SWPBIS is implemented in more than 16,000 schools across the United States. The purpose of SWPBIS is to diminish students' behavioral problems by changing and developing systems and supports to meet their behavioral needs. Bradshaw et al. examined the intervention effects on child behavior and adjustment from an effectiveness trial of SWPBIS. The sample included 12,344 elementary school children, which consisted of 52.9% male, 45.1% African American, and 46.1% Caucasian. Approximately 49% of the children received free or reduced-priced meals, and 12.9% received special education services at baseline (Bradshaw et al., 2012). A randomized controlled effectiveness design was implemented in 37 elementary schools. Multilevel analysis was conducted over the course of four academic years on teachers' ratings of children's behavior problems, concentration problems, social-

emotional functioning, prosocial behavior, ISS, OSS, and ODR. The multilevel results indicated statistically significant positive effects of SWPBIS on children's behavior and social-emotional problems, concentration problems, social-emotional functioning, and prosocial behavior (Bradshaw et al., 2012). The outcomes showed that children in SWPBIS schools were 33% less likely to receive ODR than those in the comparison schools. The effects were strongest among children who were initially exposed to SWPBIS in kindergarten and continued the program throughout elementary school. The study results indicated that SWPBIS should begin early in childhood to curtail disruptive behavior later in school (Bradshaw et al., 2012).

Educational disengagement in the middle school transpires when behavioral challenges occur (Fenning et al., 2011). These occurrences most likely yield from middle school personnel handling problematic behaviors through punitive disciplinary measures. Suspension and expulsion are the most frequently used strategies to resolve disciplinary problems, even though these strategies are predictive of reduced school connectedness, increased dropout, and entry to juvenile crime (Fenning et al., 2011).

Rumberger and Losen (2016) found that suspensions in 10th-grade alone produced more than 67,000 dropouts in the United States and generated social costs to the nation of more than $35 billion. OSS and expulsions are the most severe consequences that a school district can impose for unacceptable behavior (Council on School Health, 2013). Students who experienced OSS and expulsions are 10 times more likely to ultimately drop out of high school than are those who do not (Losen, Hodson, Keith, Morrison, & Belway, 2015; Noltemeyer, Ward, & Mcloughlin, 2015).

Moreover, exclusionary discipline is provided disproportionately to students of color and students with disabilities, particularly those students with emotional behavior

disorder (Losen, Hodson, Keith, Morrison, & Belway, 2015). A Multi-Tier System of Supports is a term used to describe how schools provide supports for each child. The supports help each child to be successful and inform the processes and tools teachers, behavioral specialists, and other related service providers use to make decisions (Institute of Education Sciences, 2020). Exclusionary discipline (i.e., OSS, ISS, ODR, and expulsions) remains a common response to problem behavior in schools (Lewis et al., 2017). OSS and expulsions can contribute to the risk of a student dropping out of high school (Council on School Health, 2013; United States Commission on Civil Rights, 2019).

McIntosh, Gion, and Bastable (2018) examined the disciplinary data in schools that implemented SWPBIS and compared these schools to the entire suspension data of United States public schools in the 2013-14 academic year. McIntosh et al.'s results showed that OSS rates were 20% lower in schools that implemented SWPBIS with fidelity. In addition, proper implementation of SWPBIS was related to lower suspension rates, which were not influenced by race/ethnicity.

Gray et al. (2017) conducted a two-year exploratory, mixed-methods research study on the disciplinary practices and climate of schools serving Kindergarten through Grade 8 students in the School District of Philadelphia. Findings revealed that schools were making efforts to reduce suspensions and improve climate. The critical barriers to these efforts included resource limitations and philosophical misalignments between teachers and school leaders. The researchers identified three profiles among schools that served kindergarten through eighth grade students based on information about disciplinary practices and climate. These profiles were predictive of ISS and OSS rates and academic outcomes. Students who attended schools with collaborative climates and

less punitive approaches to discipline had a lower risk of being suspended and had better academic outcomes (Gray et al., 2017).

A longitudinal study conducted by Childs, Kincaid, George, and Gage (2015) utilized data from 1,122 Florida schools to investigate the relationships between the total score and 10 subscale scores on the Benchmarks of Quality (BoQ). The BoQ is a validated SWPBIS implementation fidelity tool, which measures student outcomes. Schools having higher BoQ total scores had lower ODR and correspondingly fewer ISS and OSS. Within the 10 BoQ subscales, the classroom was negatively and significantly associated with ODR and OSS, whereas the BoQ Data Entry Plan was positively and significantly associated with ODR at initial status and across time after controlling for school-level characteristics (i.e., school size and number of years of implementation; Childs et al., 2015).

Background of the Problem

Students' disruptive behavioral issues have become more prevalent in 21st Century classrooms (Heng, 2019) than ever. To address this on-going challenge, school officials implemented a PBIS plan. The program showed positive results to restore school and classroom cultures. The purpose of Heng's qualitative case study was to understand middle school teachers' perspectives on the implementation of the PBIS plan at an urban school located in central California. To gain an in-depth understanding of the perception of middle school teachers concerning the program implementation, face-to-face, semi-structured interviews, and an open discussion forum were conducted. Findings from Heng's qualitative study included the following: (a) rewards for the positive behavior reinforcement, (b) problem solving strategies, (c) teachers' perceptions toward PBIS implementation, (d) lack of buy-in, (e) less is more valuable, and (d) collaborative and

inclusive approach. Findings from Heng's qualitative study may benefit aspiring urban school leaders by helping them to better understand middle school teachers' perspectives on SWPBIS implementation within the urban school settings. Future studies may be required to obtain a comprehensive understanding of urban teachers' perspectives (Heng, 2019).

Nocera, Whitebread, and Nocera (2014) examined the influence of teacher perceptions and attitudes on the effectiveness of schoolwide positive behavior supports (SWPBS) in a low-performing middle school. Results indicated a reduction in ISS, OSS, and ODR, including students with disabilities. In addition, findings showed statistically significant improvement on 30 of 47 items of a school climate and student resiliency survey. School achievement scores on state mastery tests improved in reading by 25% and in mathematics by 11%. The researchers suggested that the implementation of a SWPBS framework may result in improved academic and behavioral outcomes for students. The researchers indicated that few studies have examined the use of a SWPBS approach as part of a comprehensive school improvement process involving academic and student behavioral goals, particularly on the use of data-driven decision making and data teams.

Anderson-Saunders (2016) conducted a qualitative study in an urban, elementary school (Pre-K-Grade 5) to explore perceptions of 20 teachers on how the PBIS framework prepared them to implement SWPBIS in their school and how the program developed prosocial behaviors in students. Findings indicated that the program was beneficial but selective. Additional training was needed after implementation. Parental support was necessary for the development of prosocial behaviors. Themes supported the findings that the SWPBIS framework was beneficial, successful with some students but

not all, and that it must be implemented with fidelity. The limitation was the sample size of 20 purposefully selected teachers from Pre-K-Grade 3 and Grade 5.

Hannigan and Hannigan (2016) found that lack of administrator and teacher buy-in were reasons why SWPBIS did not work in some school districts and schools. Administrators and teachers who did not believe in the fundamental steps that are necessary to implement a comprehensive behavior system produced a staff who did not believe in SWPBIS and often returned to the traditional, easier way of responding to disruptive student behavior. It is important to recognize the teachers' perspectives about behavior to administer prevention-focused initiatives with fidelity because teachers' perspectives are prone to influencing the choice of behavior management that is implemented (Dutton-Tillery, Varjas, & Smith-Collins, 2010). Some teachers viewed student behavior from a developmental perspective, and other teachers viewed misbehavior as a within child issue (Dutton et al., 2010; U.S. Department of Education Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2019).

Lane et al. (2009) suggested that teachers' perspectives have been proven to influence their support. Scott (2018) conducted a qualitative study to explore how teachers perceived their ability to implement PBIS in classrooms and how teachers' perspectives on PBIS implementation in their classrooms influenced their self-efficacy. Data collection included interviews, field notes, and surveys from 15 purposefully selected teachers in kindergarten through Grade 6 who taught at the study school for one school year prior to this current research using the PBIS framework. Results indicated that there was a lack of teacher PBIS training to implement the framework, lack of teacher buy-in, and implementation issues at the school level. Further research was recommended to explore how the PBIS leadership team prepares teachers for PBIS

program implementation, and how teachers are trained to provide additional supports for Tier 2 and Tier 3 students.

Dean (2018) conducted an explanatory, sequential, mixed methods study to examine the SWPBIS perceptions of high school administrators and 98 teachers in a Middle Georgia school district. The qualitative phase of the study consisted of individual interviews with administrators and teachers. The quantitative phase comprised of a PBIS Perception Survey to measure principal and teacher perceptions on the effectiveness of SWPBIS. The methodological limitation of this study was the unclear integration of quantitative and qualitative data. The study results indicated that teacher buy-in must be linked to rewards, expectations, and perceptions of teacher self-efficacy to effectively implement SWPBIS based on support, training, and resources. Feuerborn and Chinn (2012) found that teacher perceptions and practices were one of the most pervasive barriers to effective implementation of SWPBIS.

Pinkelman, McIntosh, Rasplica, Berg, and Strickland-Cohen (2015) identified the most important perceived enablers and barriers regarding sustainability of SWPBIS. An open-ended survey on sustainability of SWPBIS was competed by school personnel in 860 schools which implemented or were about to implement SWPBIS. Qualitative analysis was used to assess perceptions of the most important factors related to sustainability (Pinkelman et al., 2015). Thematic analysis produced 13 themes regarding enablers and barriers. The most commonly cited enablers were staff buy-in, school administrator support, and consistency. Staff buy-in, lack of resources, time, and money were the most significant barriers to sustain SWPBIS.

The most frequent theme that was important to sustain SWPBIS was staff buy-in (n = 214). Buy-in is both an enabler and a barrier. Staff buy-in refers to a commitment to

the principles behind the philosophy of the intervention, such as explicit instruction, inclusion, or the use of positive school discipline practices (Pinkelman et al., 2015). When describing staff buy-in as a barrier to sustainability, one participant responded, "The biggest barrier for our school has been getting staff to initially buy-in. I think once they have gotten on board, they are willing. It is the initial step." Another participant stated:

> It is difficult to get staff to buy-in. Getting the common language of PBIS is difficult for staff. It is difficult to change viewpoints towards active and preventative approaches rather than punitive, as what most teachers in our school are used to doing (Pinkelman et al., 2015).

Statement of the Problem

The concern about problematic, disruptive student behavior, decline in academic performance, and lack of teacher buy-in to implement the SWPBIS program in two middle schools in the Southeastern United States has persisted. A high level of behavior problems exists among middle school students in Grades 6-8 at two local public middle schools as evidenced by numerous ISS and OSS during the 2017-18 and 2018-19 academic school years. A review of the data from prior disciplinary problems revealed that eighth-grade students have the highest percentage (42%) of disruptive behaviors (n = 160) followed by Grade 6 students (36%; n=138), as depicted in Table 1.

Table 1

Percentage of Students Receiving ISS and OSS by Grade Level (2017-18)

		n	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Grade Levels	6	138	36.4	36.4	36.4
	7	81	21.4	21.4	57.8
	8	160	42.2	42.2	100.0
	Total	379	100.0	100.0	

The majority of the students were African Americans, who had the highest percentage (97%) of disruptive behaviors (*n* = 368). The remaining 3% of students belonged to the other categories (i.e., Hawaiian, Hispanic, Indian, and multiracial; see Table 2).

Table 2

Race/Ethnicity of Students Receiving ISS and OSS (2017-18)

		n	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Race	African American	368	97.1	97.1	97.1
	Hawaiian	4	1.1	1.1	98.2
	Hispanic	2	.5	.5	98.7
	Indian	2	.5	.5	99.2
	Multi	3	.8	.8	100.0
	Total	379	100.0	100.0	

The majority of the students (79%) were in general education and these students had not been identified as special needs students (*n* = 301; see Table 3).

Table 3

Special Education/General Education Status (2017-18)

Status		*n*	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
	General Education	301	79.4	79.4	79.4
	Special Education	78	20.6	20.6	100.0
	Total	379	100.0	100.0	

There were more reported incidents of students suspended in OSS (*n*=284) than ISS (*n* = 95; see Table 4).

Table 4

Percentage of ISS and OSS (2017-18)

	n	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
ISS	95	25.1	25.1	25.1
OSS	284	74.9	74.9	100.0
Total	379	100.0	100.0	

The number of days per suspension ranged from one-half day up to 12 days out of school. Most of the offenses resulted in two days out of school (114 incidents), followed by one day (103 incidents). Twenty-three offenses resulted in students spending 10 days in OSS. There were more reported incidents of students suspended in OSS (n = 284) than in ISS (n = 95; Appendix D). Fighting was the number one offense, which resulted in 156 offenses (41%), followed by severe, disorderly conduct with 33 offenses (9%). The last highest offense was rude and disrespectful behavior with 28 offenses (7%). Teachers faced discipline challenges on a daily basis. The two middle schools used in the current study adopted SWPBIS principles to reduce ISS and OSS and to help middle school teachers implement the program with fidelity. Yet, the discipline related problems had not decreased.

The number of schools implementing SWPBIS practices nationwide is increasing on a national level, but still little is known about the fidelity with which teachers are implementing SWPBIS practices in the classroom (Fallon, Sanetti, & McCarthy, 2014; Kincaid et al., 2007). Successful implementation of any behavior management program requires attention to the context where it is being implemented with fidelity (Sugai, Horner, Fixsen, & Blasé, 2010). The gap is in what middle school teachers are teaching in the classroom and what is happening in the SWPBIS program. Are teachers really defining behavioral expectations with students? Are teachers teaching behavioral expectations? Is there an on-going system for rewarding behavioral expectations? Are there resources available to teachers to implement the behavioral program with fidelity? Specifically, data are needed that reflect the consistency with which classroom based SWPBIS practices are implemented, the challenges faced by school personnel to implement SWPBIS, and to ensure the best possible behavioral and academic outcomes

for students. The results of this study could provide insight on how SWPBIS can be enhanced to attract middle school teachers to buy-in and implement SWPBIS with fidelity. Therefore, teachers could implement the program with conformity, which could decrease the classroom disruptions, ISS, and OSS when the SWPBIS strategies are implemented with fidelity.

The current study is distinct from past studies of teacher perceptions of effective implementation of SWPBIS because of the following reasons: First, past studies have indicated that teacher buy-in is important. However, there is limited discussion on why teacher buy-in is insufficient. Second, there is limited discussion in the PBIS literature on how the fidelity of implementation can be improved by creating consistent policies on behavioral expectations defined (BED) by the school district administration, behavioral expectations taught (BET) by the teachers, and an on-going system for rewarding (OR) behavioral expectations. Thirdly, the majority of studies examining PBIS are either quantitative or qualitative. Few studies have examined SWPBIS using a mixed-methods approach (Cooper, 2013; Dean, 2018; Dittrich, 2019; Orozco, 2018; Kuhn, 2014). These mixed-methods studies have methodological limitations with regard to the integration of quantitative and qualitative strands at the design, methods, and interpretation levels (Fetters, Curry, & Creswell, 2013). Furthermore, these studies have limited discussion on integrated results from both strands using mixed-methods techniques such as joint displays and data transformations and narration (explanation of results from both strands using a theme-by-theme approach). The current study attempted to fill these limitations in the research literature of teacher perceptions on implementing SWPBIS with fidelity.

The current study could provide insights on how SWPBIS can be enhanced to attract teachers to buy-in to implement and embrace SWPBIS with fidelity. Hence,

teachers could implement the program with conformity when the SWPBIS strategies are accepted, which could lead to a decrease in classroom disruptions, ISS, and OSS, and have a positive impact on future proper implementation of the program with fidelity.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this mixed methods explanatory sequential study was to examine middle school teachers' perceptions (BED, BET, and OR) of their efforts toward implementing SWPBIS with fidelity in two middle schools within an urban school district located in the Southeastern United States. The Schoolwide Evaluation Tool (SET) was used for the quantitative phase of the study where teachers responded to questions regarding their perceptions on the implementation of SWPBIS with fidelity in their school (see Appendix A). The independent variables were SWPBIS team member, years of full-time teaching experience, and the teacher's role as a team member in the SWPBIS team. The dependent variables were the composite scores of BED, BET, and OR, which were derived from the SET survey.

For the qualitative phase of the study, teachers' perceptions were explored to obtain a rich, in-depth description of how their perceptions of knowledge, experiences, training, and support within SWPBIS are related to their participation or non-participation on the SWPBIS team and their years of full-time teaching experience and teacher's role as a team member in the SWPBIS team in implementing SWPBIS with fidelity. Exploring teachers' perceptions of this program may provide a safer, more orderly, and more positive school environment. The findings may increase the involvement of administration, teachers, staff, parents, and students to implement the program with fidelity and buy-in to the elements of the SWPBIS program. Student disciplinary rates may be reduced with such innovative strategies on a district-wide basis.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research Question 1: To what extent do sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers' perceptions differ in BED within SWPBIS when they are part of the SWPBIS team versus when they are not? (quantitative)

Null Hypothesis 1: There were no statistically significant differences among sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers' perceptions in BED within SWPBIS when they are part of the SWPBIS team versus when they are not.

Alternate Hypothesis 1: There were statistically significant differences among sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers' perceptions in BED within SWPBIS when they are part of the SWPBIS team versus when they are not.

Research Question 2. To what extent do sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers' perceptions differ in BET within SWPBIS when they are part of the SWPBIS team versus when they are not? (quantitative)

Null Hypothesis 2: There were no statistically significant differences among sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers' perceptions in BET within SWPBIS when they are part of the SWPBIS team versus when they are not.

Alternate Hypothesis 2: There were statistically significant differences among sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers' perceptions in BET within SWPBIS when they are part of the SWPBIS team versus when they are not.

Research Question 3: To what extent do sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers' perceptions differ in an ongoing system for rewarding behavioral expectations within SWPBIS when they are part of the SWPBIS team versus when they are not? (quantitative)

Null Hypothesis 3: There were no statistically significant differences among sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers' perceptions in an ongoing system for rewarding behavioral expectations within SWPBIS when they are part of the SWPBIS team versus when they are not.

Alternate Hypothesis 3: There were statistically significant differences among sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers' perceptions in an ongoing system for rewarding behavioral expectations within SWPBIS when they are part of the SWPBIS team versus when they are not.

Research Question 4: What are the differences in perceptions of sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers regarding BED within SWPBIS based on their number of years of full-time teaching experience and a teacher's role as a team member in the SWPBIS team? (quantitative)

Null Hypothesis 4: There were no statistically significant differences among sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers' perceptions in BED within SWPBIS based on their number of years of full-time teaching experience and a teacher's role as a team member in the SWPBIS team.

Alternate Hypothesis 4: There were statistically significant differences among sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers' perceptions in BED within SWPBIS based on their number of years of full-time teaching experience and a teacher's role as a team member in the SWPBIS team.

Research Question 5: What are the differences in perceptions of sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers regarding BET within SWPBIS based on their number of years of full-time teaching experience and a teacher's role as a team member in the SWPBIS team? (quantitative)

Null Hypothesis 5: There were no statistically significant differences among sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers' perceptions in BET within SWPBIS based on their number of years of full-time teaching experience and a teacher's role as a team member in the SWPBIS team.

Alternate Hypothesis 5: There were statistically significant differences among sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers' perceptions in BET within SWPBIS based on their number of years of full-time teaching experience and a teacher's role as a team member in the SWPBIS team.

Research Question 6: What are the differences in perceptions of sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers regarding OR behavioral expectations within SWPBIS based on their number of years of full-time teaching experience and a teacher's role as a team member in the SWPBIS team? (quantitative)

Null Hypothesis 6: There were no statistically significant differences among sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers' perceptions in OR behavioral expectations within SWPBIS based on their number of years of full-time teaching experience and a teacher's role as a team member in the SWPBIS team.

Alternate Hypothesis 6: There were statistically significant differences among sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers' perceptions in OR within SWPBIS based on their number of years of full-time teaching experience and a teacher's role as a team member in the SWPBIS team.

Research Question 7: What are the differences in ISS rates between C. M. Middle School and M. N. Middle School? (quantitative)

Null Hypothesis 7: There were no statistically significant differences in ISS rates between C. M. Middle School and M. N. Middle School.

Alternate Hypothesis 7: There were statistically significant differences in ISS rates between C. M. Middle School and M. N. Middle School.

Research Question 8: What are the differences in OSS rates between C. M. Middle School and M. N. Middle School? (quantitative)

Null Hypothesis 8: There were no statistically significant differences in OSS rates between C. M. Middle School and M. N. Middle School.

Alternate Hypothesis 8: There were statistically significant differences in OSS rates between C. M. Middle School and M. N. Middle School.

Research Question 9: How are teachers' perceptions of their knowledge, experiences, training, and support within SWPBIS related to their participation and non-participation on the SWPBIS team and their years of full-time teaching experience and a teacher's role as a team member in the SWPBIS team on implementing SWPBIS with fidelity? (qualitative)

Research Question 10: What are the teachers' perceptions of BED, BET, and an ongoing system for rewarding behavioral expectations within SWPBIS? (mixed-methods)

Research Question 11: How do these perceptions influence their participation and non-participation on the SWPBIS team and their years of full-time teaching experience and a teacher's role as a team member in the SWPBIS team on implementing SWPBIS with fidelity? (mixed-methods)

Methodology Overview

Quantitative phase. There were two phases of this study: quantitative and qualitative (Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017). The purpose of the quantitative component was to collect data from the SET survey (Sugai, Lewis-Palmer, Todd, & Horner, 2001) on middle school teacher demographics and their perceptions on BED,

BET, and a system for rewarding behavioral expectations within SWPBIS with fidelity. A causal-comparative research design was utilized because the groups by grade level were already formed. Purposive sampling was used to select Grades 6-8 teachers from two middle schools where SWPBIS was put into practice.

Participants were asked to use a five-point Likert-type scale of 1= Strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Not sure, 4= Agree, and 5= Strongly agree to rate the nine (Appendix A) subcategories of the SET survey. Cronbach alpha reliability analysis was conducted to assess the internal consistency of the SET survey items. The psychometric properties of SET survey showed excellent internal consistency (.96), interrater (99%), and test-retest (.97) reliability, moderate to strong concurrent validity with other measures of SWPBIS fidelity of implementation (r=.75), and sensitivity to SWPBIS training (Horner et al., 2004).

Data collection began after obtaining approval from the Columbus State University Institutional Review Board (IRB), the school district, and the participants via informed consent through electronic signatures. The focus group session was conducted online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Data analysis occurred in SPSS (version 24) and consisted of descriptive statistics (i.e., mean, variance, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis), independent samples *t*-tests, and ANOVA analysis. The composite scores of BED, BET, and OR (dependent variables), teachers' role as team members of SWPBIS, and years of teaching experience were used to answer the eight quantitative research questions.

Qualitative phase. The purpose of the qualitative component was to obtain a rich, in-depth description of middle school teachers' perceptions on what factors promoted or impeded their buy-in into the SWPBIS program and how it can be implemented with

fidelity. A phenomenological research design was utilized to examine the lived experiences of teacher perceptions of buy-in, reward systems, and self-efficacy to implement SWPBIS with fidelity. Data collection in this phase occurred through a focus group session in which nine teachers were purposively selected from those who had completed the SET survey in the quantitative phase. The focus group session was conducted online via Zoom teleconference due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The discussion in the focus group session was based on 11 questions (Appendix B). Teacher responses were recorded digitally with audio and video. Permissions from the district superintendent and two middle school principals were obtained before conducting the focus group session that was held during a Zoom teleconference.

Data analysis was a "qualitative analytic process which is cyclical, where first cycle of coding occurred during the initial coding of the data" (Rogers, 2018, p. 890). Using a manual coding process, the aim of the first phase of coding was to develop a code list that described the issues, aspects, phenomena, themes that are in the data, naming them, and trying to make sense of them in terms of similarities and differences. This procedure resulted in a structured code list that was utilized during second-stage coding. The code list was refined further with a few more cycles of coding until the coding schema was fully developed. Selective coding and intermediate coding were utilized in a second cycle coding (Skjott & Korsgaard, 2019). Member-checking and interrater reliability were utilized to establish the credibility, confirmability, dependability, and trustworthiness of qualitative codes (Smith & McGannon, 2018). Transcripts were emailed to teacher participants to ensure the accuracy of their responses during member checking.

Mixed methods analysis. Triangulation involves using multiple methods, data sources, observers, or theories to gain a more complete understanding of the phenomenon being studied. Triangulation was used to ensure that the research findings were robust, rich, comprehensive, and well-developed (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Methodological triangulation using linking of quantitative and qualitative data were used to integrate the data derived from the SET quantitative survey and qualitative focus group. Joint display tables were utilized to integrate the quantitative and qualitative data to visually summarize the insights and to derive conclusions that are over and above the separate analysis of both data strands. The weaving technique was used to construct a theme-by-theme discussion of the results obtained from the integration of quantitative and qualitative phases (Bradt et al., 2015; Guetterman, 2019).

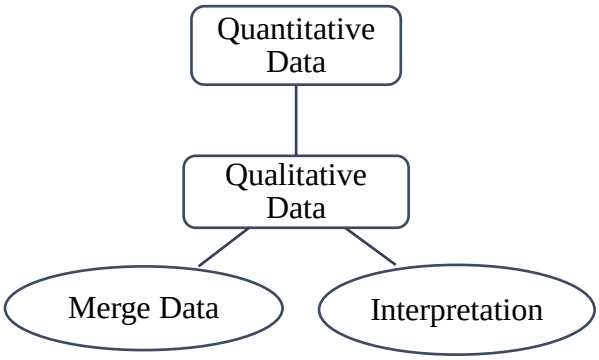

Figure 1. Joint display to facilitate integration of quantitative and qualitative research.
Note. Adapted from "Joint Displays to Facilitate Integration of Qualitative and Quantitative Research," by T. C. Guetterman, 2019. Mixed Methods International Research Association and IIQM Webinar. https://www.ualberta.ca/international-institute-for-qualitative-methodology/media-library/international-institute-of-qualitative-methods/webinars/mixed methods/2019/t-guetterman-mm-aug27-2019-final.pdf

Delimitations and Limitations

Delimitations. The delimitations of a study are those characteristics that limit the scope but are within the control of the researcher. Delimitations define the boundaries of the research, as determined by exclusionary and inclusionary decisions that are made throughout the development of the study (Simon & Goes, 2013). The first delimitation

was the choice of the problem itself. Bias in the sample selection could have occurred as participants in the focus group worked with the researcher in the same building, and those within the same school district that may or may not have known the researcher.

To mitigate conflict of interest in the focus group, teachers served as volunteers in the focus group. If more than 10 participants volunteered, the researcher put their names in a box and randomly pulled names until 3 to 4 participants from each grade level were randomly selected. The researcher was cautious of not using coercion because it raised some of the most difficult ethical issues. Coercion can cause psychological and physical harm, and it also threatened middle school teachers' perception of what SWPBIS discipline is and how it helped them to control disruptive student behavior. The principal investigator or co-principal investigator were not related to any of the study participants and were not in any supervisory position that could lead to coercion.

The role of the researcher may interfere with working personal relationships that may also create conflict of interest. There may be a conflict of interest since the researcher worked in the same school where data collection took place. Conflict of interest was mitigated to a considerable extent because the survey was completed online. All survey responses were anonymous. However, some level of conflict of interest could have occurred as the researcher was the moderator in the focus group session.

Limitations. The limitations of the study are those characteristics of design or methodology that set parameters on the application or interpretation of the results of the study (Harrison, Birks, Franklin, & Mills, 2017). Self-report survey measures are subject to several biases and limitations (King & Bruner, 2000; Salters-Pedneault, 2019). For example, teachers could have hidden their true perceptions of SWPBIS implementation and inflated their responses reflecting more positive responses on the Likert scale.

Although self-report survey measures are easy to obtain, collecting information through a self-report has its limitations (Salters-Pedneault, 2019). Teachers may be biased when they report on their perceptions of SWPBIS. For example, some teachers may consciously or unconsciously have been influenced by desirability bias, or they are more likely to report their perceptions that are socially preferred rather than being truthful, or what they think the researcher wants them to report (Salters-Pedneault, 2019).

The interpretation of question wording can be another source of bias. The Cronbach alpha values of the SET survey items were reliable, indicating that the bias due to different interpretation in question wording was mitigated (Salters-Pedneault, 2019). Another limitation was that the study was conducted in one school district and within two targeted middle schools. Teacher perceptions of SWPBIS implementation varies with elementary, middle, and high schools. Chances of common method bias (due to usage of one type of data collection instrument) are less in mixed methods research design because both quantitative and qualitative data are collected to triangulate the findings (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Lee, 2003). A limitation in the qualitative strand was that only nine middle school teachers provided feedback in the focus group discussion. This limitation provided an initial voice from middle school teachers who were assumed to have buy-in and implemented SWPBIS with fidelity with principals' support of SWPBIS discipline program.

Definitions of Terms

Definitions of the following core terms were used throughout this study to provide consistency and clarity.

Behavioral expectations defined (BED): BED is supportive and responsive discipline that involves modeling good behavior, reminding students of expectations,

using positive language, rewarding effort and growth, using non-verbal signals as much as possible, and connecting with students to offer support or having an individual restorative conversation with a student when a problematic behavior arises (Harper, 2018).

Behavioral expectations taught (BET): BET is used simultaneously with 'establish schoolwide expectations' because discipline, unlike punishment, is proactive, and begins before there are problems. The phrase means seeing conflict as an opportunity to solve a problem (Desautels, 2018).

Classroom discipline: Classroom discipline is defined as "the teacher's use of educational strategies that ease the teaching process in an academic classroom" (Kitishat & Al Friehat, 2013, p. 37).

Discipline: The major challenge that teachers face is maintaining discipline. The practice of teaching others to follow rules by using consequences to modify unwanted behaviors or incentives to reward appropriate behaviors. In the classroom, a teacher uses discipline so that routines are practiced, school rules are enforced, and students are in a safe learning environment (National Education Association, 2018).

Disruptive behavior: A student displays behavior that could interrupt the lesson that distracts the teacher and other students. Examples of disruptive behaviors are out of seat, makes noises, talks to peers, makes loud comments, and makes derogatory comments. Behaviors can range from low intensity, which include distracting another student by talking, to high intensity, such as fighting, threatening others, destroying property, and using profanity (Gage & MacSuga-Gage, 2017).

Emotional quotient: Emotional quotient means social-emotional skills are necessary to cooperate, learn procedures, and assess curriculum (Grimes, 2018).

Expectancy: Expectancy is another factor that determines the motivation and refers to the probability that a particular action leads to the desired outcome. The expectancy is different from the instrumentality, in the sense that it relates efforts to the first-level outcome, whereas the instrumentality relates to the first- and second-level outcomes to each other. Thus, expectancy is the probability that a particular action leads to a first-level outcome (Vroom, 1964).

Fidelity of implementation: Fidelity of implementation means that teachers adhere to the process and procedures in which the SWPBIS is implemented and the way in which it is intended usually affects student outcomes (Hempenstall, 2019). "Significantly higher outcomes are achieved when programs are implemented as intended by the developer" (O'Donnell, 2008, p. 124).

Force: Smith (2009) describes force as an employer's attempt to implement the goals an employer has set. Force is often referred to as motivation in the context of this study as the school district's or principals' attempt to effectively implement SWPBIS goals and to decrease classroom disruptions, ODR, and ISS/OSS.

In-school suspension (ISS): Many schools across the country utilize two forms of suspension: ISS and OSS (National Clearinghouse on Supportive School Discipline, 2018). ISS means that a child is temporarily removed from his or her regular classroom but remains under the direct supervision of school personnel (National Clearinghouse on Supportive School Discipline, 2018; States, Detrich, & Keyworth, 2015).

Instrumentality: Another major input into the valence is the instrumentality of first-level outcome in obtaining the second-level outcome, or a degree to which the first-level leads to the second-level outcome. For example, a teacher desires a promotion as grade level chair, and superior performance is a key factor to achieve the goal. Thus, the

first-level outcomes are superior, average, and poor performance, and the second-level outcome is the promotion. Hence, the first-level outcome of high performance acquires the positive valence to have the expected relationship with the second-level outcome of the promotion. Thus, the teacher is motivated to perform efficiently with a desire to get promoted (Vroom, 1964).

Implementation: Implementation is a specified set of activities designed to put into practice as an activity (United States Department of Education, 2018).

Intervention: Intervention is the use of evidence-based practices or actions to reframe the expected behavior change and then teach new skills to help meet the expectations (United States Department of Education, 2018).

Ongoing system for rewarding (OR) behavioral expectations: OR is a system for rewarding behavioral expectations as one of the schoolwide practices developed to reward students who exhibit expected positive behaviors (Cook et al., 2015). Rewards can consist of tangible reinforcers such as tickets, parties, prizes, or special privileges such as an opportunity to have lunch with a favorite teacher or administrator.

Out-of-school suspension (OSS): For students with disabilities (IDEA, 2004), OSS means a child is temporarily removed from his or her regular school for disciplinary purposes. For students without disabilities, OSS means excluding a student from school for disciplinary reasons (States et al., 2015).

Positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS): PBIS is defined as "a framework for enhancing the adoption and implementation of a continuum of evidence-based interventions to achieve academically, and behaviorally important outcomes for all students" (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012, p. 2).

Problem behaviors: Problem behaviors interfere with achieving a positive or negative result (Farlex, Inc., 2018). Those student behaviors disrupt the social well-being and academic progress of other students and "present formidable challenges to school personnel" (Bambara, 2009, p. 1).

Response to intervention (RtI): RtI is a program that integrates assessment and intervention within a multilevel system to maximize student achievement and to reduce behavior problems (National Center on Response to Intervention, 2010). With RtI, schools identify students whose learning outcomes fall significantly below or above those of their grade level peers at various benchmarks throughout the school year; monitor student progress; provide evidence-based interventions; adjust the intensity and nature of those interventions depending on a student's responsiveness; and identify students for placement into a special education program (National Center on Response to Intervention, 2010).

School violence: School violence can occur on school property or at a school-sponsored event (United States Department of Education, 2018).

Schoolwide evaluation tool (SET): The SET is designed to assess and evaluate the features of SWPBIS for each academic school year (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, 2018; Sugai, Lewis-Palmer, Todd, & Horner, 2001).

Schoolwide positive behavioral interventions and supports (SWPBIS): SWPBIS is used when discipline is applied at the schoolwide level. SWPBIS is a system designed to change the discipline process for an entire school or school district. The underlying theme of SWPBIS is teaching behavioral expectations in the same manner as any core curriculum subject (Bradshaw et al., 2015; Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, 2004).

Social-emotional learning: Social-emotional learning is the process whereby children, adolescents, and adults apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (Grimes, 2018).

Suspension: Suspension refers to the temporary removal of a student from his or her regular educational setting for a violation of school policies or rules. During suspension, a student is not allowed to attend school or not allowed to attend school activities for a set length of time. The length of time can vary depending on the violation and the school's policies (National Clearinghouse on Supportive School Discipline, 2018).

Sustainability: Sustainability refers to "durable, long term implementation of a practice at a level of fidelity that continues to produce valued outcomes" (McIntosh, Horner, & Sugai, 2009, p. 328).

Sustained implementation: Sustained implementation is defined as "continued use of an intervention or prevention program, with ongoing fidelity of implementation to the core program principles, after supplemental resources used to support initial training, and implementation are withdrawn" (Han & Weiss, 2005, p. 667).

Teachers buy-in: Teachers buy-in for SWPBIS could affect how students perceive it, which can impact student outcomes. Finding a balance between teacher buy-in for programs for SWPBIS means getting administrator and faculty support (Chatlani, 2017).

Teacher self-efficacy: Teacher self-efficacy is a belief in one's capability to organize and execute courses of action required to successfully accomplish a specific teaching task (Rubie-Davis et al., 2012).

Valence: Valence refers to the value that an individual places on a particular outcome or the strength of an individual's preference for the expected rewards of the outcome. To have a positive valence, one should prefer attaining the outcome to not attaining it (Vroom, 1964).

Vroom's expectancy theory: Vroom's Expectancy Theory was proposed by Victor H. Vroom, who believed that people are motivated to perform activities to achieve some goal to the extent they expect that certain actions on their part could help them to achieve the goal (Vroom, 1964).

Significance of the Study

The contribution of the study's findings to the current literature on SWPBIS implementation was the use of the lens of middle school teacher perceptions about buy-in and self-efficacy to examine its relationship to BED, BET, and OR behavioral expectations, and ISS and OSS rates. The contribution was also based on the theoretical framework by examining teacher perceptions from different perspectives: buy-in, self-efficacy, BED, BET, OR behavioral expectations, and tangible output (ISS and OSS). To the researcher's knowledge, teacher perceptions of BED, BET, OR behavioral expectations within SWPBIS are yet to be investigated using a mixed-methods lens.

A gap exists in the literature between teacher perceptions of BED, BET, and OR behavioral expectations systems in SWPBIS if teachers implement the rewards system with fidelity. Past studies have examined teacher perceptions of SWPBIS from a singular and compartmentalized lens. McDaniel, Kim, and Guyotte (2017) conducted a qualitative case study and examined the efficacy of the positive, proactive framework that has been well established across varying school settings. Yet, little is known about schoolwide PBIS implementation and sustainability in high-need school contexts. Sustainability

refers to “durable, long term implementation of a practice at a level of fidelity that continues to produce valued outcomes” (McIntosh, Horner, & Sugai, 2009, p. 328). Sustained implementation is defined as “continued use of an intervention or prevention program, with ongoing implementation fidelity to the core program principles, after supplemental resources used to support initial training, and implementation are withdrawn” (Han & Weiss, 2005, p. 667).

Similar to the current study’s purpose of using a semi-structured focus group to generate themes in high-needs or low-income schools to improve student behavior, McDaniel et al. (2017) investigated perceptions of the barriers and facilitators to implementing and sustaining PBIS in high-need schools from the perspectives of four stakeholders. A semi-structured focus group was conducted with stakeholders from high-need schools with experience in implementing PBIS. Four main themes were identified: (1) perceptions of PBIS outcomes, (2) challenges, (3) additional supports, and (4) suggestions for improving PBIS in high-need schools.

Another significant contribution of the current study was the mixed-methods methodology, where quantitative and qualitative data were integrated to examine teachers’ perceptions from different perspectives. The results from the quantitative SET survey were triangulated with the qualitative focus group to improve credibility and consistency of the study findings.

Although a few studies addressed teachers’ perceptions of self-efficacy to implement SWPBIS with fidelity, there has been no study which has investigated how these perceptions influence ISS and OSS rates by using a mixed-methods approach (Amegin, 2018; Bowling, 2018; Feuerborn & Chinn, 2012). The current explanatory sequential mixed methods study quantitatively (causal-comparative research design)

examined teachers' perceptions of their efforts toward implementing SWPBIS, ongoing system for rewarding behavioral expectations system within SWPBIS, and how those perceptions impacted ISS and OSS suspension rates.

To address behavioral problems, United States public schools often use reactive, punitive, and exclusionary disciplinary actions such as suspension (Bal, 2018). In the last two decades, SWPBIS emerged as a new way of thinking about behavioral problems and school discipline. SWPBIS offered a promising approach to improve the timeliness and effectiveness of behavioral support. Usually, students misbehave because they may be bored with schoolwork or because the work could be too difficult for them. As a result, they might act out to mask their lack of academic knowledge (Morin, 2019). Consequently, teachers should try to determine the reasons behind students exhibiting behavioral problems, if possible. Some students may need more engaging or challenging tasks, while others may need tasks simple enough to prevent frustration. Regardless, teachers could find that alteration in students' academic workload may improve their behavior (Morin, 2019). The current study may provide insight on how to improve SWPBIS within schools, or school districts, and how SWPBIS can be enhanced to attract teachers to implement and embrace SWPBIS with fidelity (Alter & Vlasak, 2014).

Summary

The SWPBIS discipline program was first implemented in the study site's school district during the 2010-2011 school year and continued for the past decade. However, it may not have been implemented as consistently with fidelity as it should have been and has not been monitored as well. The SWPBIS program was initiated because many middle schools in the target school district failed to meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) goals in reading and mathematics. The school district placed those middle schools

not meeting AYP on the 'needs improvement list.' AYP is a measurement defined by the United States federal law NCLB (2002) that allows the U.S. Department of Education to determine how every public school and school district in the country is performing academically, according to results on standardized tests. The relationship between academic performance and behavior problems is a long-recognized phenomenon (Kremer, Flower, Huang, & Vaughn, 2016). Academic performance is affected by student behavior. Students who fail academically may disrupt the classroom with misbehavior causing others not to learn (Kremer et al., 2016).

Although SWPBIS has been in effect for nearly a decade at the researcher's school site, it is unknown if middle school teachers had effectively implemented the program, and if they had done so with fidelity to reduce ISS and OSS. SWPBIS is an integral part of a school improvement plan for middle schools due to failure to meet AYP goals, and administrators felt that the middle school students could also benefit from the program's SWPBIS implementation. Most teachers in the schools were familiar with the behavior system due to mandatory orientation policies for all faculty. Since SWPBIS is a schoolwide program in middle schools, policies were in place to help orient new teachers to become aware of the system and the procedures, interventions, and goals of the SWPBIS program in the county.

Standard and consistent rules, procedures, processes, and language were implemented consistently across all levels of teachers by creating a SWPBIS Task Force that met with all middle school principals and teachers in the school district on a Saturday morning with lunch from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Lunch was sponsored by the school's Parent Teacher Association. Several parents, along with the principal, business community partners, and middle school teachers, served on the SWPBIS Task Force. The researcher

served as the moderator to host the meeting. During this time, standard and consistent rules, procedures, processes, consequences, and language were developed and created. So, everyone was aware of the standards that put in the language for middle school students to understand.

The standards were professionally printed in a handbook, entitled the *Code of Student Conduct Student Rights and Responsibilities and Character Development Handbook*, which contains the discipline rules and regulations of the County School District. Students are taught the contents of the code of student conduct, student rights and responsibilities, and character development. Students' signatures must be accompanied with parents' signature. Teachers reviewed the standards every day during the first month of school and once a week for the entire year. The rules were posted in every classroom, hallways, restrooms, cafeteria, auditorium, principal's office, assistant principal's office, counselor's office, and school buses. The students were able to read or recite these rules and know what they mean. When the rules were violated, there was a first chance, and a second chance with consequences, if they were broken. Behavior contracts were created and developed for ISS and OSS. The contracts contained homework and schoolwork missed while at home or assigned to ISS during the day at school. Parent's signature, student's signature, teacher's signature, and principal's signature were on the contract and signed when a student returned to school from suspension. An example of an essay was, "Five Things I Plan to Do to Change My Behavior." Chapter II focuses on the review of literature to understand the past research conducted on SWPBIS regarding teacher perceptions and the discipline program's influence on schools' disciplinary issues.

Chapter II

Review of the Literature

Chapter II contains a review of the literature on the theoretical framework of Vroom's Expectancy Theory of Motivation followed by a historical overview and legislative background of SWPBIS to include the Elementary and Secondary Act, the Individual with Disabilities Education Act, No Child Left Behind Act, and Every Student Succeeds Act under various United States Presidents. Other topics covered in this chapter are culturally responsible SWPBIS, BED, BET, OR in SWPBIS, implementing SWPBIS with fidelity, PBIS and SEL, and restorative discipline and ISS/OSS. The barriers to SWPBIS implementation, criticisms about the SWPBIS program followed by teacher perceptions of buy-in towards SWPBIS implementation and teacher efficacy and emotional status of children are also covered in the chapter. Gaps in the literature are presented regarding SWPBIS. Other topics discussed are RtI and its relationship to SWPBIS.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this research was the Expectancy Theory of Motivation that was created by Victor H. Vroom who pioneered the theory with a direct application to a person's work setting (Vroom, 1964). The Expectancy Theory is related to the Needs Theory of Motivation that attempts to analyze what specifically motivates individuals in the workplace (Lunenburg, 2011). These same motivations could be applied to students in classrooms.

To experiment with motivational factors on students in the classroom using Vroom's Expectancy Theory, Betz (2010) applied it to a group of undergraduate architectural engineering technology students to see what factors motivated them to learn

more and perform better in class. If only students could be motivated, then maybe they could learn more and perform better. For teachers in the current study felt partly responsible for creating successful learning environments for students. Motivation played an important part in teachers' performance as was the same with students. The findings showed that just 15 minutes of motivational discussion with students prior to starting a 60-minute learning assignment yielded an increase of one-half letter grade. Based on the student attitude survey, the greatest motivating factor was providing an understanding for students as to why they were learning the information. The next greatest factor was explaining the assessment. Many of the other factors that Vroom outlined in his Expectancy Theory did not seem to make a significant difference or were not perceived by students to do so. However, a half of a letter grade improvement on learning performance may have made the difference in passing or failing the class for some students. Generally, faculty are assumed to understand the importance of telling students why they are learning something and how they are assessed. Betz (2010) concluded that architectural engineering technology students were already motivated. Another conclusion was the study should have focused on students who were potential high school dropouts to see if motivational strategies would keep them in school to graduate.

The expectancy theory of motivation. The Expectancy Theory of Motivation is best described as a process theory (Redmond & Nemati, 2016). With research pioneered by Edward C. Tolman and continued by Victor H. Vroom, the Expectancy Theory provides an explanation of why individuals choose one behavioral option over others. The core premise of this theory is that people are motivated to do something because they think their actions lead to their desired outcome (Redmond, 2009). The Expectancy Theory proposes that motivation to work is dependent upon the perceived association

between performance and outcomes, and that individuals modify their behavior based on their calculation of anticipated outcomes (Chen & Fang, 2008; Redmond & Nemati, 2016). The Expectancy Theory can help explain why a person performs or behaves in a certain manner (Redmond & Nemati, 2016). This notion has a practical and positive potential of improving motivation because it can help, and has helped, leaders create motivational programs in the workplace and in schools to improve student behavior. This theory provides the idea that an individual's motivation comes from the belief that he or she gets what is desired in the form of a reward. Although the theory is not all inclusive of individual motivation factors, it provides school leaders with a foundation to build a better understanding of ways to motivate students to behave appropriately (Student Advocacy, 2015).

The Expectancy Theory is classified as a process theory of motivation because it emphasizes individual perceptions of the environment and subsequent interactions arising because of personal expectations (Cook & Artino, 2016; Lawler, Porter, & Vroom, 2009). Motivation has been defined as the process whereby goal-directed activities are initiated and sustained. In expectancy-value theory, motivation is a function of the expectation of success and perceived value (Cook & Artino, 2016). Vroom's Expectancy Theory of Motivation assumes that individuals have different sets of goals and can be motivated if they believe that there is a positive correlation between efforts and performance, favorable performance and behavior that result in a desirable reward, the reward satisfies an important need, and the desire to satisfy the need is strong enough to make the effort meaningful (Cook & Artino, 2016; Lawler et al., 2009).

Vroom's Expectancy Theory of Motivation Core Theoretical Constructs. Vroom's Expectancy Theory (1964) focuses on cognitive experiences that drive motivation and

how those experiences are related to each other. Thus, the Expectancy Theory is categorized as a cognitive process theory of motivation, which is based on the concept that people believe that if they put forth the effort, then they will receive rewards for their performance (i.e., good grades, praise and encouragement, and rewards). It could be concluded that there are relationships between the effort they put forth and performance. The Expectancy Theory is the belief that people are motivated when they believe that effort leads to performance and that performance leads to a desired reward.

Vroom's theory was selected for this study because it can relate to student behavior in the classroom and throughout the school environment. This theory is based on the belief that children are motivated to behave in a certain manner when they believe that their effort to behave appropriately leads to good performance and that performance leads to a desired reward provided by teachers, staff, and others (Lunenburg, 2011; Redmond & Nemati, 2016). Vroom's theory partitions motivation into four elements: (1) motivation (force), (2) expectancy, (3) instrumentality, and (4) valence (Smith, 2009).

Force. Smith (2009) describes force as an employer's attempt to implement the goals an employer has set. Force in the context of this study is the school district's or principals' attempt to effectively implement SWPBIS goals and to decrease classroom disruptions, ODR, and ISS/OSS. Teachers' expectancy motivation is related to job satisfaction, students' attitudes towards school, and perceived school efficiency (Miskel, McDonald, & Bloom, 1983; Salehi, Taghavi, & Yunus, 2015). Expectations explain the school climate and have positive relationships with humanistic attitudes that are used to control students (Han & Yin, 2016; Kottkamp & Mulhern, 1987). The Expectancy Theory can be used to predict satisfaction, participation in activities, and student achievements (Graham, 1980; Redmond & Nemati, 2016). Other examples of the

Expectancy Theory extend within the educational context, as in the development, and implementation of educator efficacy policies (Graham, 1980; Redmond & Nemati, 2016). The Expectancy Theory applies to teachers in the classroom and student learning (Redmond & Nemati, 2016). Minimal research exists that examines the validity of expectancy theory, how teachers can use expectancy theory in the classroom to decrease the negative impact of distractions like noise, and disruptive behavior on a student's motivation towards learning (Hancock, 1995).

Expectancy. Smith (2009) defined expectancy as the employee's evaluation of the likelihood of success of the enforced goal. Expectancy in the context of this study is defined as a teacher's evaluation of students' performance. Expectancy can be described as the belief that higher or increased effort yields better performance. In the eyes of students, they may believe, "If I work harder, I will receive good grades, and my parents will be proud of me, and I will get a reward for my good grades." Conditions such as rewards for good grades or good behavior in the classroom will reap rewards, praise, and even encouragement from the teacher that enhance the child performing well in class and behaving appropriately in the classroom: hence, changing his/her academic performance or behavior.

Instrumentality. According to Smith (2009), instrumentality is an individual's belief that if he or she successfully achieves the goals, then a promised reward is given. Instrumentality means that an individual who performs well could receive a valued outcome. Instrumentality means possessing a clear understanding of the relationship between performance and the outcomes. People with instrumentality trust and respect people who make the decisions regarding who gets a reward and visualize transparency in the process of who gets a reward (Redmond & Nemati, 2016). In the context of this

study, instrumentality is the extent to which a teacher is successful in their teaching, which could lead to positive student outcomes such as decreases in the ISS and OSS rates. Instrumentality is the perception that a given performance level is related to a given outcome. A person's belief facilitates a given reward or outcome. People only perform at a certain level if they believe that performance leads to an outcome (Anderson & Rainie, 2018; Isaac, 2001). The instrumentality component of the Expectancy Theory is people's belief that, if they can meet performance expectations, they receive a great reward (Redmond & Nemati, 2016; Scholl, 2002). An example of instrumentality of Expectancy Theory is, "If I complete more work than anyone else, do I receive a promotion before they do?" The variables affecting instrumentality are trust in leaders, control, and how formalized rewards systems and written policies are (Redmond & Nemati, 2016; Scholl, 2002).

Many people care about how they are perceived by those around them (Bursztyn & Jensen, 2016). Something is considered instrumental if it is conditional upon something else or is believed to directly result into a particular outcome (Bursztyn & Jensen, 2016; Redmond, 2010). Remembering the influential element of perceptions and beliefs, what people believe to be an outcome may not be the actual outcome that results from their performance. If people do not see a connection between their performance level and a possible outcome, they are less likely to be motivated (Bursztyn & Jensen, 2016; Redmond, 2010). A key question in defining instrumentality is as follows: What is the strength of the relationship between the things I do and the rewards I get from my actions? An example of instrumentality is "If I get a better grade on tomorrow's math test, do I earn an A in math?" Another example is, "If I behave better in class, do I get a prize as my reward?" (Redmond & Nemati, 2016; Scholl, 2002). Instrumentality means

that an individual who performs well could receive a valued outcome. Instrumentality means to have a clear understanding of the relationship between performance and the outcomes (Redmond & Nemati, 2016).

Valence. Valence means *value,* and refers to beliefs about outcome desirability (Redmond, 2010). Valence can be thought of as the pressure or importance that a person puts on an expected outcome. Smith (2009) defined valence as the employee's desire for the promised rewards associated with the goals being enforced. Valence in the context of this study is defined as the teacher's opinion of his or her outcomes being desirable. There were individual differences in the level of value associated with any specific outcome. For instance, a bonus may not increase motivation for an employee who is motivated by formal recognition or by increased status such as promotion (Redmond, 2010).

In accordance with expectancy theory, each student has different values, and views rewards differently (Farrington, 2019). To some students, earning an 'A' grade may be their primary reward, and to others developing skills for future employment may be most important. Teachers should assess each student's source of motivation and develop outcomes that match their desires which could improve their interest to learn (Farrington, 2019). The algebraic representation of Vroom's Expectancy theory is: Motivation (force) = ∑Valence x Expectancy (Vroom, 1964).

Application of Vroom's expectancy theory of motivation. Vroom's (1964) Expectancy Theory of Motivation has most often been used within the cooperate establishments. However, there have been several national and international studies conducted on educational staff about the expectancy theory of motivation. Historically, Mowday (1978) found that school administrators with high motivation more actively

participated in regional decision-making compared to school administrators with low motivation. Landy and Becker (1987) found that administrators measured costs and acquisitions by considering the alternatives and selected the actions with the maximum benefits.

Vroom's (1964) Expectancy Theory of Motivation is practical for the education practice in that predicting factors are linked to cognitive processes of work motivation that can provide valuable insights to policy development and program implementation (Kelley & Finnigan, 2003; Kelley, Heneman, & Milanowski, 2002; Kuranchie-Mensah, & Amponash-Tawiah, 2016; Rice, Malen, Jackson, & Hoyer, 2015). Vroom's theory is associated with the conditions of the current mixed methods study because it describes the processes surrounding how teachers' perceptions influence their decisions to effectively implement the SWPBIS. It is important to gain a clear understanding of what teachers perceived as essential to implement SWPBIS with fidelity, as shown in detail in Figure 2.

Expectancy and value in achievement motivation settings. A teacher can alter or improve students' perception of their ability to learn the material and concepts being presented. This strategy can be implemented by explaining to students the types of behaviors that relate to learning such as reading, understanding the meaning behind the reading, and actively asking questions about the reading and its interpretation (Redmond & Nemati, 2016). Thus, teachers can explain how to do these tasks like taking extra time to reiterate and reinforce the concepts and reading material, expand the breadth of their reflection about the meanings, and be more active in the classroom. Teachers can also help students enhance their understanding by having after class discussions, offering tutoring, or presenting the material in a different format (Redmond & Nemati, 2016).

Teachers make connections between the work that is done and the value of the outcome and relate to students how doing well in school relates to life outside of school (Redmond & Nemati, 2016). Empirical research supports the interaction between expectancy and value in achievement motivation settings. If students view an assignment not as an accomplishment, they are not motivated to even start to work on the assignment (Redmond & Nemati, 2016). Teachers can adjust the assignment, break the assignment into parts, or redesign the assignment entirely to improve their motivation towards the assignment.

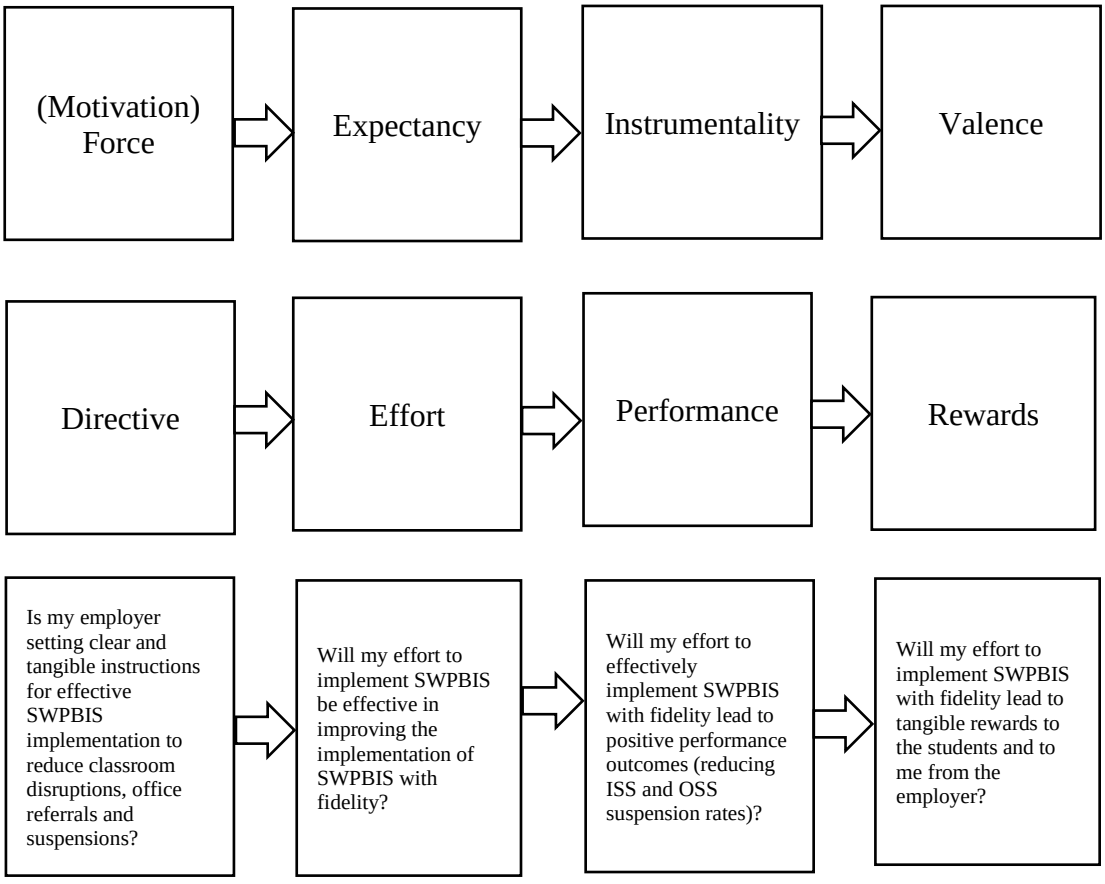

Figure 2. Vroom's Expectancy Theory of Motivation: Core Theoretical Constructs
Note. Adapted from *Work and Motivation* (p. 112), by V. H. Vroom, 1964. New York, NY: Wiley. Copyright [1964] by V. H. Vroom.

Research has also shown that perceived importance does not have a large effect on student motivation for good test performance as they do not perceive the test to be important (Penk & Schipolowski, 2015). The researchers investigated test-taking motivation in a large-scale assessment by applying expectancy-value theory as the framework, which is most commonly used to conceptualize test-taking motivation. The researchers' aim was to explore the complex relationship between expectancy, value, test-taking effort, and test performance using data from a large-scale educational assessment study of ninth grade students in Germany. First, a measurement model of test-taking motivation including all aspects of this multidimensional construct was established. Second, the predictive power of different components of test-taking motivation for test-taking effort and test performance was investigated. The factor analyses results showed that expectancy, value, and test-taking effort constituted distinguishable components of test-taking motivation. Subsequent latent regression analyses showed that the value component was a strong predictor of test-taking effort and that expectancy, value, and effort taken together explained over a quarter of the variance in mathematics scores. Expectancy and test-taking effort had the most obvious effects on test performance. The researchers concluded that a comprehensive model of test-taking motivation should include all three components: expectancy, value, and test-taking effort.

Historical Overview and Legislative Background of SWPBIS

In the United States, youth from minority communities, especially African Americans, Native Americans, and Latinos, disproportionately received more severe and frequent exclusionary disciplinary referrals for less objective reasons such as disrespect, dress code violations, and excessive noise. Youth from minority communities are more

frequently placed in special education programs with the label of emotional disturbance (Office for Civil Rights 2014; Skiba et al., 2002; Steinberg & Lacoe, 2017; United States Department of Education Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services, 2016).

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). In the 1960s, President Lyndon B. Johnson and his cabinet developed an education initiative called the Gardner Commission (Thomas & Brady, 2005). This initiative was aimed at developing different ways to think about federal funding for education. The Gardner Commission attempted to change past practices with federal education funding by having it based on educating children with special needs, as well children of families with financial difficulties. In 1965, the United States Congress acknowledged the workings of the Gardner Commission and passed the ESEA. The ESEA was signed into law in 1965 by President Lyndon Baines Johnson, who believed that full educational opportunity should be America's first national goal. From its inception, ESEA was a civil rights law.

ESEA offered new grants to districts serving low-income students, federal grants for textbooks and library books, funding for special education centers, and scholarships for low-income college students. Additionally, the law provided federal grants to state educational agencies to improve the quality of elementary and secondary education (United States Department of Education, 2018). The belief of this original legislation was "to provide financial assistance to local educational agencies serving areas with high concentrations of children from low-income families to expand, and improve their educational programs by various means" (Thomas & Brady, 2005, p. 27). While this legislation was based primarily on poverty level, it was also based on the educational needs of the child (Thomas & Brady, 2005). This legislation later used federal funding to develop ways to reduce behavior issues in schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2018).

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The 2004 reauthorization of the special education law—the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)—mandates that states and districts assess disproportionality. IDEA allocated 15% of federal funds to eliminate disproportionality through prevention and early intervening services. Among the programmatic responses, SWPBIS is a multi-tier system of supports model which has emerged in the past two decades (Bal, 2018). SWPBIS is one of the most important innovations in education for addressing behavioral problems. SWPBIS is the only non-defined schoolwide model specifically mentioned in the IDEA (2004) and has become the primary means to provide behavioral support.

SWPBIS have implemented in more than 20,000 American schools, about 20% of all schools. More than 40% of schools have implemented them up to the current time (Horner, 2015). Globally, PBIS has been widely used in various national education systems including Canada, Qatar, Finland, Hungary, the Netherlands, Turkey, and Australia. The SWPBIS framework may inform the movement to address the issues that researchers and practitioners experience regarding behavioral outcome disparities, and the implementation of PBIS in diverse school environments (Bal, 2018).

In the 1980s, there was a need to find ways to treat behavior disorders (BDs) in school-aged children (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012). There was an increase in the diagnosis of BDs, but limited options were available for treatment that brought about a need for professionals to assess and document new interventions. As a result, implementation of special interventions to help children diagnosed with BDs emerged (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012). To address this need, researchers at the University of Oregon began evaluating new ways to prevent BDs. Research-based methods evolved using data-based decisions, schoolwide implementation, instruction in social skills, and several assessments of

student outcomes (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012). During the 1990s, the authorization of the IDEA facilitated a grant to build the National Center on SWPBIS (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012). This agency provided support services to schools to help with students diagnosed with behavior disorders. As a result of its research in the methods used to help with behavior disorders, the University of Oregon developed the SWPBIS Center. Eventually, the SWPBIS Center developed partnerships with universities in five different states. These universities and officials have helped with SWPBIS framework, which has been implemented in many states and school districts to work with all students, with or without BDs (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012).

No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). In 2001, President George W. Bush initiated a program known as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) that was the reauthorization of the ESEA of 1965 begun by President Lyndon B. Johnson (Marin & Filce, 2013). The NCLB Act (2002) was used to determine which schools performed well enough to justify financial support from the United States Government. The NCLB Act was intended to increase the accountability of teachers, and administrators regarding the academic performance of students (Marin & Filce, 2013; Qahtani, 2016). The NCLB Act was also used to examine the factors that supported and hindered classroom learning (Marin & Filce, 2013; Qahtani, 2016).

Solomon, Klein, Mintze, Cressey, and Peller (2012) conducted a meta-analysis of Positive Behavior Support (PBS) research spanning 16 years. PBS for behavioral problems was included in the 1997 IDEA (2004) reauthorization, reflecting the increased implementation, and strengthening empirical evidence for PBS in schools (Solomon et al., 2012). Whereas PBS can be used reactively, its flexibility has led to a popular comprehensive schoolwide model used for prevention and proactive intervention

strategies. PBS has been used across a variety of school environments and various demographics and has been evaluated using a variety of different outcome measures. PBS for behavioral problems was included in the 1997 IDEA reauthorization, which reflected an increase in implementing and strengthening empirical evidence for PBS in schools. The IDEA's flexibility has led to a popular comprehensive school-wide model used for prevention of behavioral problems. PBS has been used across a variety of school environments and various demographics and has been evaluated using a variety of different outcome measures. Specifically, single-case studies were evaluated using a regression-based procedure. Results showed promising early trends in the data across dependent variables with a need for further research in specific areas.

The NCLB Act (2002) put in place measures that exposed achievement gaps among traditionally underserved students and their peers and spurred an important national dialogue on education improvement. This focus on accountability has been critical in ensuring quality education for all children, yet it also revealed challenges in the effective implementation of this goal (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). Parents, educators, and elected officials across the country recognized that a strong, updated law was necessary to expand opportunity to all students to: support schools, teachers, and principals, and to strengthen America's education system and economy (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). As a result of the implementation of the NCLB Act, school administrators sought ways to increase effective instruction time in the classroom without disruption (Marin & Filce, 2013; Qahtani, 2016). This entailed reducing undesirable behaviors and increasing beneficial conditions for learning. Research-based practices became an important aspect when looking at intervention programs to combat negative

behaviors. The SWPBIS system was designed to address those needs (Marin & Filce, 2013; Qahtani, 2016).

Qahtani (2016) identified undesirable student behaviors in academic classrooms and disciplinary, preventive, and therapeutic strategies that were used by faculty members to control those behaviors from the perspective of the students in the College of Education at King Saud University. A review of the results showed that the undesirable behavior in academic classrooms that strongly applies to the sample are cheating and plagiarism regarding homework and research, replying with rude manners, using cell phones, side talking, and arriving late to lectures. The strategies that are related to co-educational assets submitted a detailed plan at the beginning of the semester regarding the discipline strategies used by faculty members that strongly applies to the sample. Clear and concise discipline rules in the classroom and strictly following them and an explanation of the consequences of not following the classroom discipline rules were established. In addition, teachers followed the rules of treating students with respect and without mockery or embarrassment and maintaining eye contact. Using therapeutic discipline strategies, students were given a first notice to remind them of the discipline rules that asked students to stop the undesirable behavior calmly but strictly (Qahtani, 2016).

The practices, principles, and systems of SWPBIS were studied, described, and implemented since 1965 in places other than the University of Oregon (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012). Behavioral theory, behavior analysis, positive behavioral supports, and prevention and implementation science to improve the school environment were used for all students (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012). NCLB (2002) represented a significant step forward for the nation's children as it focused on where students were making progress

and where they needed additional support, regardless of race, income, zip code, disability, home language, or background. Over a period of nearly two decades, NCLB's prescriptive requirements became increasingly unworkable for schools and educators (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). Recognizing this fact in 2010, the Obama administration joined a call from educators and families to create a better law that focused on the clear goal of fully preparing all students for success in college and careers (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). Congress responded to that call and voted to support the new law. The ESSA reflects many of the priorities of Obama's administration (U.S. Department of Education, 2018).

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed by President Barack Obama on December 10, 2015. This bipartisan measure reauthorizes the 50-year-old ESEA, the nation's national education law and longstanding commitment to equal opportunity for all students (U.S. Department of Education, 2019). The new law built on key areas of progress in recent years, which was made possible by the efforts of educators, communities, parents, and students across the country. ESSA includes provisions that help to ensure success for students and schools. The law advances equity by upholding critical protection for America's disadvantaged and high-need students (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). For example, high school graduation rates have increased. Under ESSA, all states are required to include rates of ISS and OSS, expulsions, school-related arrests, referrals to law enforcement, and incidences of school violence, including bullying and harassment on their state and local report cards (Kostyo, Cardichon, & Darling-Hammond, 2018; U.S. Department of Education, 2019). In 2012, the Obama administration began granting flexibility to states regarding specific requirements of NCLB in exchange for rigorous and comprehensive

state-developed plans designed to close achievement gaps, increase equity, improve the quality of instruction, and increase outcomes for all students (U.S. Department of Education, 2018).

Dropout rates are at historically low rates (Kostyo et al., 2018). More students are going to college than ever before (Marcus, 2018). Although the number of students going to college has increased, the percentage of full-time freshmen has decreased because 58% do not return in their second year of college (Marcus, 2018). These figures provide a firm foundation for further work to expand educational opportunity and improve student outcomes under ESSA (U.S. Department of Education, 2019). The new law requires that all students in America are taught with high academic standards that prepare them to succeed in college and careers. ESSA ensures that vital information is provided to educators, families, students, and communities through annual statewide assessments that measure students' progress toward those high standards (U.S. Department of Education, 2019). ESSA helps to support and grow local innovations, including evidence-based and place-based interventions developed by local leaders and educators. ESSA sustains and expands historic investments in increasing access to high-quality preschool (U.S. Department of Education, 2019). ESSA maintains an expectation that there is accountability and action to effect positive change in the lowest-performing schools, where groups of students are not making progress, and where graduation rates are low over extended periods of time (Solomon et al., 2012; U.S. Department of Education, 2019).

Response to Intervention (RtI) and SWPBIS

Response to Intervention is a multi-tier approach to the early identification and support of students with learning and behavior needs (Response to Intervention Action

Network, 2019). The RtI process begins with high-quality instruction and universal screening of all children in the general education classroom. Struggling learners are provided with interventions at increasing levels of intensity to accelerate their rate of learning. Those services may be provided by a variety of personnel, including general education teachers, special education teachers, and reading specialists (Response to Intervention Action Network, 2019). Progress is closely monitored to assess both the learning rate and level of performance of individual students. Educational decisions about the intensity and duration of interventions are based on individual student response to instruction. RtI is designed for use when making decisions in general education and special education, creating a well-integrated system of instruction and intervention guided by child outcome data. Though there is no single, thoroughly researched and widely practiced model of the RtI process, it is generally defined as a three-tiered (or three-step) model of school supports that uses research-based academic and/or behavioral interventions (Response to Intervention Action Network, 2019). Children with IEPs or 504 plans can be in any of the tiers.

Tier 1: High-quality classroom instruction, screening, and group interventions. In the RtI program, Tier 1 is a schoolwide, universal system for everyone in a school. Children learn basic behavior expectations like to be respectful and kind. School staff regularly recognize and praise children for good behavior. They may also use small rewards, like tokens or prizes, to encourage children (Response to Intervention Action Network, 2019). Within Tier 1, all students receive high-quality, scientific based instruction provided by qualified personnel to ensure that their difficulties are not due to inadequate instruction. All students are screened on a periodic basis to establish an academic and behavioral baseline and to identify struggling learners who need additional

support. Students identified as being at risk through universal screenings and/or results on state- or district-wide tests receive supplemental instruction during the school day in the regular classroom. The length of time for this step can vary, but it generally should not exceed eight weeks. During that time, student progress is closely monitored using a validated screening system such as curriculum-based measurement. Students who do not make adequate progress in the regular classroom in Tier 1 are provided with increased intensive instruction that is matched to their needs based on levels of performance and rates of progress. At the end of this period, students showing significant progress are generally returned to the regular classroom program. Students not showing adequate progress are moved to Tier 2 (Response to Intervention Action Network, 2019).

Tier 2: Targeted interventions. Tier 2 provides an extra layer of support to children who continue to struggle with behavior. Children get a set of evidence-based interventions and instruction. For example, some children may interrupt class because they may struggle with social interaction. A Tier 2 strategy might be a social skills club to help these children learn about how to get along with peers. Intensity varies across group size, frequency and duration of intervention, and level of training of the professionals providing instruction or intervention. In addition to instruction in the general curriculum, these services and interventions are provided in small-group settings. In the early grades (Kindergarten through Grade 3), interventions are usually in the areas of reading and mathematics. A longer period may be required for this tier, but it should generally not exceed a grading period. Students who continue to show too little progress at this level of intervention are then considered for more intensive interventions as part of Tier 3 (Response to Intervention Action Network, 2019).

Tier 3: Intensive interventions and comprehensive evaluations. In Tier 3, students receive individualized, intensive interventions that target the students' skill deficits (Response to Intervention Action Network, 2019). Students who do not achieve the desired level of progress in response to those targeted interventions are then referred for a comprehensive evaluation and considered for eligibility for special education services under the IDEA Act (2004). Tier 3 is the most intensive level that is for children who need individualized supports and services because of behavior issues. The data collected during Tiers 1, 2, and 3 are included and used to make the eligibility decision.

At any given point in an RtI process, IDEA allows parents to request a formal evaluation to determine eligibility for special education. An RtI process cannot be used to deny or delay a formal evaluation for special education. In addition to variations in the tiers used to deliver RtI services, schools use different approaches in implementation, such as problem-solving, functional assessment, standard protocol, and mixture approaches. Several formats were available for how a school might implement RtI to best serve students' needs. In every case, RtI can be a schoolwide framework to efficiently allocate resources to improve student outcomes (Kruger, 2016; Response to Intervention Action Network, 2019).

Behavioral Expectations Defined

Restorative discipline approaches encourage teachers to approach issues proactively and supportively, creating classroom conditions where problems are less likely to arise and easier to resolve if they do (Harper, 2018). Key steps to achieving proactive discipline in the classroom involve relationship-building with students, developing classroom norms with student input, and making classroom expectations clear and defined (Harper, 2018). Supportive and responsive discipline involves modeling

good behavior, reminding students of expectations, using positive language, rewarding effort and growth, using non-verbal signals as much as possible, and connecting with students to offer support, or having an individual restorative conversation with a student when a problematic behavior arises (Harper, 2018).

Bullying continues to be a behavior problem that plagues many schools (Harper, 2018). In a recent survey, one-third of students reported experiencing bullying in school: A rate that seems to be increasing, despite the use of anti-bullying efforts. Bullying can harm students and affect their academic performance and attendance rates. School leaders bear some legal responsibilities for addressing and preventing this from taking place (Harper, 2018). However, many schools are rethinking discipline and looking at alternatives to suspensions, including positive approaches like restorative practices. These methods look at problems with student behavior as opportunities to explore the roots of the problems and teach students how to react more appropriately in the future (Harper, 2018). Because the approach depends on relationship building, it takes more time than responsive discipline. However, these positive approaches are also more conducive to learning and can help these students become more productive citizens in the long run (Harper, 2018).

Behavioral Expectations Taught

There are many perspectives on the topic of discipline in American classrooms and schools. Discipline, unlike punishment, is proactive, and begins before there are problems which means seeing conflict as an opportunity to solve a problem (Desautels, 2018). Discipline provides guidance, focuses on prevention, enhances communication, models respect, and embraces natural consequences. It teaches fairness, responsibility, life skills, and problem solving (Desautels, 2018). Sometimes students need to be

removed from the classroom and school for aggressive, volatile actions, but a plan of action specifying the behavioral expectations should be decided upon re-entry that begins to address the problem and break the cognitive conflict cycles. Traditional punishment with students only escalates power struggles and conflict cycles, breeding an increased stress response in the brain and body. Punishment is used to try to force compliance. Most school discipline procedures are forms of punishment that work best with the students who need them the least. The current way schools attempt to discipline students does not change their behavior and often escalates the problems with the most difficult students (Desautels, 2018). The neurobiological changes caused by chronic negative experiences and a history of adversity can trigger a fear response in the brain. In children, the fear response often looks aggressive, defiant, and oppositional. Young people have brains that are in a constant state of alarm. In this alarm state, consequences do not register properly (Desautels, 2018).

Discipline can only be done when both the educator and the student are calm and self-regulated (Desautels, 2018). If they are not, behavioral difficulties escalate. In a brain-aligned model of discipline, children must be taught the behaviors that teachers desire to see which lay the groundwork for prevention systems and strategies. Preventive systems are taught as procedures and routines that are collaborative and filled with choice (Desautels, 2018). The purpose is to create a sustainable behavioral change, not just compliance or obedience for a short period of time. PBIS is not a treatment or therapy; rather, it is a framework for teachers, administrators, and parents to follow. PBIS is used for all students including children with Individual Education Plans and 504 plans. PBIS could lead to better student behavior. In many schools that use PBIS, students receive

fewer detentions and suspensions and get better grades. There is also some evidence that PBIS may lead to less bullying (Desautels, 2018).

Ongoing Reward Behavioral Expectations

SWPBIS implementation requires schools to establish a set of positive schoolwide expectations for student behavior that are developed and taught and finally rewarded for demonstrating good behavior by the school's SWPBIS team. A statewide collaboration in Maryland partnered on an integrated implementation of PBIS in a randomized controlled study where 58 schools were provided with evidence-based prevention programs (Bradshaw, 2013). A 13-million-dollar trial was funded through the U.S. Department of Education's Safe and Supportive Schools Initiative, which aimed to develop and administer a statewide web-based measurement system to assess multiple aspects of school climate (i.e., school safety, student engagement, and the school environment), as reported by students, parents, and school staff members. Half of the schools were randomly assigned to the PBIS intervention condition where they received training in the PBIS model. The use of the school climate data determined the need for tailored evidence-based preventive interventions. The intervention schools received training, coaching, and the necessary resources to implement a continuum (i.e., universal, selective, and indicated) of evidence-based practices (Bradshaw, 2013). The comparison high schools were monitored over a period of three years using this same climate measure and received training at the end of the trial. The researcher determined the impact of PBIS on classroom and non-classroom observations on several factors (e.g., safety and classroom climate). The impact of PBIS on classroom and non-classroom observations was evaluated through examination of potential setting-level moderators of program impact and predictors of fidelity of implementation. In addition, the study also explored

the relationship between perceptions of school climate and setting-level measures of school climate.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports and Social and Emotional Learning

Cook et al. (2015) explored the independent and combined effects of PBIS and Social Emotional Learning (SEL) on student mental health outcomes. PBIS and SEL are two of the most widely adopted and accepted, evidence-based approaches that have been advocated to address student mental health. However, these universal prevention approaches stem from different theoretical camps and are often advocated and implemented separately (Cook et al., 2015). A quasi-experimental control design at the classroom level was used to make comparisons across four conditions: business-as-usual (BAU), PBIS alone, SEL alone, and PBIS and SEL (e.g., COMBO condition) that combines teachers, integrity of program delivery, and student outcomes. As predicted, the COMBO condition produced significantly greater improvements in overall mental health and reductions in externalizing behaviors when compared to all other conditions. The results also indicated that PBIS-only and SEL-only conditions were able to produce significant improvements in overall mental health functions when compared to the BAU control. A schoolwide system was then developed to reward students who exhibited expected positive behaviors. Rewards consisted of tangible reinforcers such as tickets, parties, prizes, or special privileges such as an opportunity to have lunch with a favorite teacher or administrator. Mental health among children and adolescents is a growing national concern, and schools have taken steps in efforts to prevent problems and promote wellness (Cook et al., 2015). Although research and policymakers support the integration of mental health services into the schools, there is limited agreement on the ways to combine existing supports to achieve prevention-oriented goals.

PBIS is a proactive approach to establish the behavioral supports and social culture needed for all students in school to achieve social, emotional, and academic improvement. Attention is focused on creating and sustaining schoolwide primary, secondary, or small groups and individual systems of support that improve student outcomes (i.e., personal, health, social, family, work, recreation) for all youth. The reason PBIS targets less effective misbehavior and creates appropriate behavior is because it is more constructive and practical (Rodriguez, 2018). San Jacinto Unified School District students are expected to follow all school rules, procedures, and regulations. Failure to do so results in severe consequences that are progressive and include verbal warning, parent contact, lunch or after-school detention, removal from extra-curricular activities, conference with parents, suspensions, and expulsion. When possible and appropriate, discipline processes are joined with behavioral support services, such as teacher with parent conferences, meditations, phone calls, counseling, tutoring, as well as referral to district programs and community agencies. Student support supervises the disciplinary process when student behavior is such that expulsion becomes a consideration. In doing so, student support considers and balances the needs and requirements of the student, the school, the district, and applicable laws. Student support also provides a variety of counseling and support resources to assist students and their families during and after the expulsion process (Rodriguez, 2018).

Restorative Discipline and Suspensions

Restorative discipline seeks to create an environment in which problematic behavior is less likely to occur (van Woerkom, 2018). Educators who had success with restorative practices find them to be a better alternative to suspension. Restorative practices encourage teachers to engage with students not only when there is an incident

but throughout the school day. Restorative practices consist of what teachers do naturally and that is to teach. Restorative discipline is proactive and supportive as much as it is responsive. Restorative discipline aims to create conditions in which issues are less likely to arise, and when they do arise, there are connections and skills needed to handle them and restore the school behavior practices. Restorative discipline is proactive and supportive as much as it is responsive because it creates conditions in which issues are less likely to arise. When conditions do arise, teachers have the connections and skills needed to handle them and restore the classroom. The goal of disciplinary interventions is to teach appropriate behavior while building and maintaining relationships with students, showing concern, and getting to know them (Van Woerkom, 2018).

Types of Suspensions

The two types of suspensions used in the current study are ISS and OSS (U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights, 2018). The U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (2018) defines the two types of suspension: ISS and OSS. ISS means instances in which a child is temporarily removed from his or her regular classroom for at least half a day but remains under the direct supervision of school personnel. Direct supervision means school personnel are physically in the same location as students under their supervision (U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights, 2018).

Educators, for the past three decades, have dealt with severe discipline problems in schools and classrooms across the nation (Greene, 2019). ISS is typically for students to be removed temporarily from the classroom to another location that is called the ISS Room for less offensive problems. Traditionally, schools use OSS to deter further

discipline problems. As a result, students are left at home alone and unsupervised with little academic enrichment to maintain their schoolwork.

ISS is used to place students on in-house suspension in a separate classroom for a short period of time. Under California state law, teachers could still be allowed to suspend students from their classrooms for up to two days if they remained in school by enrolling in an ISS program. Students could remain in school under school supervision where they are expected to participate in activities that address the behavior that led to their being removed from the classroom.

OSS removes students from school grounds. Teachers in California are no longer allowed to suspend elementary and middle school students from school for disrupting classroom activities or defying school authorities, as the result of a law signed by Governor Gavin Newsom (Freedberg, 2019). Current law already bans OSS in Grades K-3 as a result of a 2013 law signed by former Governor Jerry Brown, who extended the ban to higher grades (e.g., Grades 6-12), where many suspensions occurred. Governor Brown vetoed several bills that extended the ban to higher grades. Nearly 19,000 students were suspended for defiance in the 2017-18 school year who did not have these protections (Freedberg, 2019).

The U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (2018) distinguishes between two types of OSS. For students without disabilities and students with disabilities served solely under Section 504, OSS means excluding a student from school due to disciplinary reasons for one school day or longer and does not include students who served their suspension in the school. For students with disabilities, OSS is an instance in which a child is temporarily removed from his/her regular school due to disciplinary purposes to another setting (i.e., home, behavior center). OSS includes both removals in

which no IEP services are provided because the removal is 10 days or fewer as well as removals in which the child continues to receive services according to his/her IEP (U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights, 2018).

Suspensions and expulsions have long been employed in schools to discipline students with disruptive behavior to maintain a safe school environment (Rafa, 2018). However, a growing body of research revealed that these types of disciplinary interventions have a negative impact on student achievement, risk of dropout, and likelihood to commit crimes. The effects of these policies are more pronounced for students of color and students with disabilities, who have historically experienced higher rates of suspensions and expulsions (Rafa, 2018).

Student Suspensions and Student Outcomes

Recent national data showed that African American students in K-12 schools are 3.8 times as likely to be suspended, and twice as likely to be expelled, as Caucasian students (Rafa, 2018). Similarly, students with disabilities are more than twice as likely to receive OSS as students without disabilities. These racial and gender disparities are evident as early as preschool, where African American students are 3.6 times as likely to receive OSS as their Caucasian classmates. Boys represent 54% of preschool enrollment who constituted 79% of all suspended preschool children. Research indicates that a child's early educational experiences have a significant influence on their development and outcomes later in life, making these data particularly consequential. State policymakers have attempted to address these problems through legislation aimed at striking an appropriate balance between promoting a safe school environment and reducing the adverse effects of harsh disciplinary policies. Generally, recent legislative efforts to address school discipline policies have focused on restricting suspension and

expulsion by grade level and type of infraction, limiting the length of` exclusion, implementing reporting requirements, and supporting re-engagement (Rafa, 2018).

Interventions to Control Student Behavior

Student suspensions are an intervention frequently used in schools to control student behavior (States et al., 2015). During the 2011–12 school year in the United States, 3.5 million students were disciplined by ISS and 3.45 million by OSS (U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2014). These statistics are of concern because African Americans and economically disadvantaged students are overrepresented in school suspension data (Bal, 2018; Jaggers, Robison, Rhodes, Guan, & Church, 2016; Office for Civil Rights 2014; Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002; Skiba, Ritter, Simmons, Peterson, & Miller, 2005; U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services, 2016). The most common reason for suspending students is to deter students from future infractions of school conduct rules (States et al., 2015). Many students find school far worse than the punishment. It is clear through knowledge of human behavior, suspensions may in other ways negatively impact students who are a great risk for failure in America's schools. Figure 3 shows the number of students who dropped out of the system in 2015 (Noltemeyer, Ward, & Mcloughlin, 2015).

Corporal punishment as a means of discipline. Many schools within 19 states adopted corporal punishment rather than suspensions, as shown in Table 5. Over 160,000 children are subject to corporal punishment in schools each year in the United States (Gershoff & Font, 2016; Gershoff, Sattler, & Holden, 2019). Corporal punishment is permitted in 19 states. However, corporal punishment is much more pervasive across schools in some states, particularly Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Texas, where

half of all students attend schools that use corporal punishment. Mississippi has the highest proportion of children experiencing school corporal punishment, where one in every 14 children is subject to corporal punishment in a single school year (Gershoff et al., 2019; U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 2014).

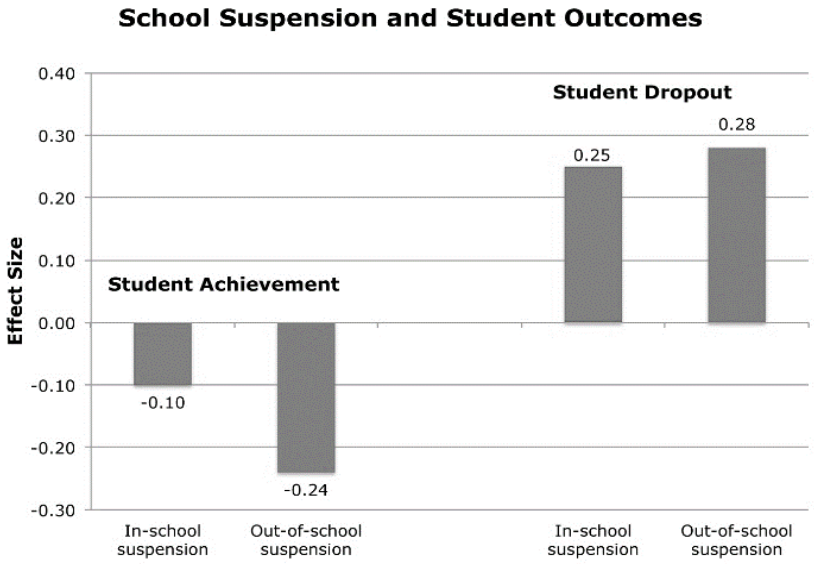

Figure 3. School suspension and student outcomes.
Note. Adapted from "Relationship Between School Suspension and Student Outcomes: A Meta-analysis," by A. L. Noltemeyer, R. M. Ward, and C. Mcloughlin, 2015, *School Psychology Review*, *44*(2), 224–240. Copyright 2020 by the American Psychological Association.

According to the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (2018), 5% (2.7 million) of all K-12 students (50.6 million) received one or more OSS during the 2015–16 school year (U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights, 2018), as shown in Table 5. A teacher survey on disciplinary problems and policies indicates too many students are losing critical opportunities for learning. Far too many teachers are leaving the profession because of the behavior of a few persistent students with severe behavior issues (Public Agenda Foundation, 2004; Self & Dulaney, 2018).

The U.S. Department of Education (2014) warned that the widespread overuse of suspensions and expulsions has tremendous costs. Students who are suspended or expelled from school may be unsupervised during daytime hours and cannot benefit from

academic achievement, positive peer interactions, and adult mentorship offered in class and in school. Suspending students fails to help them develop the skills and strategies they need to improve their behavior and avoid future problems. Suspended students are less likely to graduate on time, and they are more likely to be suspended again, repeat a grade, dropout of school, and become involved in the juvenile crimes (U.S. Department of Education, 2014).

Table 5

Percentage of Schools Reporting Corporal Punishment, and Percentage of Children Attending Schools using Corporal Punishment, by State in the 2011–12 School Year

State	Percentage of schools reporting corporal punishment	Percentage of children attending schools that report corporal punishment
Arkansas	53	47
Alabama	51	50
Oklahoma	33	24
Tennessee	25	23
Louisiana	22	21
Texas	16	12
Georgia	15	12
Missouri	10	8
Kentucky	7	6
Florida	4	4
Indiana	4	4
Arizona	2	1
South Carolina	2	2
Idaho	2	2
North Carolina	2	1
Kansas	1	1
Wyoming	1	1
Colorado	1	<1
Total in states where it is legal	14	12
Total across all states	5	5

Note. Adapted from "*Civil Rights data collection: 2011–12*," by Author, 2014, U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights. Copyright [2014] by Author. Washington, DC: Author.

Rumberger and Losen (2016) conducted a study entitled, *The High Cost of Harsh Discipline and Its Disparate Impact*, funded by the University of California at Los Angeles Civil Rights Project. This was the first study that quantified the economic cost of suspending students from school and built on a large body of research that demonstrated

that excessive school suspensions failed to improve the student's learning environment or enhance academic achievement. School suspension rates have been increasing since the early 1970s, especially for children of color (Rumberger & Losen, 2016). Research has demonstrated that suspension from school is harmful to students, as it increases the risk of retention and school dropout. School dropouts impose huge social costs on their states and localities due to lost wages and taxes, increased crime, higher welfare costs, and poorer health. Although it is estimated that reducing school suspension rates in Texas could save the state up to $1 billion in social costs, only one study to date has linked these two bodies of research. The researchers addressed some of the limitations of their study by estimating a stronger causal model on the effect of suspension on school dropout, calculating a more comprehensive set of the social costs associated with dropping out, and estimating the cost of school suspensions in Florida and California and for the United States (Rumberger & Losen, 2016). The results showed that suspensions in Grade 10 alone produced more than 67,000 dropouts in the United States and generated social costs to the nation of more than $35 billion. California's estimates were limited to Grade 10 students, while Florida estimates were limited to Grade 9 students. Thus, they did not capture the effects of suspensions in earlier grades (Rumberger & Losen, 2016).

Nearly 15% of students are disciplined each year, with 60% of students being disciplined at least once between Grades 7-12 (Marchbanks et al., 2013). The researchers examined the impact of school discipline as student's risk of grade retention and school dropout using a statewide sample of Grade 7 students tracked through their Grade 12 year. Results indicated that school discipline is associated with approximately 4,700 grade retentions per year in the state of Texas. The delayed workforce entry related to grade retention has an effect of over $68 million for the state, including $5.6 million in

lost tax revenue. Given the higher discipline rate for minorities, these costs disproportionately affected students. Further, an additional year of instruction costs the state nearly $41 million dollars. For each year, a student was retained, the effect on the net social surplus exceeded $23,000. Results also indicated that school discipline relates to a 29% increase in high school dropout. These additional dropouts account for an economic effect of $711 million per year. Marchbanks et al. recommended that educational agencies should adopt evidenced-based programs that reduces the use of punitive and exclusionary measures to manage student behavior, such as PBIS. Further, these results emphasized the need for school officials to employ secondary and tertiary dropout prevention programs that were targeted at the most academically and behaviorally at-risk students in schools, in addition to primary prevention programs (Marchbanks et al., 2013).

Suspensions and School Absences

A review of literature revealed that in the State of California grade-level suspension rates were lowest in Grades K-3, with a total of 38,628 suspensions that transformed into more than 77,000 days of lost instruction. Despite a state-mandated ban on suspensions for the category of disruption or defiance in Grades K-3, 2,000 incidences were reported, which added to more than 4,000 days of lost instruction. Some elementary schools are still giving suspensions in those grades for minor disruptive behavior. While there has been a dramatic reduction in suspensions, the legislative restriction clearly has not been fully implemented. However, older students lost more days of instruction due to ISS/OSS than Grades K-3 (Losen & Martin, 2018). The data hold true for every racial and ethnic subgroup. One of the most disproportionate differences in race is for African American students in Grades K-3. These students lost 13 more days in instruction per 100

students enrolled than the statewide average than for all students in the lower elementary grades (17 versus 4). Moreover, the rate of days lost per 100 African American students in Grades K-3 was higher than the aggregate rate for all students in Grades 9-12. However, the most lost instruction for every racial group occurred in Grades 7-8 (Losen & Martin, 2018).

Teacher Perceptions of Buy-in towards SWPBIS Implementation

SWPBIS is an evidence-based program that has been shown to improve student behavior and academic performance and is currently being implemented in nearly 26,000 schools nationwide (Amegin, 2018). However, research showed that there are differences in implementation at elementary schools and secondary schools, but reasons for these differences are not yet fully understood. Amegin investigated the initial perceptions of secondary teachers on SWPBIS implementation, how they changed during the implementation process, and how leaders helped to create more buy-in when a new SWPBIS program was implemented at their site. Teachers were given an anonymous survey about their perceptions of SWPBIS, then a follow-up of one-on-one interviews was conducted to gain a deeper understanding of their beliefs. Interviews were also conducted with both administrators at the focus school. A review of the findings showed that not all teachers were initially supportive of SWPBIS. Their perceptions changed with time as they learned more and witnessed the implementation of SWPBIS on their campus. Teachers also expressed the importance of administrator support. However, buy-in for SWPBIS implementation was necessary to be successful. This research may help SWPBIS teams and administrators better understand teacher insights and therefore implement SWPBIS with fidelity at their school sites (Amegin, 2018). A limitation was that the interview was the only measure used for data collection.

Bowling (2018) conducted a case study of K-5 teachers' and administrators' experiences and perceptions on the need, implementation, and the sustainability of SWPBIS as a schoolwide discipline approach. Multiple forms of data were collected, such as minutes of meetings, SWPBIS Fidelity Checks, Schoolwide Information System data, interviews that were audio- and video-taped, Teacher Working Conditions Survey, and Education Value-added Assessment System data. The results indicated that teachers and administrators reported a need for a schoolwide discipline approach, and SWPBIS was selected. Participants reported that the initial training and staff development were helpful. Creation of norms and expectations for the common areas of the school helped establish the climate and initiated staff buy-in (Bowling, 2018). During the first three years, the school experienced decreased behavior issues, increased academic achievement, and decreased teacher turnover rate. However, sustainability was an issue (Bowling, 2018). To sustain SWPBIS, the staff indicated a need for intensive training for new staff members as well as yearly refresher training and support for all staff members. Teachers also indicated a need for more support and feedback from administrators when addressing discipline issues and consequences for staff members not using SWPBIS. The results demonstrated a need for local school districts to provide annual intensive training for all staff members at SWPBIS school, and to better prepare and train new teachers in the area of classroom management (Bowling, 2018). The limitation for this qualitative study was lack of sustainability.

SWPBIS is a framework utilized by more than 18,000 schools in the United States (Donohue, 2014). Middle and high school SWPBIS leadership teams are usually composed of administrators, school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, special educators, and general educators. The purpose of Donahue's study was

to understand middle and high school counselors' perceptions of SWPBIS impact. The Delphi methodology was used to gain agreement on changes to student outcomes, school climate, and school counselor effectiveness. A review of the results showed that a knowledgeable panel of school counselors from schools that implemented SWPBIS with high fidelity identified changes to student outcomes, school climate and had implications for school counselor effectiveness (Donohue, 2014). The limitation of this study was that only counselor perceptions were assessed. Teacher perceptions on SWPBIS were not examined.

The Delphi methodology is an effective way to identify competencies (Nworie, 2011). It is useful when no description currently exists when acquiring the consensus of experts in the topic (Skulmoski & Hartman, 2007; Wiersma & Jurs, 2009; Wilhelm, 2001). The Delphi technique has been used in school counseling research to define students' college readiness (Milsom & Dietz, 2009), identify urgent school counseling research (Dimmitt, Carey, McGannon, & Henningson, 2005), and identify components needed when teaching classroom management to school counselors (Geltner, 2007).

Runyan (2012) conducted a Delphi study of school counselors and utilized an expert panel of school counseling professionals to create a consensus list of classroom management competencies for 12 school counselors. An open-ended questionnaire was used for data collection. These responses were qualitatively coded by a research team to produce the items that were rated quantitatively in rounds 2 and 3. The final panel consisted of 12 members with expertise in school counselor classroom guidance and classroom management. The panel agreed on a list of 81 classroom management competencies that were specifically tailed for school counselors. The limitation of this

study was that the criteria for establishing participants' expertise may have affected the findings.

Funches (2017) conducted a phenomenological research study with elementary teachers' perceptions on how PBIS related to academic achievement. Purposeful sampling was utilized to identify 10 participants for individual interviews and a Qualtrics survey. During the face-to-face interviews, participants expressed their ideas and experiences with PBIS as a behavioral management framework that was used to manage behavior and improve student academic achievement. The surveys provided an additional analysis of the participants' perceptions of PBIS and academic achievement. The findings indicated a strong relationship between PBIS and academic achievement. The researcher concluded that elementary teachers perceived PBIS to be an effective behavioral management resource for student discipline and achievement when supported by administrators, or the PBIS team, when used with consistency and fidelity (Funches, 2017). However, the results revealed that majority of the participants believed that PBIS does not provide effective strategies to improve achievement and to assist with severely behaved or non-compliant students. The study results indicated that elementary school teachers may be able to create a strategic plan to improve the achievement levels on non-compliant students with more training, guidance, and assistance from the PBIS team (Funches, 2017).

The purpose of Hansen, Labat, and Labat's (2014) study was to determine whether a relationship existed between teacher perception of a school's PBIS program and the implementation process. One hundred and sixteen certified public school teachers in Grades K-8 participated in the study. The participants in the study had a wide range of teaching experience, with most of the respondents reporting 10 or more years of

experience in the schools. An instrument of Teacher Perceptions of PBIS was used as the data collection measure. This study explored the perceptions of teachers from three aspects of the PBIS model as they relate to the implementation process. PBIS provides strategies for behavior modification to discourage inappropriate behaviors through the reinforcement of positive behaviors. The study examined participants' perceptions of PBIS that supported pro-social behaviors and decreased anti-social behaviors to determine if a relationship existed between their perceptions and the implementation processes. The participants rated their perception of the administrator's role in PBIS to examine the presence of a relationship between this perception and their implementation process (Hansen et al., 2014). The limitation of this study was that only one data collection survey was used, which could lead to common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

Martin (2013) examined teachers' satisfaction level and perceptions of PBIS in a school district in the southeast Georgia school district. This mixed methods study took place within a small school district. Approximately 80 teachers from the primary (Pre-K-2) school and the elementary (Grades 3-5) school were surveyed. Teachers who scored in the top and bottom 5% were interviewed after determining an overall score on the survey. Analysis of the surveys and interviews of teachers at these schools helped provide a deeper understanding of their perceptions and satisfaction with PBIS. Teachers in Grades K-5 were surveyed and interviewed to determine their opinions of PBIS. The results of quantitative survey and interview data indicated that teachers in this school system were satisfied with PBIS. Results of this study could benefit administrators in this school district as they evaluate the effectiveness of PBIS and plan to implement further interventions or programs. The limitation of this study was that teachers from Grades K-5

were surveyed, and only teachers who scored in the top and bottom 5% were interviewed. Furthermore, the mixed-methods research design and the methodology to integrate the quantitative and qualitative data were not clearly and coherently explained.

Pavlovich (2008) examined the relationship between PBIS and schoolwide discipline problems after a school had been trained in PBIS. The study examined differences in educators' perceptions about the relationship between positive school climate, Stanford Achievement Test (SAT) scores, and academic achievement. The researcher surveyed 35 schools in Alabama and collected data on disciplinary referral data, SAT scores, and teacher and administrator perception data. Some of the data were gathered via the Internet for the years prior to implementation, during implementation, and the year after implementation. A survey was sent to each of the schools to collect perception data. A review of the results showed a significant increase in Grade 3 reading SAT scores between the years of implementation and one year following implementation of PBIS. The results of office discipline referral data were significantly lower after implementation, and then again one year later. The survey information indicated that the PBIS committee met before school started, as well as either monthly or when necessary. The responsibility of training was undetermined from the results, indicating a conflict on who was responsible (Pavlovich, 2008). The limitation of this study was that only one data collection measure was used, which could have led to common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003). There was no middle school.

Anderson-Saunders (2016) conducted a study of school personnel who were concerned about the disruptive student behaviors at an urban, elementary school in the northeast United States which had persisted, despite PBIS implementation and professional development, for more than seven years. The purpose of this basic

qualitative research study was to explore teacher perceptions regarding the PBIS related to student behavior and socialization issues. Skinner's reinforcement theory and Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory served as the conceptual frameworks for this study. Specifically, this study explored the role of PBIS framework to reduce students' undesirable behaviors, how the framework prepared teachers to implement PBIS in their school, and how PBIS developed prosocial behaviors in students. The study included interview data from 20 teachers who were purposefully selected from Grades Pre-K-5 and were known to meet the selection criteria of being an urban elementary school teacher with two or more years of experience using the PBIS framework. Data were analyzed using Attride-Stirling's six steps of thematic coding. Findings indicated that PBIS is beneficial but selective, more training was needed after implementation, and parental support is necessary for the development of prosocial behaviors. Themes indicated that the PBIS framework was beneficial, that it was successful with some students but not all, and that it must be implemented properly. The study provided intervention strategies to supplement the current PBIS framework. Implications for positive social change are dependent on educators to effectively use PBIS in improving students' social behavior in the school district. The limitation of this study was that only one data collection measure was used, which could have led to common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Middle school was not investigated.

Thornton (2012) investigated PBIS to not only increase students' academic achievements but also their behavioral and social and emotional needs. The participants in the study were a random sample of Grades K-12 public school teachers in the state of Mississippi. The instrumentation was a 32-question teacher perception survey. Although the result of the statistical analysis of the survey data was mostly non-significant, the

results showed that teachers' general feelings about PBIS were positive. This finding seemed to reveal that teachers believed PBIS had a positive impact on students. The number of years PBIS had been at the school had the greatest impact when correlated with teachers' overall perception. This finding showed that the longer PBIS had been at the school, the greater impact the program had on students' outcomes. The limitation of this study was that only one data collection measure was used, which could have led to common bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

Rigorous research is limited regarding teacher buy-in of SWPBIS discipline program (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, & Gardner, 2017; Turnbull, 2002). However, teachers are more likely to buy-in to a school reform program when they receive adequate SWPBIS training, professional development, and resources, support from program developers, and support from staff members such as the school leadership team who addresses teacher concerns related to implementation than those teachers who are not trained (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Turnbull, 2002). Other factors that contribute to teacher buy-in are administrator buy-in and support and teacher decision about classroom implementation that includes input into decisions regarding changes needed and how those changes can be made that do not compromise fidelity of implementation (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Turnbull, 2002). Universal practices associated with a SWPBIS model include clearly defining and systematically teaching 3 to 5 behavioral expectations and key examples of expected behaviors to all students in all classroom and non-classroom settings, having a system where each school forms a SWPBIS team comprising of school staff members, and led by a SWPBIS team leader (Flannery, Fenning, Kato, & Mcintosh, 2014). District and state level support teams were also formed to provide training and technical assistance related to SWPBIS (Mathur &

Nelson, 2013). Preferably, a coaching process was used at the school, district, and state level to promote high fidelity in implementation through ongoing progress monitoring (Cressey et al., 2014).

Teacher Efficacy and Emotional Status of Children

The emotional status of children often depends on teachers for support, guidance, and accountability, which stress the importance of ensuring the social well-being of children to experience school and life success (Rubie-Davis, Flint, & McDonald, 2012). The emotional status of children translates to teachers' understanding of their efficacy. Efficacy is the teacher's belief in the capability to organize and execute courses of action required to successfully accomplish a specific teaching task in a context. Wheatley (2002) linked teacher efficacy more directly to a teacher's belief in his or her ability to influence student outcomes. Therefore, teacher efficacy re-counts to a context-specific assessment of one's ability to instruct students in a curriculum area or in a particular manner (Rubie-Davis et al., 2012). Teachers' sense of efficacy can be considered one type of self-efficacy specifically applied to the context of teaching tasks (Chang & Engelhard, 2015).

Chang and Engelhard (2015) examined the psychometric quality of the *Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale* through data collected from 554 teachers in midwestern United States. The multi-faceted Rasch model was used to measure several potential contextual influences (i.e., years of teaching experience, school context, and levels of emotional exhaustion) on item function within the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale. Results suggested that, although the scale items are rather easy for teachers to endorse, sufficient variance in the item endorsement hierarchy of the scale exists to support the validity of

score interpretations. The items are invariant across years of teaching experience or school locations but not invariant across levels of emotional exhaustion.

Pas, Bradshaw, Hershfeldt, and Leaf (2010) examined how teacher burnout and teacher efficacy were related to student disciplinary actions (ISS and OSS). Other referrals were for school-based support services (student support and special education), while adjusting for school-, teacher-, and student-level variables. Data were collected during the fall and spring of a single school year from 491 teachers who taught 9,795 students in 31 elementary schools. Low teacher efficacy in the fall semester was associated with a reduction in student referrals to the student support team. A review of the results showed that teachers with high burnout in the fall were less likely to have students who received OSS by the spring than teachers with low burnout. These findings enhanced an understanding of the teacher factors that influenced student outcomes and may inform the development of screenings and teacher-targeted interventions. The limitations of this study were that only elementary school teacher perceptions were examined and only one data collection measure was used, which could have led to common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

VanParys Couet (2014) investigated how PBIS affects the level of teachers' teaching anxiety and self-efficacy. The relationship between PBIS and achievement is well established. The impact PBIS has on teaching anxiety and self-efficacy levels is unknown. The research design was quasi-experimental, pre- and post-test design with a sample of 136 Grades K-5 teachers, who were employed at a single school that was planning to implement PBIS at the time of the study. The two instruments used for data collection were *Teaching Anxiety Scale* and *Teacher Sense of Self-efficacy Scale*. ANOVA analysis was used to compare the self-efficacy and teaching anxiety means

before and after the implementation of a PBIS program. The results showed that PBIS does have a statistically significant relationship to reduce teaching anxiety and increase teacher self-efficacy. The study's limitations were the short length of time between pre- and post-data collection, sample size, number of schools involved, and cause and effect could not be established. No grade level was mentioned.

Medina's (2017) mixed methods phenomenological study described elementary school general education teachers' perceptions of how their efficacy, as teachers, was affected by their experiences in implementing the PBIS framework. The study also sought to determine a better understanding of the skills necessary to impact all students while increasing teachers' efficacy and their ability to carry out obligations in facilitating student academic success and student discipline. The research design followed a mixed methods approach, although the methodology of integrating of quantitative and qualitative data was not clearly and coherently explained.

Through an electronic format, two different surveys were administered to the selected elementary school teachers. In addition, principals of participating PBIS elementary schools referred teachers from their sites to participate in semi-structured interviews. A review of the quantitative findings showed that the implementation of PBIS had positive effects on teachers' efficacy, thus affecting classroom experiences and student conduct. Findings demonstrated that teachers did not have a clear understanding of PBIS. However, teachers did understand, and they used the strategies learned through the implementation of PBIS. Qualitative findings included the opportunity to model, practice, and apply appropriate behavior and the strategies. Findings also revealed that teachers could redirect student behaviors by providing students with clear expectations, praise, positive student recognition, and rewards (Medina, 2017).

Student teachers need positive classroom and mastery experiences to increase their efficacy (de Boer, Janssen, & van Driel, 2016). Those mastery experiences could be created by student teachers. Therefore, student teachers need a tool to better understand problematic teaching experiences and help them create positive classroom experiences. Nine student biology teachers found this attribution support tool difficult to use when reflecting on multiple lessons taught in classes. Student teachers scored the lessons and filled in a teacher efficacy questionnaire after each lesson. The results showed that teacher efficacy increased and the number of failures during the lessons decreased. On average, the self-awarded marks per teacher per lesson increased, indicating an increase in mastery experiences. Therefore, the attribution tool seems to be a promising measure for student teachers to enhance teacher efficacy and to support reflection on problematic teaching experiences.

Culturally Responsive Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

Culturally Responsive Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (CRPBIS) is the first framework to operationalize cultural responsiveness in the context of positive behavioral interventions and supports in the United States (Ball, 2011). To test and expand the CRPBIS framework in practice, Bal (2018) has been conducting a mixed methods research project in the state of Wisconsin since 2012. The CRPBIS project was funded by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction to examine and address racial disproportionality in behavioral outcomes in the state schools. To examine and intervene in the educational processes that reproduce those disparities, Bal moved to local schools and implemented Learning Labs in three public schools in two districts between 2013 and 2015 (Bal, 2016, 2018; Bal, Betters-Bubon, & Fish, 2017; Bal, Kozleski, Schrader, Rodriguez, & Pelton, 2014).

Learning Lab is an inclusive research and innovation site for local stakeholders to collectively examine and transform existing disciplinary systems that exclude and marginalize students from non-dominant communities. Learning Lab is a task force: not a focus group. Learning Lab addresses a historical, systemic contradiction of racial disproportionality through an inclusive problem solving and decision-making process. PBIS implementation was studied in the fourth school related to disproportionality and family-school-community partnership without a Learning Lab. These actions aimed to renovate school systems to restore effectiveness, efficiency, and justice and address racial disparities in behavioral outcomes (Bal, 2018). The CRPBIS research team conducted descriptive and multilevel analyses to study the extent of disproportionality in special education identification and school discipline. A review of the results showed that Native American, African American, and Latino students disproportionally received suspension and expulsion, and that African American and Native American students were overrepresented in special education (Bal et al., 2017).

Implementing SWPBIS with Fidelity

Schaper, McIntosh, and Hoselton (2016) documented within-year fidelity growth during installation and initial implementation of SWPBIS. Participants included 353 SWPBIS school teams comprised of building leaders and district coaches from schools throughout the United States. A descriptive analysis was conducted to describe the outcome and predictors. A review of the findings showed that the fidelity outcome was assessed with the Team Implementation Checklist and was completed multiple times per year by SWPBIS teams (Schaper et al., 2016). Results from multilevel fidelity growth models documented within- and between-school variability and growth predictors. Years of implementation, location, school type and enrollment size were significant predictors

of beginning year fidelity scores (intercept). Years of implementation and relative socio-economic status were significant predictors of the average rate of fidelity change per month of school (Schaper et al., 2016).

Fallon, Sanetti, and McCarthy (2014) posited that the number of schools implementing SWPBIS practices nationwide is increasing, but still little is known about the fidelity with which teachers implement SWPBIS practices in the classroom. Specifically, data are needed that reflect the consistency with which classroom based SWPBIS practices are implemented. In addition, teachers face challenges to implementation to ensure the best possible behavioral and academic outcomes for students. One hundred and seventy-one personnel in Connecticut schools implementing SWPBIS were surveyed. A review of the results indicated that, although classroom based SWPBIS practices are implemented very consistently by most respondents, certain practices are somewhat challenging to implement (Fallon et al., 2014). The limitation of this study was only personnel's perceptions in Connecticut schools were examined.

Reinke, Herman, and Stormont (2013) evaluated the use of classroom-level behavior management strategies that align with SWPBIS. Direct observations of universal classroom management strategies were conducted across 33 elementary classrooms in elementary schools implementing SWPBIS with high fidelity. A review of the findings showed that classrooms had posted positively stated classroom rules at high rates, whereas teacher use of specific praise and the ratio of positive to negative interactions were less than optimal. In addition, classroom teachers with higher rates of general praise were found to report being more efficacious about classroom management (Reinke et al., 2013). As a result, teachers in classrooms with higher rates of disruptive behavior reported feeling less efficacious. In contrast, teachers with lower rates of

positive to negative interaction who used higher rates of harsh reprimands and had higher rates of disruptions reported higher levels of emotional exhaustion (Reinke et al., 2013).

Barriers to SWPBIS Implementation

A review of the literature showed several major barriers to the effective implementation of evidence-based practices in schools (Gay, 2016; Pinkelman et al., 2015). One of those barriers was lack of resources, which refers to time, money, and staffing and can be in relation to a lack of financial resources or staff time to support an intervention (Fisher, Lange, Klose, Greiner, & Kraemer, 2016). Another barrier was lack of parental engagement, which was regarded as critical in many school-based interventions, but the degree to which authentic engagement was obtained varied considerably (Baker, Wise, Kelley, & Skiba, 2016; Pinkelman, McIntosh, Rasplica, Berg, & Strickland-Cohen, 2015).

Informational barriers exist when district and school leaders do not communicate information about the need to have current data about research-based practices and reform strategies that may make the greatest difference (Wood, Bauman, Rudo, & Dimock, 2017). Without research-based strategies, states, schools, and districts have been slow to make family engagement a priority. As a result, family engagement has become "one of the most powerful but neglected supports for children's learning and development" (Weiss, Bouffard, Bridglall, & Gordon, 2009, p. 4). Family involvement was perceived as less important to initial implementation but critical to sustainability. Findings from Roberts-Clawson's (2017) study could be useful in helping teachers to implement the PBIS framework to fidelity, as well as helping to sustain these practices. This information could be vital in training new teachers who join the staff as well as experienced teachers who are struggling with individual students' behavior.

Lack of administrator, staff support, and teacher support. An additional barrier was logistical barriers that impeded implementation in several different forms, including time, school climate, and data systems (Kim, 2019; McIntosh, Mercer, Nese, Strickland-Cohen, & Hoselton, 2016). Lack of administrator, staff, and teacher support were identified as problematic for implementation (Fallon, Sanetti, & McCarthy, 2014; Kincaid et al., 2007). Lack of teacher buy-in was noted as a significant barrier, as teachers who were not supportive of the intervention were unlikely to see the benefits of the intervention or practice (Langley et al., 2010). This barrier was compounded by the general difficulty of recruiting staff to assist with initiatives (Seffrin et al., 2009). Finally, passive resistance to the practice occurs when implementation is significantly diminished as displayed by administrators and teachers. Passive resistance means that the staff or teacher supported the intervention but did not pursue learning about the intervention or implementing its core features (Forman et al., 2009).

Criticisms about the SWPBIS Program

Several challenges are present when creating effective academic and behavior systems in schools (Bennett, 2017). When teachers complained that SWPBIS did not work, the problem was inconsistency of implementation, which contributed to its failure (Farlex, Inc., 2018; Hannigan & Hannigan, 2016; Nelen et al., 2019; Scott, 2018). In addition to SWPBIS, not implementing the academic and behavior RtI program using the three tiers could also hinder the implementation of SWPBIS. Research supported the implication that, if teachers do not implement SWPBIS with fidelity, then it may not work (Farlex, Inc., 2018; Hannigan & Hannigan, 2016; Nelen et al., 2019; Scott, 2018).

Program implementation with fidelity coupled with supportive leadership, teacher buy-in, beliefs about discipline, and effective school systems that support academic

performance and student behavior become critical markers of implementation (Farlex, Inc., 2018; Hannigan & Hannigan, 2016; Nelen et al., 2019; Scott, 2018). SWPBIS is an evidence-based framework for preventing and treating challenging behavior in schools and improving overall school climate (McDaniel et al., 2017). The efficacy of this positive, proactive framework has been well established across varying school settings, yet little is known about SWPBIS implementation and sustainability in high-need school contexts. McDaniel et al. (2017) conducted a qualitative study that investigated the perceptions of the barriers and facilitators to implementing and sustaining PBIS in high-need schools from the perspectives of four stakeholders. A semi-structured focus group was conducted with stakeholders from high-need schools with experience in implementing SWPBIS. The findings showed four themes: (a) perceptions of PBIS outcomes, (b) challenges, (c) additional supports, and (d) suggestions for improving PBIS in high-need schools.

Gaps in the Literature

The number of schools implementing SWPBIS practices nationwide is increasing, but still little is known about the fidelity with which teachers implement SWPBIS practices in the classroom (Fallon, Sanetti, & McCarthy, 2014; Kincaid et al., 2007). The gap is in what teachers are teaching in the classroom with fidelity and what is happening in the schoolwide discipline program. Are teachers defining behavioral expectations with students? Are teachers teaching behavioral expectations? Are teachers rewarding students' behavioral expectations? Are resources available to teachers to implement SWPBIS with fidelity?

Specifically, data are needed that reflect the consistency with which classroom based SWPBIS practices are implemented, as well as challenges to implementation faced

by school personnel, to ensure the best possible behavioral and academic outcomes for students. This study presented data to support the consistency with which classroom based SWPBIS practices were implemented, and a focus group discussion ensued to present the challenges faced by teachers with the program. Successful implementation of any behavior management program requires attention to the context where it is being implemented, which is in the classroom setting (Sugai, Horner, Fixsen, & Blasé, 2010).

Summary

Chapter II contains a review of the literature on Vroom's theoretical framework, the Expectancy Theory of Motivation, followed by a historical overview and implementing the SWPBIS. Other topics are misconceptions of the SWPBIS, BED, BET, and OR, restorative discipline, ISS/OSS and school absences, brain-aligned discipline, and administrator and faculty support of SWPBIS. Gaps in the literature are reviewed followed by emotional status of children and teacher efficacy. Implementing SWPBIS with fidelity research is presented along with barriers regarding SWPBIS. Other topics discussed are adoption and implementation of evidence-based practices, school suspensions and expulsion, disruptive misbehaviors, criticisms about the SWPBIS program, and safe and civil schools. A history of post-behavioral interventions and strategies is discussed followed by RtI and SWPBIS, and zero tolerance, suspensions, expulsions, and dropout rates.

Chapter III

Methodology

Chapter III contains the methodology of the research study. The explanatory sequential mixed-methods research design and the rationale for using this design are explained. The responsibilities of the researcher are to ensure that participants in this study are well informed, knowledgeable about the study, and how it benefits them as educators. The participants were informed of the researcher's qualifications to explore the phenomenon of SWPBIS teacher perceptions on the implementation with validity and reliability. The review of literature in Chapter II (including Figure 3) shows that there is minimal research that examines the validity of the expectancy theory in the classroom and how teachers can use expectancy theory in the classroom to decrease the negative impact of distractions like noise and disruptive behavior on a student's motivation towards learning (Hancock, 1995; Nizhebetskiy, 2018; Yurt, 2015). Hancock (1995) said, "Establishment of classroom conditions in which students are motivated to learn academic course content continues to be an important, but elusive goal of educators," (p. 171).

The participants' section describes the selection criteria and recruitment process to construct the sample for quantitative and qualitative data collection. The instrumentation section presents a description of the survey and the focus group with teachers. The data collection section explains the process of administering the SET survey through Qualtrics and conducting focus group discussion.

Data analysis includes discussion of the methods and procedures that were used for data interpretation and integration of the quantitative and qualitative components of the study. IRB protocols for Columbus State University and the school district were

followed during participant recruitment, informed consent, data collection, and analysis to maintain confidentiality of the responses (Columbus State University Doctoral Handbook, p. 23).

Research Design

An explanatory sequential mixed methods design was implemented in this study to examine teachers' perceptions of the SWPBIS program. This design was characterized by an initial quantitative phase of data collection and analysis followed by a qualitative phase, with a final phase of integration, or linking of data from the two separate strands of data (Berman, 2017; Fetters et al., 2013). There were several reasons for utilizing mixed-methods research in this research study. The researcher wanted to understand SWPBIS perceptions of middle school teachers from different perspectives to enhance and enrich the meaning of the SWPBIS program for middle school students. The researcher also wanted to convey information and to take a universal view of discipline standards and processes of a school or a school system.

A mixed-methods design was used to compare, validate, and triangulate the results from the quantitative and qualitative phases to examine the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings from both strands (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Furthermore, the focus group responses were used to explore, explain, and corroborate the responses from the SET survey (Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017).

Maheshwari (2018) posited that causal-comparative research is used to understand the differences between groups that are naturally formed before the research study commenced. Differences can be identified in a causal-comparative study, but it is hard to establish causality between the variables under investigation because of the non-random assignment of participants to experimental and control groups. Causal-

comparative research is not as effective as experimental designs, but it attempts to determine the cause of differences that already existed between or among groups of individuals. For example, grade levels of middle school teachers are already formed in this proposed study. However, causal-comparative research is usually used in educational research to examine differences between groups in the natural settings. This research design also minimizes the unethical treatment of participants, which has a greater chance of occurrence in the case of random assignment (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2001).

Phenomenological research design was utilized for the qualitative phase of the study to understand the lived experiences of teachers' perceptions of buy-in, reward systems, and self-efficacy to implement SWPBIS with fidelity. Phenomenological research was appropriate for this study because it was used to study the real-life experiences of individuals based on their perceptions, past experiences, background characteristics, and environmental attributes. It was used to understand or comprehend meanings of human experiences as it is lived (Laverty, 2003).

The SET survey was emailed to approximately 120 middle school teachers. The focus group results from the qualitative phase were triangulated with the SET survey results from the quantitative phase to improve the validity and reliability of the study results. All data collected from the SET survey and focus group were aggregated and then analyzed and interpreted.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher ensured that the participants in this study were well informed and knowledgeable about the study, and how it benefitted them as educators. The researcher is employed as a Behavior Liaison in a large metropolitan school district located in the Southeastern United States. The researcher is qualified to have conducted the study

because she has 12 years of teaching experience and nine years of experience in assessing and observing students' behavioral and academic functions. The researcher also has experience in utilizing data to develop appropriate educational placements, goals, and objectives in tailoring instruction and activities.

Participants and Sampling

Purposive sampling was used in both quantitative and qualitative phases to select middle school teachers in sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade at C. M. Middle School and M. N. Middle School in a school district located in the Southeastern United States. Data collection began in April 2020 after obtaining approval from the Columbus State University IRB, the school district's IRB, letters of support from two school principals, and informed consent from middle school teachers in both schools. Data were collected for ISS and OSS during the 2017-18 and 2018-19 academic years. Participants of the qualitative phase were purposefully selected for the focus group and comprised of nine teachers (Grades 6-8) who had completed the SET Qualtrics survey and had indicated that they wanted to participate in the focus group.

The risk to participants was not greater than minimal. Confidentiality was maintained during data collection because all the teacher responses in the survey were anonymous in the quantitative phase of the study. The researcher was not related to any participants in this study and was not in a supervisory position that could cause coercion. "Perceived coercion is a sense of pressure related to the experience of being referred to treatment" (Opsal, Kristensen, Verderhus, & Clausen, 2016, p. 1). No identifying information was given about the school district, the schools, or participants. Information collected was used solely for the purpose of this study. In addition, all IRB policies and regulations of CSU and the school district were followed during the study. No individual

level data were published. The researcher adhered to five general principles to ensure ethical conduct in research: (a) beneficence and nonmaleficence, (b) fidelity and responsibility, (c) integrity, (d) justice, and (e) respect for people's rights and dignity (The Belmont Report, 2014; U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1979).

There were approximately 7,000 teachers employed in the targeted County School System. The sample consisted of 120 full-time, certified middle school teachers from two middle schools located in the Southeastern United States. Both schools are classified as Title I based on the 50% or higher percentage of students eligible for free and reduced-price meals.

The majority of students in C. M. Middle School were African American (96%) followed by Caucasian (2%), Asian (1%), and Hispanic (1%). There were 20 students enrolled in the English for Speakers of Other Languages program. The racial composition of the N. M. Middle School community was predominantly African American (95%) with 3% Hispanic and less than 1% Caucasian and 1% Multi-racial. All students in both schools were eligible for free and reduced priced meals.

Based on a G*Power analysis, a minimum sample size of 84 was required to attain a power of .80 and an effect size of .35 as shown in Figure 4 (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner et al., 2016; Faul, Erdfelder, Lang et al., 2016; Meyvis & Van Osselar, 2018). A purposive sampling strategy was implemented in the study. However, to ensure that the study had sufficient power, data collection continued until a minimum of 84 participants had completed in the survey.

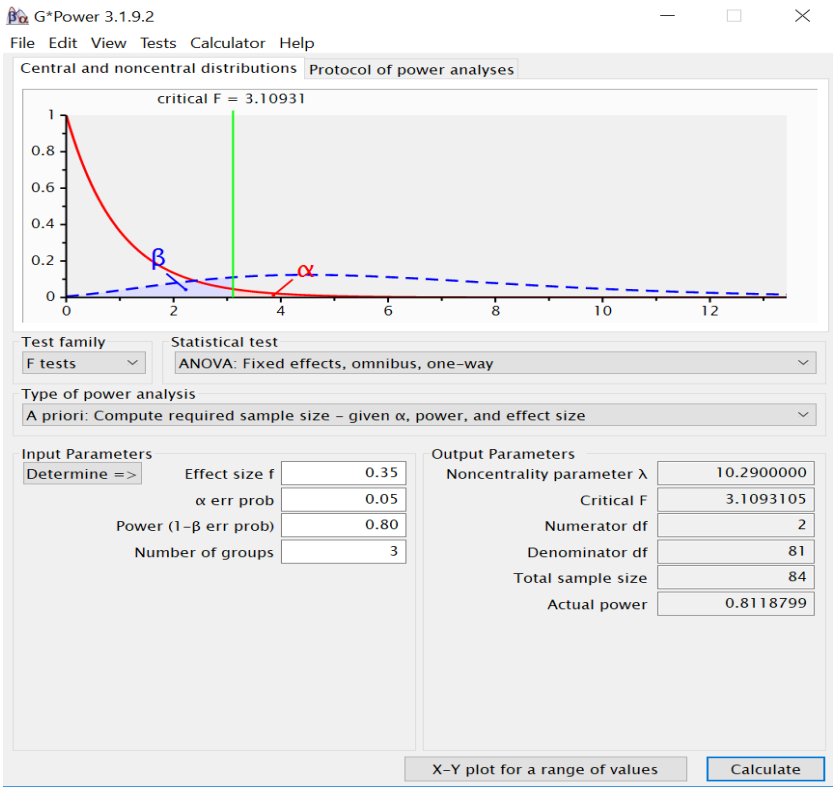

Figure 4. G*Power analysis.
Adapted from "G*Power 3.1.9.2: A flexible statistical power analysis program for the social, behavioral, and biomedical sciences," by F. Faul, E. Erdfelder, A.-G. Lang, and A. Buchner, 2016, *Behavior Research Methods, 39*, pp. 175-191. Copyright 2020 by the American Psychological Association.

Participation in this research was voluntary. Participants were informed of the purpose of the research through an email that was sent to all the middle-school teachers in both schools. One of the criteria for participation in the focus group was teachers must have completed the SET survey. The selection criteria were to voluntarily participate in the study, work as full-time certified middle grade teachers (Grades 6-8), and should have participated in the SWPBIS discipline program for at least 2 years. The quantitative phase of the study included 43 full-time certified teachers employed in M. N. Middle School and 45 full-time certified teachers in C. M. Middle School (Grades 6-8) that implemented SWPBIS (n = 84). The final sample size in this phase was 84.

Inclusion criteria. Teachers having varying years of teaching experience and having different education levels further added to the diversity in the sample characteristics. Demographics were collected on gender, age, ethnicity, years of employment with the school district, years of full-time teaching experience, grade level currently teach, and whether they were members of the SWPBIS school team. Teachers who completed the survey and expressed their interest to participate in the focus group were eligible participants in the focus group.

Exclusion criteria. Individuals who worked in the districts' central office staff, teachers from Grades K-5, and Grades 9-12 were not included in the study. The focus on middle school teachers (Grades 6-8) was based on the literature review regarding discipline problems in middle school and low academic performance (Augustine et al., 2018; Gray, Sirinides et al., 2017; Sugai et al., 2001). In addition, teachers who were not certified, individuals who could not read, or speak English proficiently, incarcerated persons, and mentally deficient individuals in mental institutions were excluded from the study.

Instrumentation

Quantitative phase. The SET was used to collect data in the quantitative phase. The survey was designed to assess and evaluate the critical features of schoolwide effective behavior support across each academic schoolyear. The survey consisted of 40 questions related to nine areas of SWPBIS such as (1) BED, (2) establish and maintain a team, (3) team self-assessment, (4) BET, (5) establish OR behavioral expectations, (6) violations, (7) establish information system, (8) build capacity for function-based support, and (9) build district level support (Sugai et al., 2001; Sugai & Simonsen, 2012). However, only the following dependent variables were investigated because these

constructs focused on BED, BET, and OR behavioral expectations by administrators and teachers to modify students' behavior schoolwide.

The SET results were used to assess features that are in place, determined annual goals for schoolwide effective behavior support, evaluated on-going efforts toward schoolwide behavior support, designed and revised procedures as needed, and compared efforts toward schoolwide effective behavior support from year to year (Sugai, Lewis-Palmer, Todd, & Horner, 2001). The SET was created to provide a rigorous measure of primary prevention practices within schoolwide behavior support (Todd, Lewis, Sugai, & Boland, 2004). The survey was used to measure various elements of the SWPBIS discipline program.

Teachers were asked to rate their levels of satisfaction about the impact of SWPBIS on student behavior, their satisfaction with the program's expectations and consequences and short- and long-term incentives, and their perceptions of administrative support for the program. The 40 questions were on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1=*strongly disagree*, 2=*disagree*, 3=*not sure*, 4=*agree*, to 5=*strongly agree*. The survey took approximately 30 minutes to complete. Demographic data were collected on participants' gender, ethnicity, age, years of employment with the school district, years of full-time teaching experience, grade level currently taught, and whether they were members of the SWPBIS school team.

The SET was used to obtain middle school teachers' perceptions regarding the implementation of SWPBIS and examined how the program was working to influence discipline rates. The survey was administered online via the Qualtrics platform. Teachers read the online informed consent form and indicated their expression of interest by

selecting the “I agree” or “I do not agree” option. The “I agree” option led participants to complete the survey. The “I do not agree” option exited participants from the survey.

The results of the SET survey provided schools with a measure of the proportion of features that are not targeted or started, in the planning phase, and in the implementation and maintenance phases of development toward a systems approach to schoolwide effective behavior support. The SET is designed to provide trend lines of improvement and sustainability over time. Gross-Portney and Watkins (2000) stated, “A good scale is one that assesses the different aspects of the same attribute; that is, the items are homogenous” (p. 575). According to Gross-Portney and Watkins, “A value that gets near .90 is considered to be high, and the scale can be considered reliable” (p. 577).

Taber (2018) conducted a meta-analysis that focused on Cronbach’s alpha because it is a commonly used technique that is recognized in the methodological literature. Cronbach’s coefficient alpha was used to calculate the internal consistency index for all SET subscales and the SET total score in this study. The psychometric properties of SET survey showed excellent internal consistency (.96), interrater (.99) and test-retest (.97) reliability, moderate to strong concurrent validity with other measures of SWPBIS fidelity of implementation (.75), and sensitivity to SWPBIS training (Horner et al., 2004). These results demonstrated that the item structure of the SET survey meets standard psychometric criteria for validity, internal consistency, and test-retest reliability.

Ling, Liang, and Tsai (2015) reported that a questionnaire made explicit inferences to Cronbach’s alpha as a reliability coefficient in the context of discussing the source instrument and new empirical results. The overall reliability Cronbach’s alpha was .80. The alpha values of the two subscales were .88 and .89.

Construct validity and reliability. Validity was traditionally subdivided into three categories: "content, criterion-related, and construct" (Brown, 1996, pp. 231-249). *Content validity* includes any validity that focuses on the content of the test. To demonstrate content validity, testers investigate the degree to which a test is a representative sample of the content of whatever objectives or specifications the test was originally designed to measure. *Criterion-related validity* helps to assess the extent to which there is correlation or similarity between the instrument under investigation and a similar instrument (having the same characteristics/objectives/specification) that has already been validated (Brown, 1996).

Construct validity has traditionally been defined as the extent to which a test is measuring the construct it claims to be measuring and not something else (Brown, 2000). The construct validity of a test should be demonstrated by an accumulation of evidence. Examples of construct validity are using content analysis, correlation coefficients, factor analysis, one-way ANOVA studies demonstrating differences between differential groups such as grade levels, pre- and post-test intervention studies, factor analysis, and multi-trait/multi-method studies. The more strategies are used to demonstrate the validity of a test, the more confidence test users have in the construct validity of that test, but only if the evidence provided by those strategies is convincing (Todd et al., 2004).

The SET scores demonstrated adequacy in measures of central tendency and measures of dispersion at all three levels: item, subscale, and total. The results of Todd, Lewis, Sugai, and Boland's (2004) study showed that the SET is a valid, reliable measure that can be used to assess the impact of schoolwide training and technical assistance efforts. The SET can also be useful in formal analyses of the relationship between use of schoolwide PBS and changes in social and academic outcomes.

Reliability. The reliability of the SET was assessed through a variety of correlational analyses involving test–retest and internal consistency of items, subscales, and the total SET score and calculations of interobserver agreement percentages. Internal consistency determines the extent to which all SET items are derived from a common content domain: thus, determining content cohesiveness and distinctiveness of items, subscales, and the total score. Table 6 provides Cronbach alpha of the seven sub-scales of the SET. However, the current study presented nine subscales. The similarities and differences in the responses of teachers were analyzed around the nine domains of the SET survey items: (1) BED, (2) BET, (3) OR behavioral expectations, (4) establish and maintain a team, (5) team self-assessment, (6) violations, (7) establish information system, (8) build capacity for function-based support, and (9) build district level support (Horner et al., 2004). This study only used three domains, which represented schoolwide BED, BET, and OR behavioral expectations. The remaining domains were tested for reliability using Cronbach's alpha reliability measure.

The Bathgate, Crowell, Schunn, Canady, and Dorph (2015) study did not focus on the SET. However, Bathgate et al. insinuated that two mentions were related to an unspecified alpha statistic, known as Cronbach's alpha statistic. Todd et al. (2004) used Pearson product–moment correlations to analyze all item/subscale score correlations, all item/SET total score correlations, and all subscale/SET total score correlations. Cronbach's coefficient alpha was used to calculate the internal consistency index for all SET subscales and the SET total score. The psychometric properties of SET survey demonstrated excellent internal consistency (r=.96), interrater (r=.99) and test-retest (r=.97) reliability, moderate to strong concurrent validity with other measures of SWPBIS fidelity of implementation (r=.75), and sensitivity to SWPBIS training (Horner,

Todd, Lewis-Palmer, Irvin, Sugai, & Boland, 2004). These results demonstrated that the item structure of the SET survey meets standard psychometric criteria for validity, internal consistency, and test–retest reliability.

Table 6

SET Features and Mean Interobserver Agreement for Seven Key Features

SET Features	Mean test-retest agreement (range)
BED	98.8% (75-100)
BET	92.8% (83-100)
Ongoing system of behavioral expectations rewarded	89.8% (67-100)
Continuum of consequences for problem behavior	92.3% (75-100)
System for gathering, summarizing, and using data for decision-making	98.3% (88-100)
Local administrative support	97.5% (94-100)
District support	100%
SET total	97.3% (93-100)

Note. Adapted from "The School-wide Evaluation Tool (SET): A Research Instrument for Assessing School-wide Positive Behavior Support," by R. H. Horner, A. W. Todd, T. Lewis-Palmer, L. K. Irvin, G. Sugai, & J. B. Boland, 2004, *Journal of Positive Behavioral Interventions*, *6*(1), p. 18. Copyright 2020 by the American Psychological Association. https://doi.org/10.1177/10983007040060010201

Qualitative phase. The second phase of instrumentation included a protocol for conducting the focus group and a set of focus group questions (see Appendix B) by the researcher. The focus group questions were aligned to the SET survey items on BED, BET, and ongoing rewards system. The focus group phase was conducted online through a teleconference because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The researcher followed the protocol as identified in the addendum to conduct the focus group session. The anticipated duration of the focus group session was 60 minutes.

Data Collection

Quantitative phase. In the quantitative phase, recruitment letters were emailed to middle school teachers (Grades 6-8) in both schools. The letter contained a hyperlink to the online informed consent form and Qualtrics survey along with information on focus group session, as well as details on recruitment and the process of taking informed

consent from participants for the online Qualtrics survey. The survey took approximately 30 minutes to complete (Appendix A).

Data were collected for ISS and OSS during the 2017-18 and 2018-19 academic years from the Office of Accountability, Research, Data, and Evaluation. Qualtrics is web-based software that allows the researcher to create surveys and generate reports. Qualtrics allowed the researcher to use surveys, feedback, and polls through a variety of distribution means (Ibarra, Agas, Lee, Pan, & Buttenheim, 2018). Qualtrics was used to collect data from middle school teachers on the SET survey questions. Informed consent was obtained from the middle school teachers via electronic signature prior to the administration of the SET Survey. All teachers were sent a recruitment email stating the study purpose, objectives, study design, data collection, and analysis procedures. The email contained a link to Qualtrics survey that participants could click if they wanted to participate in the study. The first page of the Qualtrics survey had the informed consent form via electronic signature that provided information on the participant's rights and responsibilities and stated that participation in the study was voluntary. The form also provided a statement that the study had been approved by Columbus State University's IRB and the school district's Office of Accountability, Research, Data, and Evaluation.

A follow-up email was sent out one week after the initial recruitment as a reminder via middle school teachers' email accounts, which were provided from the school district's office. The recruitment email re-introduced the principal investigator, provided an overview of the mixed methods study and the link that took them directly to the informed consent and Qualtrics survey when they opted to participate. Information about opting to participate in the focus group was also included in the follow-up recruitment email. The researcher also included a thank you note for those middle school

teachers who had already completed the SET survey. Participants were reminded that the survey also had a question on focus group participation embedded at the end of the survey where the participant was redirected to a new Uniform Resource Locator (URL), whereby they provided their first and last name in addition to their email address while keeping their responses to the survey de-identifiable from their identifiable information (name and email address).

Teachers were assured that their responses were confidential, and their identity remained anonymous. No individual responses, either from quantitative or qualitative analysis, were reported. There were no identifiers that allowed anyone to identify participants by their responses to the questions. Participants selected the "I agree" option before they could respond to the survey questions. The responses were recorded in the Qualtrics system after the respondents electronically completed and submitted the survey. The survey took approximately 30 minutes to complete. All survey responses were anonymous.

Qualitative phase. The qualitative phase of data collection involved a purposefully selected focus group of nine certified teachers (three from each Grades 6-8) who met via an audio- and video-taped Zoom teleconference due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The purpose of the qualitative phase was to obtain a rich, in-depth description of how middle school teachers felt about the SWPBIS discipline program. The researcher posed 11 questions. Permissions from the school district superintendent and two middle school principals were obtained before conducting the focus group Zoom teleconference session.

For data collection, the researcher included a question at the end of the informed consent of the SET survey to indicate whether teacher participants wished to participate in a focus group. Teacher participants were asked to leave their email addresses if they

indicated their voluntary participation in the focus group. Then the researcher contacted those teacher participants who agreed to participate in the focus group by email (included on the informed consent letter and by permission of teacher participants to be contacted). Teacher participants signed the electronic informed consent forms and electronically emailed their consent before starting the focus group session. Focus group directions were developed prior to convening the focus group (see Appendix B). The duration of the focus group session was approximately 60 minutes.

The qualitative phase of this study involved a purposefully selected focus group of nine teachers (Grades 6-8) who completed the SET Qualtrics survey and indicated that they wanted to participate in the focus group. Meeting day and time were finalized based on participants' convenience due to the COVID-19 pandemic that caused face-to-face meeting not to occur. Participants met during a Zoom teleconference that the researcher arranged. Details were provided to participants on recruitment and the process of taking email informed consent for the focus group. The researcher was the moderator of the focus group session and provided the guidelines and discussion topics.

The meeting took place after the school hours within a Zoom meeting due to the COVID-19 pandemic. All schools were closed due to the pandemic. Meeting face-to-face with participants was not possible during the session. Participants signed the online informed consent forms before starting the focus group session via Zoom. The researcher reviewed the focus group protocol before the session started. The focus group session was audio- and video-taped due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The researcher signed up for and created a free Zoom account by installing Zoom using Google Gmail. Participants received an email invitation for them to join the meetings with other focus group participants scheduled for Saturday, April 18, 2020 from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Within the comfort of their homes or other locations, participants were instructed to open their teleconference app on their desktop or laptop and click “Sign in” at the scheduled time. Participants logged in using the email and meeting identification password that the researcher created. The researcher greeted each participant as they logged into the meeting. When all participants checked in, the focus group discussion took approximately 60 minutes.

Topics related to SWPBIS implementation and its effectiveness were the main areas covered in the session. Participants were instructed to put a placard with their pseudonym on the card, which each participant placed in front of themselves to maintain anonymity of responses in the audio and video recordings. The researcher addressed each participant by a number and a pseudonym to maintain confidentiality. The survey responses remained anonymous and focus group responses were confidential. All data were aggregated. No individual responses either from quantitative or qualitative analysis were reported. All the survey, focus group data, and online informed consent forms will be kept for one year from the time the data were collected. The electronic data will be deleted, and transcripts, recordings, and other paper documentation will be shredded after one year. The data from the survey, disciplinary rates, and focus group may be utilized for future research projects.

Teachers were assured that their responses were confidential, and their identity would remain anonymous. No individual responses, either from quantitative or qualitative analysis, were reported. There were no identifiers that allowed anyone to identify participants by their responses to the questions. Participants selected the “I agree” option before they could respond to the survey questions. The responses were recorded in the Qualtrics system after the respondents electronically completed and

submitted the survey. The survey took approximately 30 minutes to complete. All survey responses were anonymous.

Group interviews are frequently called *focus groups* (Bolderston, 2012). Clarke (1999) suggested that focus groups work well because, "Group members influence each other with comments, and participants may form opinions after considering the views of others tapping into this interpersonal dialogue can help identify common experience and shared concerns" (Clarke, 1999, p. 395). The researcher conducted the focus group session. The researcher introduced herself and asked each participant to write a pseudonym (not their real name) on a blank place card and introduce themselves to others on the Zoom teleconference. Before speaking, each participant stated her pseudonym and grade level to help to maintain confidentiality in participant responses and facilitate the transcription phase of the focus group analysis. Each principal was sent an information letter to be informed about the study in the school and to gain approval to administer the survey and conduct the focus group session. Participants signed an electronic copy of the informed consent forms before starting the focus group session. Permission to record the session was provided in the electronic online informed consent letter.

The researcher asked semi-structured questions using the focus group protocol that contained those questions (see Appendix B). Examples of focus group questions were, "Have you taught the school rules/behavioral expectations this year? Is there a schoolwide team that addresses behavioral support in your building?" There were three types of interview structure processes (i.e., structured, semi-structured, and unstructured; Jamshed, 2014). Structured questions are fixed questions in exact wording and order with limited responses, interaction, and variation. Semi-structured questions contain flexible question wording and order because the responses are open with interaction and

clarification. Semi-structured methods follow the exact research process and occur only one time with an individual or with a focus group and generally last from 30 minutes to an hour (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). The researcher could add and remove questions between participants. In contrast, unstructured questions have no set questions or order with open interaction and clarification. Question order was not modified based on the participant responses; however, participants could ask for a question to be repeated or explained if necessary. Table 7 shows the integration of a joint display match between the survey and focus group questions (James, 2017).

Table 7

Schoolwide Evaluation Tool (SET) Matching Guide

Survey Questions	Focus Group Questions/Documentation
BED	Discipline Handbook, instructional materials.
1. Is there documentation that staff has agreed to 5 or fewer positively stated rules or behavioral expectations?	Rules posted in classrooms, hallways, cafeteria, and other locations.
2. Are the agreed upon rules and expectations publicly posted in 8 of 10 locations?	Wall posters
BET	Have you taught the school rules/behavior expectations to your students this year?
3. Is there documentation system for teaching behavioral expectations to students on an annual basis?	Has the schoolwide team taught/reviewed the schoolwide program to staff this year?
4. Do 90% of the staff state that teaching behavioral expectations to students has occurred this year?	What are the school rules/motto and what are they called?
5. Do 90% of the schoolwide team state that the schoolwide program has been taught/interviewed with staff on an annual basis?	
6. Can at least 70% (15+ students) of the students state 67% of the school rules?	
7. Can 90% of the staff list 67% of the school rules?	
OR Behavioral Expectations	Have you received/given a "gotcha" (positive referral) in the past two months?
8. Is there a documented system for rewarding student behavior?	

9. Do 50% or more of the students indicate they have received a reward (other than verbal praise) for expected behaviors over the past two months? 10. Do 90% of the staff indicate they have delivered a reward (other than verbal praise) to students for expected behavior over the past two months?	Focus group, lesson plans, instructional materials.

Data Analysis

Quantitative phase. The quantitative data analysis included descriptive statistics (i.e., mean, variance, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis), checking assumptions of normality (Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests and Shapiro Wilks' test) and homogeneity of variance (Levene's test). These assumptions were met to determine whether the results were statistically non-significant. An independent sample *t*-test was conducted to answer research questions 1, 2, and 3. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to answer the quantitative research questions 4, 5, and 6. Grade level (e.g., SWPBIS team member and number of years of teaching experience) were the categorical independent variables, and SET survey scores (i.e., BED, BET, and OR) were the continuous dependent variables. Post-hoc tests (Tukey) were utilized to assess if the teachers' perceptions were different to a statistically significant degree based on membership on the SWPBIS team and number of years of teaching experience. All data analysis was conducted in SPSS, version 24. The frequencies and percentages of ISS and OSS data were compared for the academic years 2017-18 and 2018-19 across the three grade levels for both middle schools to see how SWPBIS implementation influenced the disciplinary rates across the grade levels.

Skewness is a measure of the symmetry in a distribution. A symmetrical dataset has a skewness equal to zero. Therefore, a normal distribution has a skewness of

zero. Skewness essentially measures the relative size of the two tails. A *positive* skewness indicates that the size of the right-handed tail is larger than the left-handed tail.
If skewness is positive, the data are positively skewed or skewed right, meaning that the right tail of the distribution is longer than the left. The skewness value of less than 2 and kurtosis less than 7 indicates the normal distribution of the data (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019).

Kurtosis is a measure of the heaviness (heavy-tailed or light-tailed) of both tails in the normal distribution. If the kurtosis is greater than 3, then the dataset has heavier tails than a normal distribution (more in the tails). If the kurtosis is less than 3, then the dataset has lighter tails than a normal distribution (less in the tails). Distributions that are flatter than a normal distribution are called *platykurtic* and distributions that are more peaked are called *leptokurtic*.

Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the internal consistency and reliability of the survey items. A Cronbach's alpha of greater than .70 is acceptable to meet the internal consistency standards (Cronbach, 1951). The more homogeneous or related the survey items in the scale are, the higher the Cronbach's alpha scale. Gross-Portney and Watkins (2000) stated, "A good scale is one that assesses the different aspects of the same attribute; that is, the items are homogenous" (p. 575). According to Gross-Portney and Watkins, "A value that gets near .90 is considered to be high, and the scale can be considered reliable" (p. 577).

Qualitative phase. During the cycle of coding, the focus group questions were developed prior to the focus group session (see Appendix B). Data analysis from the focus group followed "qualitative analytic process, which was cyclical, where first, a cycle of coding occurred during the initial coding of the data" (Rogers, 2018, p. 890).

The aim of the first phase of coding was to develop a code list that described the issues, aspects, phenomena, and themes that were identified in the data, naming them and trying to make sense of them in terms of similarities and differences. The analysis resulted in a structured code list which was used. The code list was refined further with a few additional cycles of memoing until all the data were coded and the coding schema was fully developed. Selective coding and intermediate coding were utilized in the second cycle coding (Skjott & Korsgaard, 2019). Member-checking and interrater reliability were utilized to establish the credibility, confirmability, dependability, and trustworthiness of qualitative codes (Smith & McGannon, 2018). Selective coding and intermediate coding were utilized in the second cycle coding (Skjott & Korsgaard, 2019).

The similarities and differences in the responses of teachers were analyzed around the following SET survey items: (1) BED, (2) BET, (3) team self-assessment, (4) establish schoolwide expectations, (5) OR behavioral expectations, (6) violations, (7) establish information system, (8) build capacity for function-based support, and (9) build district level support (Sugai et al., 2001).

Mixed methods analysis. Triangulation is defined as the "combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon" (Denzin, 1978, p. 291). Triangulation is usually used for cross-validation and to corroborate the results obtained from multiple sources (i.e., survey, focus group, ISS, and OSS disciplinary rates), participants (Grades 6-8 teachers), and study locations (two middle schools). The origins of triangulation are rooted in Campbell and Fiske's (1959) work of multi-operationism, which later gained popularity as multi-trait, multi-method approach to data collection and analysis.

Triangulation is widely used in mixed methods designs because both quantitative and qualitative data are integrated to gain a comprehensive and detailed understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. In this case, the goal was to examine middle school teacher perceptions on effectiveness of SWPBIS implementation and buy-in and the influence on OSS and ISS disciplinary rates. Triangulation is of four main types: theoretical (two or more alternative theories), methodological (two or more data collection methods), investigator (two or more researchers) and data source (two, different, independent data sources; Denzin, 1978). In the current study, the researcher utilized methodological and data source triangulation to integrate the quantitative and qualitative results because a survey, a focus group, and ISS and OSS disciplinary scores were used as triangulation data sources.

Triangulation involves using multiple methods, data sources, observers, or theories to gain a more complete understanding of the phenomenon being studied. Triangulation was used to ensure that the research findings were robust, rich, comprehensive, and well-developed (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Methodological triangulation using linking of quantitative and qualitative data was used to integrate the data derived from the SET quantitative survey and a qualitative focus group. A joint display table was utilized (see previously displayed Table 2) to integrate the quantitative phase and to derive conclusions that were above the separate analysis of both data strands (Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

The research design is an explanatory sequential mixed methods design was used where the survey data collection occurred first followed by qualitative data collection through a focus group discussion. At the methods level, building technique was used to construct the qualitative focus group discussion questions from the nine domains of the

SET survey. The connection data integration technique was used to integrate the survey results from quantitative descriptive statistics and one-way ANOVA analysis to the qualitative themes that were derived from the analysis interview and focus groups transcripts. For interpretation and reporting, the weaving data integration technique was used to simultaneously "write the quantitative and qualitative results together on a theme-by-theme basis" (Fetters, Curry, & Creswell, 2013, p. 2142).

Data transformations. Data transformations were used to count the number of times a theme occurred from the focus group transcripts. In this case, a theme is a keyword that appeared in the focus group transcripts. The purpose of the transformations was to help in understanding the dominance or importance of a theme based on its frequency of occurrence in the coding process.

Joint display tables. Finally, joint display tables were used to present and summarize the results from the quantitative survey along with the themes derived from the qualitative focus group discussion (Guetterman, 2019). The most prevalent types of joint displays were statistics-by-themes and side-by-side comparisons. Innovative joint displays connected findings to theoretical frameworks or recommendations. Researchers used joint displays for convergent, explanatory sequential, exploratory sequential, and intervention designs (Guetterman, 2019; Guetterman, Fetters, & Creswell, 2015).

The current study compared quantitative data of SET scores (e.g., BED, BET, and OR behavioral expectations) and SWPBIS team member and number of years of teaching experience to qualitative derived experiences from a Zoom teleconference focus group of nine middle school teachers' perceptions of a SWPBIS discipline program. In addition, ISS and OSS student discipline data were compared for two consecutive school years

(2017-18 and 2018-19) to determine whether a decrease or increase occurred in those discipline data.

Summary

An explanatory sequential design was used in the study to examine middle school teachers' perceptions of BED, BET, and OR behavioral expectations with SWPBIS implementation. The quantitative phase is the first portion of the study followed by the collection of qualitative data, which were used to explain the initial quantitative results. Causal-comparative research design was used for quantitative phase. Phenomenological research design was used for the qualitative phase. Purposive sampling was used in both phases to select Grades 6-8 teachers (n = 9) from two middle schools. Qualtrics platform was utilized to administer the SET survey and collect data from 84 middle school teachers in the quantitative phase. In the qualitative phase, an online focus group session was conducted to collect data from nine teachers who had completed the SET survey. ISS and OSS disciplinary rates were used from 2017-18 and 2018-19 academic years to examine the effectiveness of the SWPBIS program.

Chapter IV

Results

The purpose of this mixed-methods, sequential, explanatory study was to examine middle school teachers' perceptions (e.g., BED, BET, and OR behavioral expectations) of their efforts toward implementing SWPBIS with fidelity in two middle schools within an urban school district located in the Southeastern United States. The independent variables were SWPBIS team member and years of full-time teaching experience and a teacher's role as a team member in the SWPBIS team. The dependent variables were BED, BET, and OR behavioral expectations. The SET was used for the quantitative phase of the study where teachers responded to questions regarding their perceptions on the implementation of SWPBIS with fidelity in their school (see Appendix A). For the qualitative phase of the study, teachers' perceptions were explored to obtain a rich, in-depth description of how teachers' perceptions of their knowledge, experiences, training, and support within SWPBIS are related to their participation and non-participation on the SWPBIS team and their years of full-time teaching experience on implementing SWPBIS with fidelity.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research Question 1: To what extent do sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers' perceptions differ in BED within SWPBIS when they are part of the SWPBIS team versus when they are not? (quantitative)

Null Hypothesis 1: There were no statistically significant differences among sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers' perceptions in BED within SWPBIS when they are part of the SWPBIS team versus when they are not.

Alternate Hypothesis 1: There were statistically significant differences among sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers' perceptions in BED within SWPBIS when they are part of the SWPBIS team versus when they are not.

Research Question 2. To what extent do sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers' perceptions differ in BET within SWPBIS when they are part of the SWPBIS team versus when they are not? (quantitative)

Null Hypothesis 2: There were no statistically significant differences among sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers' perceptions in BET within SWPBIS when they are part of the SWPBIS team versus when they are not.

Alternate Hypothesis 2: There were statistically significant differences among sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers' perceptions in BET within SWPBIS when they are part of the SWPBIS team versus when they are not.

Research Question 3: To what extent do sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers' perceptions differ in an ongoing system for rewarding behavioral expectations within SWPBIS when they are part of the SWPBIS team versus when they are not? (quantitative)

Null Hypothesis 3: There were no statistically significant differences among sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers' perceptions in an ongoing system for rewarding behavioral expectations within SWPBIS when they are part of the SWPBIS team versus when they are not.

Alternate Hypothesis 3: There were statistically significant differences among sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers' perceptions in an ongoing system for rewarding behavioral expectations within SWPBIS when they are part of the SWPBIS team versus when they are not.

Research Question 4: What are the differences in perceptions of sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers regarding BED within SWPBIS based on their number of years of full-time teaching experience and a teacher's role as a team member in the SWPBIS team? (quantitative)

Null Hypothesis 4: There were no statistically significant differences among sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers' perceptions in BED within SWPBIS based on their number of years of full-time teaching experience and a teacher's role as a team member in the SWPBIS team.

Alternate Hypothesis 4: There were statistically significant differences among sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers' perceptions in BED within SWPBIS based on their number of years of full-time teaching experience and a teacher's role as a team member in the SWPBIS team.

Research Question 5: What are the differences in perceptions of sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers regarding BET within SWPBIS based on their number of years of full-time teaching experience and a teacher's role as a team member in the SWPBIS team? (quantitative)

Null Hypothesis 5: There were no statistically significant differences among sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers' perceptions in BET within SWPBIS based on their number of years of full-time teaching experience and a teacher's role as a team member in the SWPBIS team.

Alternate Hypothesis 5: There were statistically significant differences among sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers' perceptions in BET within SWPBIS based on their number of years of full-time teaching experience and a teacher's role as a team member in the SWPBIS team.

Research Question 6: What are the differences in perceptions of sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers regarding OR behavioral expectations within SWPBIS based on their number of years of full-time teaching experience and a teacher's role as a team member in the SWPBIS team? (quantitative)

Null Hypothesis 6: There were no statistically significant differences among sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers' perceptions in OR behavioral expectations within SWPBIS based on their number of years of full-time teaching experience and a teacher's role as a team member in the SWPBIS team.

Alternate Hypothesis 6: There were statistically significant differences among sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers' perceptions in OR within SWPBIS based on their number of years of full-time teaching experience and a teacher's role as a team member in the SWPBIS team.

Research Question 7: What are the differences in ISS rates between C. M. Middle School and M. N. Middle School? (quantitative)

Null Hypothesis 7: There were no statistically significant differences in ISS rates between C. M. Middle School and M. N. Middle School.

Alternate Hypothesis 7: There were statistically significant differences in ISS rates between C. M. Middle School and M. N. Middle School.

Research Question 8: What are the differences in OSS rates between C. M. Middle School and M. N. Middle School? (quantitative)

Null Hypothesis 8: There were no statistically significant differences in OSS rates between C. M. Middle School and M. N. Middle School.

Alternate Hypothesis 8: There were statistically significant differences in OSS rates between C. M. Middle School and M. N. Middle School.

Research Question 9: How are teachers' perceptions of their knowledge, experiences, training, and support within SWPBIS related to their participation and non-participation on the SWPBIS team and their years of full-time teaching experience and a teacher's role as a team member in the SWPBIS team on implementing SWPBIS with fidelity? (qualitative)

Research Question 10: What are the teachers' perceptions of BED, BET, and an ongoing system for rewarding behavioral expectations within SWPBIS? (mixed-methods)

Research Question 11: How do these perceptions influence their participation and non-participation on the SWPBIS team and their years of full-time teaching experience and a teacher's role as a team member in the SWPBIS team on implementing SWPBIS with fidelity? (mixed-methods)

Chapter IV includes the results of the findings for both the quantitative and qualitative phases of the study and the mixed-methods analysis. Chapter IV consists of demographics of teacher participants, ANOVA and *t*-test inferential results, themes derived from the focus groups, and the mixed-methods results.

Demographics

Gender. There were 55 (65.5%) females and 29 (34.5%) male teacher participants in the study, as seen in Table 8.

Table 8

Gender of Teacher Participants

Gender	*N*	Valid%
Male	29	34.5
Female	55	65.5
Total	84	100.0

Ethnicity of teacher participants. There were 69 (83.1%) African Americans, 11 (13.3%) Caucasians, two (2.4%) Native Americans, and one Hispanic teacher in the study sample, as shown in Table 9.

Table 9

Ethnicity of Teacher Participants

Ethnicity	*N*	Valid %
African American	69	83.1
Hispanic	1	1.2
Native American	2	2.4
Caucasian	11	13.3
Total	83	100.0

Age of teacher participants. There were 27 (32.1%), 24 (28.6%), 18 (21.4%), eight (9.5%), seven (8.4%) teacher participants in the 48-56, 39-47, 30-38, 21-29, and more than 57 years age group, respectively, as displayed in Table 10.

Table 10

Age of Teacher Participants

Age	*N*	Valid %
21-29	8	9.5
30-38	18	21.4
39-47	24	28.6
48-56	27	32.1
57-65	4	4.8
Over 65	3	3.6
Total	84	100.0

Years of employment with the school district. There were 29 (34.5%), 11 (13.1%), 15 (17.9%), and 12 (14.3%) teacher participants in the 1-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-15 years, 16-20 years, and 17 (20.2%) teacher participants with more than 20 years of employment with the school district, years respectively, as displayed in Table 10.

Years of full-time teaching experience. There were 18 (21.4%), 13 (15.5%), 13 (15.5%), and 15 (17.8%) teacher participants in the 1-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-15 years,

16-20 years, and 25 (29.8%) teacher participants with more than 20 years of full-time teaching experience, years respectively, as depicted in Table 11.

Table 11

Years of Employment with the School District and Years of Teaching Experience

Years of Employment with the School District		Years of Teaching Experience	
Number of Years	*N*	Number of Years	*N*
1-5 years	29(34.5)	1-5 years	18(21.4)
6-10 years	11(13.1)	6-10 years	13(15.5)
11-15 years	15(17.9)	11-15 years	13(15.5)
16-20 years	12(14.3)	16-20 years	15(17.8)
20+ years	17(20.2)	20+ years	25(29.8)
Total	84(100)	Total	84(100)

Note. Numbers within parentheses indicate valid percent.

Twenty-seven (34.6%) teacher participants taught sixth-grade; 26 (33.3%) taught seventh-grade; and 25 (32.1%) teacher participants taught eighth-grade. The inferential analysis includes Cronbach alpha, *t*-tests, and ANOVA results. The inferential analysis was conducted at α=.05 significance level.

Descriptive Analysis

Behavioral expectations defined and SWPBIS team member. The descriptive analysis for the survey item "Administration is visible and supportive of SWPBIS" indicated that five (5.9%) teacher participants strongly disagreed (SD), 11 (12.9%) disagreed, while eight (9.4%) were not sure (NS). Thirty-eight (44.7%) agreed and 23 (27.1%) of the teacher participants strongly agreed (SA) with this statement. The descriptive analysis for the survey item "SWPBIS is presented and explained to new staff" indicated that three (3.6%) teacher participants strongly disagreed, and 11 (13.3%) disagreed, while 13 (15.7%) were not sure. There were 40 (48.2%) teachers who agreed and 16 (19.3%) teachers who strongly agreed with this statement.

The descriptive analysis for the survey item "Majority of staff buy-in or support SWPBIS effort" indicated that three (2.1%) teacher participants strongly disagreed and 20 (24.1%) disagreed, while 21 (25.3%) were not sure. There were 26 (31.3%) teachers who agreed and 13 (15.7%) teachers who strongly agreed with this statement, as depicted in Table 12. The descriptive analysis indicates that the majority of teachers believed that there is administrative support and guidance for SWPBIS implementation, but almost half of the teachers disagreed or are not sure of buying into the SWPBIS system.

Table 12

Frequency of Behavioral Expectations Defined

Variables	*N*	SD	D	NS	A	SA
Administration supportive SWPBIS	85	5(5.9)	11(12.9)	8(9.4)	38(44.7)	23(27.1)
SWPBIS explained to new staff	83	3(3.6)	11(13.3)	13(15.7)	40(48.2)	16(19.3)
Majority staff buy-in and support SWPBIS	83	3(2.1)	20(24.1)	21(25.3)	26(31.3)	13(15.7)

Note. *N*=Number; SD=Strongly Disagree; D=Disagree; NS=Not Sure; A=Agree; SA=Strongly Agree
Numbers within parentheses indicate valid percent.

Behavioral expectations taught and SWPBIS team member. The descriptive analysis for the survey item "School rules are appropriate" indicated that one (1.2%) teacher strongly disagreed followed by four (4.8%) teachers who disagreed, and four (4.8%) teachers who were not sure. There were 50 (59.5%) teachers who agreed and 25 (29.8%) teachers who strongly agreed with this statement. The descriptive analysis for the survey item "Rules are posted in the building" indicated that two (2.4%) teacher participants strongly disagreed and 13 (15.5%) disagreed, while five (6.0%) were not sure. There were 40 (47.6%) teachers who agreed and 24 (28.6%) teachers who strongly

agreed with this statement. The descriptive analysis for the survey item "Behavior expectations are specific" indicated there were three (3.6%) teachers who strongly disagreed and 12 (14.3%) teachers who disagreed, while four (4.8%) teachers were not sure. There were 43 (51.2%) teachers who agreed with this statement and 19 (22.6%) teachers who strongly agreed with this statement.

The descriptive analysis for the survey item "Lesson plans teach SWPBIS expectations" indicated that three (3.6%) teacher participants strongly disagreed and 20 (23.8%) disagreed, while 19 (22.6%) were not sure. There were 32 (38.1%) teachers who agreed and 10 (11.9%) teachers who strongly agreed with this statement. The descriptive analysis for the survey item "Students are familiar with expectations" indicated that three (3.6%) teacher participants strongly disagreed and 10 (11.9%) disagreed, while nine (10.7%) were not sure. There were 47 (56.0%) teachers who agreed and 15 (17.9%) teachers who strongly agreed with this statement. The descriptive analysis for the survey item "New students are oriented to rules and consequences" indicated that two (2.4%) teacher participants strongly disagreed and 15 (17.9%) disagreed, while 18 (21.4%) were not sure. There were 40 (47.6%) teachers who agreed and nine (10.7%) teachers who strongly agreed with this statement, as shown in Table 13. The descriptive analysis indicates that almost half of the teachers believed that there are no lesson plans for SWPBIS. Furthermore, the majority of teachers also indicated that students should have knowledge and familiarity about SWPBIS rules.

Table 13

Frequency of Behavioral Expectations Taught

Variables	*N*	SD	D	NS	A	SA
School rules appropriate.	84	1(1.2)	4(4.8)	4(4.8)	50(59.5)	25(29.8)
Rules are posted in the building.	84	2(2.4)	13(15.5)	5(60.0)	40(47.6)	24(28.6)
Behavior expectations are specific.	84	3(3.6)	12(14.3)	4(4.8)	43(51.2)	19(22.6)
Lesson plans SWPBIS.	84	3(3.6)	20(23.8)	19(22.6)	32(38.1)	10(11.9)
Students are familiar with expectations.	84	3(3.6)	10(11.9)	9(10.7)	47(56.0)	15(17.9)
New students are oriented to rules.	84	2(2.4)	15(17.9)	18(21.4)	40(47.6)	9(10.7)

Note. *N*=Number; SD=Strongly Disagree; D=Disagree; NS=Not Sure; A=Agree; SA=Strongly Agree
Numbers within parentheses indicate valid percent.

Ongoing system for rewarding behavioral expectations and SWPBIS team member. The descriptive analysis for the survey item "Positive reinforcements are used to support expectations and rules" indicated that three (3.6%) teacher participants strongly disagreed and eight (9.5%) disagreed, while eight (9.5%) were not sure. There were 47 (56%) teachers who agreed and 18 (21.4%) teachers who strongly agreed with this statement. The descriptive analysis for the survey item "Reinforcements are modified based on data trends" indicated that two (2.4%) teacher participants strongly disagreed and 18 (21.4%) disagreed, while 18 (21.4%) were not sure. There were 37 (44.0%) teachers who agreed and eight (9.5%) teachers who strongly agreed with this statement.

The descriptive analysis for the survey item "Positive reinforcements are tracked" indicated that three (3.6%) teacher participants strongly disagreed and 12 (14.3%) disagreed, while 18 (21.4%) were not sure. There were 37 (44.0%) teachers who agreed and 14 (16.7%) teachers who strongly agreed with this statement. The descriptive

analysis for the survey item "Social acknowledgements is tied to tangible rewards" indicated that three (3.6%) teacher participants strongly disagreed and nine (10.7%) disagreed, while seven (8.3%) were not sure. There were 49 (58.3%) teachers who agreed and 15 (17.9%) teachers who strongly agreed with this statement. The descriptive analysis for the survey item "The team obtains feedback from students on reinforcements" indicated that five (6.0%) teacher participants strongly disagreed and 24 (28.6%) disagreed, while 15 (17.9%) were not sure. There were 28 (33.3%) teachers who agreed and 12 (14.3%) teachers who strongly agreed with this statement. The descriptive analysis indicated that approximately 45% of teachers did not agree or were not sure if the SWPBIS reinforcements were modified based on data trends. Almost 40% of teachers did not agree or were not sure if positive reinforcements were tracked. Half of the teachers did not believe or were not sure of the SWPBIS team obtaining feedback from students, as shown in Table 14.

Inferential Analysis

Reliability analysis. Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the internal consistency and reliability of the survey items. A Cronbach alpha greater than or equal to .7 is considered to meet the internal consistency reliability standards (Cronbach, 1951). Cronbach's alpha is the most common measure to assess the internal consistency of survey questions. Cronbach's alpha reliability analysis was conducted to determine how reliable were the items in the SET survey.

Behavioral expectations defined. There were 84 teachers who participated in this study. There were three items in the SET survey measuring the construct *BED*. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient was .765 which indicates a good internal consistency among the three items measuring the construct of BED.

Table 14

Frequency of Ongoing System for Rewarding Behavioral Expectations

Variables	*N*	SD	D	NS	A	SA
Positive reinforcements support rules.	84	3(3.6)	8(9.5)	8(8.5)	47(56.0)	18(21.4)
Reinforcements are modified by data trends.	84	2(2.4)	18(21.4)	18(21.4)	37(44.0)	8(9.5)
Positive reinforcements are tracked.	84	3(3.6)	12(14.3)	18(21.4)	37(44.0)	14(16.7)
Social responses are tied to rewards.	84	3(3.6)	9(10.7)	7(8.3)	49(58.3)	15(17.9)
Team obtains feedback from students.	84	5(6.0)	24(28.6)	15(17.9)	28(33.3)	12(14.3)

Note. *N*=Number; SD=Strongly Disagree; D=Disagree; NS=Not Sure; A=Agree; SA=Strongly Agree
Numbers within parentheses indicate valid percent.

Behavioral expectations taught. There were six items in the SET survey measuring the construct of *BET*. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient was .897 which indicates a good consistency among the six items measuring the construct of BET.

Ongoing system for rewarding behavioral expectations. There were five items in the SET survey measuring the construct of an *Ongoing System for Rewarding Behavioral Expectations*. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient was .937, which indicated a good internal consistency among the five items measuring the construct of ongoings for rewarding behavioral expectations.

Establishing and maintaining a team. There were three items in the SET survey measuring the construct of establishing and maintaining a team. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient was .83, which indicates a good internal consistency among the three items measuring the construct of establishing and maintaining a team.

Team self-assessment. There were two items in the SET survey measuring the construct of team self-assessment. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient was .92, which indicates a good internal consistency between the two items measuring the construct of team self-assessment.

Violations. There were six items in the SET survey measuring the construct of violations, which included items to measure teachers' understanding of the disciplinary and referrals processes in school. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient was .87, which indicates a good internal consistency among the six items measuring the construct of violations. The Cronbach coefficient values are summarized in Table 15.

Table 15

Summary of Constructs for Cronbach's Reliability

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	*N* of Items
BED	.765	3
BET	.897	6
Ongoing Rewards	.937	5
Establish and Maintain a Team	.830	3
Team Self-assessment	.922	2
Violations	.866	6

Findings

Research Question 1: *t*-Test Analysis for BED and SWPBIS Team Member

Research Question 1: To what extent do sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers' perceptions differ in BED within SWPBIS when they are part of the SWPBIS team versus when they are not? (quantitative)

Null Hypothesis 1: There were no statistically significant differences among sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers' perceptions in BED within SWPBIS when they are part of the SWPBIS team versus when they are not.

Alternate Hypothesis 1: There were statistically significant differences among sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers' perceptions in BED within SWPBIS when they are part of the SWPBIS team versus when they are not.

An independent sample *t*-test was conducted to determine the extent to which sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers' perceptions differed in BED within SWPBIS when they were part of the SWPBIS team versus when they were not. Levene's test indicated that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was met ($F = 1.081$, $p = .302$). The Shapiro-Wilk's test for normality was statistically significant for both SWPBIS team member group and SWPBIS non-team member group. Review of skewness (-1.122) and kurtosis (.843) statistics indicated that normality is a reasonable assumption for the SWPBIS team member group. Review of skewness (-.607) and kurtosis (.791) statistics indicate that normality is a reasonable assumption for the non-SWPBIS team member group. Independent sample *t*-tests are relatively robust to violations of the normality assumption with samples of size 10 or more (Lomax, 2001) and with a skewness value of less than 2 and kurtosis value of less than 7 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019).

There was a statistically significant difference between the mean BED scores and the mean SWPBIS team members and non-SWPBIS team members ($n = 78$, $t = 2.62$, $p < .010$). Teacher participants in the non-SWPBIS member group, on average, scored lower in BED ($n = 51$, $M = 10.10$, $SD = 2.38$) than those who participated as SWPBIS team members ($n = 30$, $M = 11.77$, $SD = 3.03$). The 95% confidence interval for the difference between means was 10.64 to 12.90. The results provide evidence to support the conclusion that individuals who participated as SWPBIS team members have more knowledge and more experience with planning and defining SWPBIS than non-SWPBIS

team members. As a result, teachers who are SWPBIS team members have higher perceptions and higher BED than non-team members.

Therefore, there were statistically significant differences among middle grade teachers' perceptions in the mean BED when they were part of the SWPBIS team versus when they were not. The null hypothesis was rejected. In research question 1, there were 30 (37.0%) teachers who were SWPBIS team members and 51 (62.9%) who were not SWPBIS team members, as depicted in Table 16.

Table 16

Descriptives for BED and SWPBIS Team Member

Member vs. Non-member	*N*	*M*	*SD*	SEM	Skewness	Kurtosis	Range
Yes	30 (37.0)	11.77	3.03	.552	-1.122	.843	18.00
No	51 (62.9)	10.18	2.38	.333	-.607	.791	23.00

Note. *N*=Number *M* = Mean *SD* = Standard Deviation SEM = Standard Error Mean tells how accurate the mean of any given sample from that population is likely to be compared to the true population means. Numbers within parentheses indicate valid percent.

Table 17

Independent Samples t-Test for BED

	Levene's Test		*t*-test for Equality of Means						
	F	*p* < .05	*t*	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	MD	SED	95% confidence interval	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	1.08	.302	2.62	79	.010	1.59	.606	.383	2.80
Equal variances not assumed			2.47	50.12	.017	1.59	.645	.295	2.89

Note. *F* = *F*-tests are named after its test statistic. *t* = test statistic *df* = degrees of freedom MD=Mean Difference SED=Standard Error Difference

Research Question 2: *t*-Test Analysis for BET and SWPBIS Team Member

Research Question 2. To what extent do sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers' perceptions differ in BET within SWPBIS when they are part of the SWPBIS team versus when they are not? (quantitative)

Null Hypothesis 2. There are no statistically significant differences among sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers' perceptions in BET within SWPBIS when they are part of the SWPBIS team versus when they are not.

Alternate Hypothesis 2. There are statistically significant differences among sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers' perceptions in BET within SWPBIS when they are part of the SWPBIS team versus when they are not.

The Shapiro-Wilk's test for normality was statistically significant for both SWPBIS team member group and SWPBIS non-team member group. Review of skewness (-0.922) and kurtosis (0.145) statistics indicated that normality is a reasonable assumption for the SWPBIS team member group. Review of skewness (-1.415) and kurtosis (.321) statistics indicate that normality is a reasonable assumption for the non-SWPBIS team member group. Independent sample *t*-tests are relatively robust to violations of the normality assumption with samples of size 10 or more (Lomax, 2001) and with a skewness value of less than 2 and kurtosis value of less than 7 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). An independent sample *t*-test was conducted to determine the extent to which middle grade teachers' perceptions differed in BET within SWPBIS when they were part of the SWPBIS team versus when they were not. Levene's test indicated that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was met for BED ($F = 2.53$, $p < .023$). There was a statistically significant difference between the mean BET scores between the SWPBIS team members and non-SWPBIS team members ($n = 78$, $t = 2.31$, $p < .023$). The results provided evidence to support the conclusion that teachers who participated as SWPBIS team members have more knowledge and more experience with planning, implementing, and teaching SWPBIS expectations. Teachers who were SWPBIS team members had higher means ($M = 24.00$, $SD = 5.30$) for BET than those teachers who

were non-SWPBIS members (*M* = 21.54, *SD* = 4.08). Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. The 95% confidence interval for the difference between means was .343 to 4.58, as depicted in Table 18.

Table 18

Descriptives for BET and SWPBIS Team Member

Member vs. Non-member	*N*	*M*	*SD*	SEM	Skewness	Kurtosis	Range
Yes	28 (35.0)	24.00	5.30	1.001	-.922	.145	18.00
No	52 (65.0)	21.54	4.08	.566	-1.415	3.214	16.00

Note. *N*=Number *M* = Mean *SD* = Standard Deviation SEM = Standard Error Mean tells how accurate the mean of any given sample from that population is likely to be compared to the true population mean. Numbers within parentheses indicate valid percent.

Table 19

Independent Samples t-Test for BET and SWPBIS Team Member

	Levene's Test		*t*-test for Equality of Means						
	F	*p* < .05	*t*	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	MD	SED	95% confidence interval	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	2.53	.116	2.31	78	.023	2.46	1.064	.343	4.58
Equal variances not assumed			2.14	45	.038	2.46	1.150	.145	4.78

Note. *F*=*F*-tests *t*=test statistic df=degrees of freedom SE=Standard error difference MD=Mean Differences SED=Standard Error Difference

Research Question 3: *t*-Test Analysis for Ongoing System for Rewarding Behavioral Expectations and SWPBIS Team Member

Research Question 3. To what extent do sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers' perceptions differ in ongoing system for rewarding behavioral expectations within SWPBIS when they are part of the SWPBIS team versus when they are not? (quantitative)

Null Hypothesis 3. There are no statistically significant differences among sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers' perceptions in ongoing system for rewarding

behavioral expectations within SWPBIS when they are part of the SWPBIS team versus when they are not.

Alternate Hypothesis 3. There are statistically significant differences among sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers' perceptions in ongoing system for rewarding behavioral expectations within SWPBIS when they are part of the SWPBIS team versus when they are not.

The Shapiro-Wilk's test for normality for the composite score of ongoing system for rewarding behavioral expectations was statistically significant in both SWPBIS team member group and SWPBIS non-team member group. Review of skewness (-.764) and kurtosis (-.280) statistics for the ongoing reward composite scores indicated that normality is a reasonable assumption for the SWPBIS team member group. Review of skewness (-.914) and kurtosis (.992) statistics for the ongoing reward composite scores indicates that normality is a reasonable assumption for the non-SWPBIS team member group. Independent sample *t*-tests are relatively robust to violations of the normality assumption with samples of size 10 or more (Lomax, 2001) and with a skewness value of less than 2 and kurtosis value of less than 7 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). An independent sample *t*-test was conducted to determine the extent to which middle grade teachers' perceptions differed in ongoing system of rewards within SWPBIS when they were part of the SWPBIS team versus when they were not. Levene's test indicated that the assumption of homogeneity of variance was a statistically significant difference between the mean ongoing system of rewards scores between the SWPBIS team members and non-SWPBIS team members ($n = 78$, $t = 2.30$, $p < .024$). The results provided evidence to support the conclusion that teachers who participated as SWPBIS team members have more knowledge and more experience with planning and implementing ongoing system

of rewards for SWPBIS. Teachers who were SWPBIS team members had higher means (M = 19.38, SD = 4.81) for ongoing rewards than those teachers who were non-SWPBIS members (M = 17.08, SD = 4.03), as displayed in Table 20. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. The 95% confidence interval for the difference between means was .308 to 4.29.

Table 20

Descriptives for Ongoing System for Rewarding Behavioral Expectations and SWPBIS Team Member

Member vs. Non-member	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*SEM*	Skewness	Kurtosis	Range
Yes	29 (35.0)	19.38	4.81	.894	-.764	-.280	16.00
No	52 (62.9)	17.08	4.03	.559	-.914	.992	20.00

Note. *M* = Mean *SD* = Standard Deviation SEM = Standard Error Mean tells how accurate the mean of any given sample from that population is likely to be compared to the true population mean. Numbers within parentheses indicate valid percent.

Table 21

Independent Samples t-Test for Ongoing System for Rewarding Behavioral Expectations

	Levene's Test		*t*-test for Equality of Means						
	F	*p* < .05	*t*	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	MD	SED	95% confidence interval	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	1.51	.223	2.30	79	.024	2.30	1.002	.308	4.29
Equal variances not assumed			2.19	49.9	.034	2.30	1.054	.185	4.42

Note. *F* = *F*-tests are named after its test statistic *t* = test statistic df = degrees of freedom
MD = Mean Difference SED = Standard Error Differences

Research Question 4: One-way ANOVA for Behavior Expectations Defined and Years of Full-time Teaching Experience

Research Question 4. What are the differences in perceptions of sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers regarding BED within SWPBIS based on their number of years of full-time teaching experience and a teacher's role as a team member in the SWPBIS team? (quantitative)

Null Hypothesis 4. There are no statistically significant differences among sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers' perceptions in BED within SWPBIS based on their number of years of full-time teaching experience and a teacher's role as a team member in the SWPBIS team.

Alternate Hypothesis 4. There are statistically significant differences among sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers' perceptions in BED within SWPBIS based on their number of years of full-time teaching experience and a teacher's role as a team member in the SWPBIS team.

The assumptions of the ANOVA model were checked before conducting the inferential analysis. The first assumption is that the dependent variable should be continuous. This assumption was met because the composite score of behavioral expectation defined is on continuous scale. The second assumption is that the independent variable should be categorical. This assumption was also met because years of full-time teaching experience is a categorical variable. The third assumption stipulates that there should be independence of observations in the dependent variable scores. This assumption was met because each teacher was in one and only one group of the independent variable, which is full-time teaching experience. The fourth assumption is that there should be no outliers in the dependent variable scores. This assumption was met because the composite scores of BED had no significant outliers as evidenced by the low values of measures of dispersion (standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis) in Table 22, as shown in the descriptive statistics table. The fifth assumption is that the dependent variable scores are approximately normally distributed. This assumption was not met as the results of the Kolmogorov Smirnov test and Shapiro Wilk's test were statistically significant, which indicated that the dependent variable scores (composite of

BED) were not normally distributed across each level of the independent variable (teaching experience).

However, the skewness value was less than 2 and kurtosis value of less than 7 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019) for BED across each level of teaching experience indicating that normality assumption was met. The sixth assumption is homogeneity of variance indicating that the dependent variable has approximately the same variance across each level of the independent variable. The Levene's test was used to assess the homogeneity of variance assumption. The results of Levene's test indicated that the assumption was not met ($F = 5.37$, $p < .001$). Hence, the Welch's test was used because the sample size is unequal in each level of the independent variable and there is heterogeneity of variance, as displayed in Table 22. The Games Howell method was used for the post-hoc tests because the homogeneity of variance assumptions was not met (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019).

Table 22

Welch's Test of BED

	Statistic[a]	df1	df2	$p<0.05$
Welch	5.052	4	32.512	.003

a. Asymptotically *F* distributed.

A one-way ANOVA was used to determine whether there were any statistically significant differences between the means of BED based on years of full-time teaching experience. There was statistically significant difference (F [4, 77] = 5.37, $p < .001$.) in BED based on years of full-time teaching experience. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. The Welch's test indicated that there are statistically significant differences in BED based on years of full-time teaching experience ($F = 5.37$, $p < .001$). Teachers with 6-10 years of full-time teaching experience had the highest mean of BED ($M = 12.62$, $SD = 1.90$) followed by teachers with 1-5 years ($M = 11.00$, $SD = 2.69$), more than 20 years

of full-time teaching experience (*M* = 10.92, *SD* = 1.68) followed by 16-20 years of full-time teaching experience (*M* = 10.57, *SD* = 3.39), as shown in Table 23.

Table 23

One-way ANOVA for BED and Years of Full-time Teaching Experience

Composite_beh_defined	*N*	*M*	*SD*	SE	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min.	Max.
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
1-5 years	17	11.00	2.693	.653	9.62	12.38	6	15
6-10 years	13	12.62	1.895	.525	11.47	13.76	10	15
11-15 years	13	8.15	2.996	.831	6.34	9.96	3	13
16-20 years	14	10.57	3.390	.906	8.61	12.53	5	15
20 years+	25	10.92	1.681	.336	10.23	11.61	7	15
Total	82	10.71	2.764	.305	10.10	11.31	3	15

Note. *N*=Number *M*=Mean *SD*=Standard Deviation SE=Standard Error Min.=Minimum Max.=Minimum

Table 24

Descriptives for BED and Years of Full-time Teaching Experience

Years of Full-time Teaching Experience	*M*	*SD*	Skewness	Kurtosis	Range
1-5 years	11.00	2.69	-.958	.245	9.00
6-10 years	12.62	1.89	.311	-1.707	5.00
11-15 years	8.15	2.99	.045	-.207	10.00
16-20 years	10.57	3.39	-.191	-1.128	10.00
20+ years	10.97	1.68	.136	1.073	8.00

Note. *M* = Mean *SD* = Standard Deviation

Table 25

Test of Homogeneity of Variances for BED and Years of Full-time Teaching Experience

		Test of Homogeneity of Variances			
		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	*p*<0.05
Composite_beh_defined	Based on Mean	2.69	4	77	.037
	Based on Median	2.01	4	77	.101
	Based on Median and Adjusted df	2.01	4	61.28	.104
	Based on Trimmed Mean	2.63	4	77	.040

There were statistically significant differences between groups (i.e., years of full-time teaching experience), as demonstrated by the one-way ANOVA for BED and years of full-time teaching experience, F =5.37, p < .001, as shown in Table 26. Overall, there was a statistically significant difference between groups. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Table 26

ANOVA for BED and Years of Full-time Teaching Experience

Composite_beh_defined	ANOVA				
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	*F*	*p*<0.05
Between Groups	134.938	4	33.73	5.37	.001
Within Groups	484.038	77	6.29		
Total	618.976	81			

The Games Howell post hoc test was used to assess in which group of teaching experience was the mean score of BED statistically different. The results indicated that there was statistically significant difference in years of full-time teaching experience between 6-10 years and 11-15 years and between more than 20 years and 11-15 years. Table 27 provides an alternate way of computing and displaying the post hoc tests and is considered more appropriate when group sizes are quite different, as shown. Groups (i.e., years of full-time teaching experience) listed in the same subset are not significantly different. As a result, the Games Howell post-hoc tests indicate that there was a statistically significant difference in the mean BED scores between 6-10 years and 11-15 years' experience.

Table 27

Games-Howell Post-Hoc Test of BED

Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: Composite_beh_defined

Games-Howell

Years of full-time teaching experience	Years of full-time teaching experience	Mean Difference	Std. Error	$p<.05$	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1-5 years	6-10 years	-1.61538	.83822	.327	-4.0584	.8276
	11-15 years	2.84615	1.05679	.084	-.2630	5.9553
	16-20 years	.42857	1.11692	.995	-2.8555	3.7126
	20+ years	.08000	.73453	1.000	-2.0808	2.2408
6-10 years	1-5 years	1.61538	.83822	.327	-.8276	4.0584
	11-15 years	4.46154*	.98309	.002	1.5235	7.3996
	16-20 years	2.04396	1.04746	.323	-1.0808	5.1687
	20+ years	1.69538	.62386	.083	-.1556	3.5464
11-15 years	1-5 years	-2.84615	1.05679	.084	-5.9553	.2630
	6-10 years	-4.46154*	.98309	.002	-7.3996	-1.5235
	16-20 years	-2.41758	1.22938	.311	-6.0287	1.1935
	20+ years	-2.76615*	.89633	.048	-5.5114	-.0209
16-20 years	1-5 years	-.42857	1.11692	.995	-3.7126	2.8555
	6-10 years	-2.04396	1.04746	.323	-5.1687	1.0808
	11-15 years	2.41758	1.22938	.311	-1.1935	6.0287
	20+ years	-.34857	.96649	.996	-3.2958	2.5987
20+ years	1-5 years	-.08000	.73453	1.000	-2.2408	2.0808
	6-10 years	-1.69538	.62386	.083	-3.5464	.1556
	11-15 years	2.76615*	.89633	.048	.0209	5.5114
	16-20 years	.34857	.96649	.996	-2.5987	3.2958

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Research Question 5: One-way ANOVA for Behavior Expectations Taught and Years of Full-time Teaching Experience

Research Question 5. What are the perceptions of sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers regarding BET within SWPBIS based on their number of years of full-time teaching experience and a teacher's role as a team member in the SWPBIS team? (quantitative)

Null Hypothesis 5. There are no statistically significant differences among sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers' perceptions in BET within SWPBIS based on their number of years of full-time teaching experience and a teacher's role as a team member in the SWPBIS team.

Alternate Hypothesis 5. There are statistically significant differences among sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers' perceptions in BET within SWPBIS based on their number of years of full-time teaching experience and a teacher's role as a team member in the SWPBIS team.

The assumptions of the ANOVA model were checked before conducting the inferential analysis. The first (the dependent variable-BET should be continuous), second (independent variable-full time teaching experience should be categorical), and third (independence of observations in the dependent variable scores), and fourth (no outliers in the dependent variable scores) assumptions were met. The fifth assumption (the dependent variable scores are approximately normally distributed) was not met as the results of the Kolmogorov Smirnov and Shapiro Wilk's tests were statistically significant. However, the skewness value was less than 2 and kurtosis value of less than 7 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019) for BET across each level of teaching experience indicating that normality assumption was met. The sixth assumption (homogeneity of variance) was also met as the Levene's test was statistically non-significant ($F = 1.278$, $p > .05$). There was no need to conduct the Welch's test and the Games Howell test (as in research question 4) because the homogeneity of variance assumption was met through the Levene's test. Hence, all six ANOVA assumptions were met.

A one-way ANOVA was used to determine whether there were any statistically significant differences between the means of BET based on years of full-time teaching

experience. There was no statistically significant difference (F [4, 76] = 1.278, p > .05.) in BET based on years of full-time teaching experience. Table 28 shows that teachers with 1-5 years of full-time teaching experience had the highest mean in BET (M = 23.59, SD = 4.99) followed by teachers with 6-10 years (M = 23.25, SD = 4.63), more than 20 years' experience (M = 22.42, SD = 3.91), and 16-20 years' experience (M = 21.53, SD = 4.31). Hence, the null hypothesis could not be rejected. Post-hoc tests were not evaluated because the overall one-way ANOVA model was statistically non-significant.

Table 28

One-way ANOVA for BET and Years of Full-time Teaching Experience

Years of Full-time Teaching Experience	*N*	*M*	*SD*	SE	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min.	Max.
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
1-5 years	17	23.59	4.99	1.21	21.02	26.15	12	30
6-10 years	12	23.25	4.639	1.34	20.31	26.19	14	30
11-15 years	13	19.92	6.809	1.87	15.81	24.03	6	29
16-20 years	15	21.53	4.31	1.11	19.15	23.92	12	27
20+ years	24	22.42	3.91	.798	20.77	24.07	15	29
Total	81	22.22	4.90	.545	21.14	23.31	6	30

Note. *N* = Number *M* = Mean *SD* = Standard Deviation SE = Standard Error Min. = Minimum Max. = Maximum

Table 29

Descriptives for BET and Years of Full-time Teaching Experience

Number of Years Full-time Teaching	*M*	*SD*	Skewness	Kurtosis	Range
1-5 years	23.59	4.99	-.986	1.005	18.00
6-10 years	23.25	4.63	-.408	.281	16.00
11-15 years	19.92	6.80	-1.127	.496	8.00
16-20 years	21.53	4.31	-.800	.284	15.00
20+ years	22.42	3.91	-.161	-.536	14.00

Note. *M* = Mean *SD* = Standard Deviation

Table 30

Test of Homogeneity of Variances for BET and Years of Full-time Teaching Experience

		Test of Homogeneity of Variances			
		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	$p<0.05$
Composite_beh_taught	Based on Mean	.931	4	76	.450
	Based on Median	.451	4	76	.772
	Based on Median and with Adjusted *df*	.451	4	55.13	.771
	Based on Trimmed Mean	.805	4	76	.526

Table 31

ANOVA for BET and Years of Full-time Teaching Experience

	SS	df	MS	*F*	$p<0.05$
Between Groups	121.143	4	30.286	1.278	.286
Within Groups	1800.857	76	23.695		
Total	1922.000	80			

Note. SS=Sum of Squares MS=Mean Square *F*=*F* Test

Research Question 6: Independent Samples *t*-Test for Ongoing System for Rewarding Behavioral Expectations and Years of Full-time Teaching Experience

Research Question 6. What are the perceptions of sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers regarding ongoing system for rewarding behavioral expectations within SWPBIS based on their number of years of full-time teaching experience and a teacher's role as a team member in the SWPBIS team? (quantitative)

Null Hypothesis 6. There are no statistically significant differences among sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers' perceptions in ongoing system for rewarding behavioral expectations within SWPBIS based on their number of years of full-time teaching experience and a teacher's role as a team member in the SWPBIS team.

Alternate Hypothesis 6. There are statistically significant differences among sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers' perceptions in ongoing system for rewarding behavioral expectations within SWPBIS based on their number of years of full-time teaching experience and a teacher's role as a team member in the SWPBIS team.

The assumptions of the ANOVA model were checked before conducting the inferential analysis. The first (the dependent variable-OR should be continuous), second (independent variable-full time teaching experience should be categorical), and third (independence of observations in the dependent variable scores), and fourth (no outliers in the dependent variable scores) assumptions were met. The fifth assumption (the dependent variable scores are approximately normally distributed) was not met as the Kolmogorov Smirnov test and the Shapiro Wilk's test were statistically significant. However, the skewness value was less than 2 and kurtosis value of less than 7 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019) for ongoing rewards across each level of teaching experience indicating that normality assumption was met. The sixth assumption (homogeneity of variance) was also met as the Levene's test was statistically non-significant ($F = 1.66$, $p > .05$). There was no need to conduct the Welch's test and the Games Howell test (as in research question 4) because the homogeneity of variance assumption was met through the Levene's test. Hence, all six ANOVA assumptions were met.

Table 32 shows that teachers with 1-5 years of full-time teaching experience had the highest mean for ongoing rewards ($M = 18.89$, SD=4.23) followed by 6-10 years' ($M = 18.67$, $SD = 3.92$) experience, more than 20 years' experience ($M = 18.00$, $SD = 4.09$), and 16-20 years' experience ($M = 17.53$, $SD = 4.53$).

Table 32

Descriptives for Ongoing System for Rewarding Behavioral Expectations and Years of Full-time Teaching Experience

Number of Years Full-time Teaching	*M*	*SD*	Skewness	Kurtosis	Range
1-5 years	18.89	4.23	-.843	.473	15.00
6-10 years	18.67	3.92	.333	-1.282	11.00
11-15 years	14.83	6.32	-.582	-1.107	18.00
16-20 years	17.53	4.53	-.423	-.003	16.00
20+ years	18.00	4.09	-.341	-.129	15.00

Note. *M* = Mean *SD* = Standard Deviation

Table 33

Test of Homogeneity for Ongoing System for Rewarding Behavioral Expectations

	Test of Homogeneity of Variances				
		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	$p<0.05$
Composite_ongoing_ reward	Based on Mean	1.708	4	77	.157
	Based on Median	.925	4	77	.454
	Based on Median adjusted df	.925	4	60.81	.455
	Based on trimmed mean	1.676	4	77	.164

Teachers with 1-5 years of full-time teaching experience had the highest mean for ongoing rewards (*M* = 18.89, *SD* = 4.23) followed by 6-10 years' (*M* = 18.67, *SD* = 3.92) experience, more than 20 years' experience (*M* = 18.00, *SD* = 4.09), and 16-20 years' experience (*M* = 17.53, *SD* = 4.53), as shown in Table 34. A one-way ANOVA was used to determine whether there were any statistically significant differences between the means of ongoing rewards based on years of full-time teaching experience.

Table 34

One-way ANOVA for Ongoing System for Rewarding Behavioral Expectations and Years of Full-time Teaching Experience

Years of Full-time Teaching Experience	*N*	*M*	*SD*	SE	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min.	Max.
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
1-5 years	18	18.89	4.23	.996	16.79	20.99	10	25
6-10 years	12	18.67	3.92	1.130	16.18	21.15	14	25
11-15 years	12	14.83	6.32	1.825	10.82	18.85	5	23
16-20 years	15	17.53	4.53	1.171	15.02	20.04	9	25
20 years+	25	18.00	4.09	.819	16.31	19.69	10	25
Total	82	17.74	4.63	.512	16.73	18.76	5	25

Note. *N*=Number *M*=Mean *SD*=Standard Deviation SE=Standard Error Min.=Minimum Max.=Minimum

There was no statistically significant difference (F [4, 77] = 1.66, $p > .05$.) in ongoing rewards based on years of full-time teaching experience (Table 35). Hence, the null hypothesis could not be rejected. Post-hoc tests were not evaluated because the overall one-way ANOVA model was statistically non-significant.

Table 35

ANOVA for Ongoing System for Rewarding Behavioral Expectations and Years of Full-time Teaching Experience

	SS	df	MS	*F*	*p*<0.05
Between Groups	137.78	4	34.44	1.66	.169
Within Groups	1601.85	77	20.80		
Total	1739.68	81			

Note. SS=Sum of Squares df=degrees of freedom MS=Mean Square *F*=*F* tests

Analysis of In-School Suspension and Out-of-School Suspension

The County School District is the third largest school system in Georgia. The District serves nearly 100,000 students, 140 schools and centers, and 16,000 employees. C. M. Middle School opened in 2001-2002 school year. Students received and signed the *Code of Student Conduct Student Rights and Responsibilities and Character Development Handbook*, which contains the discipline rules and regulations of the County School District. Students were taught the contents of the code of student conduct,

student rights and responsibilities, and character development. Special education and English language learners are assisted in understanding the contents of the handbook by appropriate staff. Students who enrolled in school during the school year received, signed for, and were taught the contents of the handbook based on a process developed by their school. Students were administered tests on the contents of the handbook. Students who scored less than 100% on the test were required do a retest after additional instruction was provided. Tests were age appropriate for Grades K–5 and Grades 6-12.

Research Question 7: *t*-Test Results for ISS Rates

Research Question 7: What are the differences in ISS rates between C. M. Middle School and M. N. Middle School? (quantitative)

Null Hypothesis 7: There were no statistically significant differences in ISS rates between C. M. Middle School and M. N. Middle School.

Alternate Hypothesis 7: There were statistically significant differences in ISS rates between C. M. Middle School and M. N. Middle School.

The normality tests for ISS scores were statistically significant in both 2017-18 and 2018-19 groups. The skewness value of less than 2 and kurtosis less than 7 indicates the normal distribution of the data (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). Composite ISS scores were computed by creating groups based on the number of suspensions (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and more than 10). These 11 groups were created for each school. The total number of students were then clustered into groups based on the number of suspensions they had in each school. For example, 73 students received one ISS suspension in the 2017-18 academic year in C. M. Middle School, as depicted in Table 36. These 73 students belonged to the group having one ISS suspension. In the *t*-test analysis, the

dependent variable was the number of students in each suspension group and the independent variable was the school: C. M. Middle School versus M. N. Middle School.

Table 36

Group Statistics for ISS

	School	*N*	*M*	*SD*	SEM	Kurtosis	Skewness
ISS	C. M.	22	23.36	19.43	4.143	0.503	1.043
	M. N.	22	7.91	11.00	2.346	2.310	1.834

Note. C. M.= Columbia Middle School M. N.=M. N. Middle School ISS=In-school suspensions *N*=Number *M*=Mean *SD*=Standard Deviation SEM=Standard Error Mean tells how accurate the mean of any given sample from that population is likely to be compared to the true population mean.

t-Test results for ISS. An independent sample *t*-test was conducted to compare the ISS rates between C. M. Middle School and M. N. Middle School. Levene's test indicated that the assumption of homogeneity of variance was not met for ISS scores ($F = 5.78$, $p < .05$). Hence, the equal variances not assumed row was used to evaluate the *t*-test results. There was a statistically significant difference between the mean ISS scores between the C. M. Middle School and M. N. Middle School ($n = 33.2$, $F = 3.25$, $p < .05$). The *t*-test results for ISS provided evidence to support the conclusion that there are statistically significant differences in the ISS rates between the two middle schools for teachers who implemented SWPBIS with fidelity and had positive attitudes toward the program. Overall, ISS suspensions in M. N. Middle School (M =7.91, SD =11.00) were less than C. M. Middle School (M = 23.36, SD = 19.43). The 95% confidence interval is 5.77 to 25.14, as depicted in Table 37. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Table 37

t-Test Results for ISS

		Levene's Test		*t*-test for Equality of Means						
		F	*p*<0.05	*t*	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	MD	SED	95% Confidence Interval	
									Lower	Upper
ISS	Equal variances assumed	5.78	.021	3.25	42	.002	15.46	4.76	5.85	25.06
	Equal variances not assumed			3.25	33.2	.003	15.46	4.76	5.77	25.14

Note. OSS=Out-of-school suspensions MD=Mean Difference SED=Standard Error Difference

Schoolwide positive behavioral interventions and supports program (SWPBIS) C. M. Middle School. The means of ISS and OSS data for C. M. Middle School were compared for the academic years 2017-18 and 2018-19 across the three grade levels to see how SWPBIS implementation influenced the disciplinary rates. During the 2018-19 academic year, ISS indicates that a child is temporarily removed from the classroom but remains in school in a separate classroom under the direct supervision of assigned school staff (National Clearinghouse on Supportive School Discipline, 2018). OSS shows that a child is temporarily removed from the school and sent home for a specified number of days for disciplinary reasons such as violation of school rules (States et al., 2015). For 2017-18, the mean (M = 9.39, SD = 14.57) for OSS is greater than the mean for ISS (M = 2.08, SD = 2.41). For 2018-19, the mean (M = 5.03, SD = 6.58) for ISS is greater than the mean for OSS (M = 3.91, SD = 12.31). The standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis value are greater for OSS across both school years, as depicted in Table 38.

Table 38

C. M. Middle School Statistics for ISS and OSS Total Days Summary 2017-18 and 2018-19

	2017-18 ISS	2017-18 OSS	2018-19 ISS	2018-19 OSS
M	2.08	9.39	5.03	3.91
SD	2.41	14.57	6.58	12.31
Skewness	5.08	9.44	2.39	13.91
Kurtosis	41.28	134.23	6.38	228.43
Range	38	231	37	209

Note. *M* = Mean *SD* = Standard Deviation ISS=In-school suspension OSS=Out-of-school suspension

ISS. One hundred and four students were either in ISS or OSS during the 2017-18 school year. One hundred and fifty-nine (39%) students did not receive ISS for 2017-18. There were 238 (59%) students who received from one to 10 days in ISS. Seven (2%) students received greater than 10 days in ISS for a total of 245 (61%) students who received ISS during 2017-18 at C. M. Middle School.

Research Question 8: *t*-Test Results for OSS Rates

Research Question 8: What are the differences in OSS rates between C. M. Middle School and M. N. Middle School? (quantitative)

Null Hypothesis 8: There were no statistically significant differences in OSS rates between C. M. Middle School and M. N. Middle School.

Alternate Hypothesis 8: There were statistically significant differences in OSS rates between C. M. Middle School and M. N. Middle School.

Table 39 shows that the normality tests for OSS scores were statistically significant in both 2017-18 and 2018-19 groups. Composite ISS scores were computed by creating groups based on the number of suspensions (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and more than 10). These 11 groups were created for each school. The total number of students were then clustered into groups based on the number of suspensions they had in each school. For example, seventy-three students received one ISS suspension in the

2017-18 academic year in C. M. Middle School. These 73 students belonged to the group having one ISS suspension. In the *t*-test analysis, the dependent variable was the number of students in each suspension group and the independent variable was the school: C. M. Middle School versus M. N. Middle School.

Table 39

Group Statistics for OSS

	School	*N*	*M*	*SD*	SEM	Kurtosis	Skewness
OSS	C. M.	22	31.82	38.51	8.211	6.312	1.526
	M. N.	22	16.14	14.73	3.140	0.426	0.979

Note. OSS= Out-of-school suspensions *N*=Number *M*=Mean *SD*=Standard Deviation C. M.=C. M. Middle School M. N.=M. N. Middle School SEM=Standard Error Mean tells how accurate the mean of any given sample from that population is likely to be compared to the true population means.

Independent samples *t*-test for OSS. An independent sample *t*-test was conducted to compare the OSS rates between C. M. Middle School and M. N. Middle School. Levene's test indicated that the assumption of homogeneity of variance was met for OSS scores ($F = 3.59$, $p > .05$). Hence, the equal variances assumed row was used to evaluate the *t*-test results. There was not a statistically significant difference between the mean OSS scores in C. M. Middle School and M. N. Middle School ($n = 42$, $F = 1.78$, $p > .05$), as shown in Table 40. The results did not provide sufficient evidence to support the conclusion that there are statistically significant differences in the OSS rates between the two middle schools. Overall, OSS suspensions in M. N. Middle School ($M = 16.14$, $SD = 14.73$) were less than C. M. Middle School ($M = 31.82$, $SD = 38.51$). The 95% confidence interval is -2.06 to 33.42. Hence, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected.

Table 40

t-Test Results for OSS

		Levene's Test		*t*-test for Equality of Means						
		F	*p*<.05	*t*	*df*	Sig. (2-tailed)	MD	SED	95% Confidence Interval	
									Lower	Upper
OSS	Equal variances assumed	3.59	.065	1.78	42	.082	15.68	8.79	-2.06	33.42
	Equal variances not assumed			1.78	27.01	.086	15.68	8.79	-2.36	33.72

Note. OSS=Out-of-school suspensions MD=Mean Difference SED=Standard Error Difference

C. M. Middle School: ISS and OSS data 2017-18

One hundred and twenty-two (12%) students received OSS for 2017-18. Two hundred and thirty-five (58%) students received one to 10 days in OSS. One hundred and twenty-two (30%) students received greater than 10 days in OSS for a total of 357 (88%) students who received OSS during 2017-18 at C. M. Middle School, as shown in Table 41.

Table 41

C. M. Middle School ISS and OSS Data 2017-18

Number of ISS Days	2017-18	Number of OSS Days	2017-18
No ISS Days	159 (39)	No OSS Days	47 (12)
1 to 10 days	238 (59)	1 to 10 days	235 (58)
Greater than 10 ISS days	7 (2)	Greater than 10 OSS days	122 (30)
Total ISS Students	245 (61)	Total OSS Students	357 (88)
Total # Students	404 (100%)	Total # Students	404 (100%)

Note. Numbers in parentheses indicate valid percent.

C. M. Middle School ISS and OSS data for 2018-19. Three hundred and forty-one students either were in ISS or OSS during the 2018-19 school year. Seventy-four (22%) students did not receive ISS for 2018-19. There were 226 (66%) students who received

from one to 10 days in ISS. There were 41 (12%) students who received greater than 10 days in ISS for a total of 267 (78%) students during 2018-19 at C. M. Middle School.

One hundred and twenty-nine (37%) students did not receive OSS for 2018-19. One hundred and eighty-three (54%) students received one to 10 days in OSS. Twenty-nine (9%) students received greater than 10 days in OSS for a total of 212 (63%) students in OSS during 2018-19 at C. M. Middle School, as displayed in Table 42.

Table 42

C. M. Middle School ISS and OSS Data 2018-19

Number of ISS Days	2018-19	Number of OSS Days	2018-19
No ISS Days	74 (22)	No OSS Days	129 (37)
1 to 10 days	226 (66)	1 to 10 days	183 (54)
Greater than 10 ISS days	41 (12)	Greater than 10 OSS days	29 (9)
Total ISS Students	267 (78)	Total OSS Students	212 (63)
Total # Students	341 (100%)	Total # Students	341 (100%)

Note. Numbers in parentheses indicate valid percent.

Comparison of C. M. Middle School's ISS and OSS Discipline Rates 2017-18 and 2018-19

C. M. Middle School 2017-18 and 2018-19. The reduction in ISS numbers for C. M. Middle School during the years 2017-18 and 2018-19 showed an increase over the school's ISS total days summary from 245 (61%) during 2017-18 to 267 (78%) during 2018-19. However, there was a decrease in the number of students who did not receive ISS from the 2017-18 (n = 159) to 2018-19 (n = 74) school year. Another increase occurred in the number of students who received ISS from 1 to 10 days during 2017-18, from 238 (59%) to an increase of 226 (66%) in 2018-19. There was an increase for those students who received greater than 10 ISS days in 2017-18 from seven (2%) students to 41 (12%) students in 2018-19. Overall, C. M. Middle School students' ISS rates increased in one to 10 days and greater than 10 ISS days, with the exception of No ISS days, that decreased from 2017-18 to 2018-19. Ideally, the number of students who do

not receive any ISS and OSS should have decreased from 2017-18 to 2018-19, but this was not the case.

OSS rates. There was a decrease in the OSS rates from 357 (88%) in 2017-18 to 212 (63%) in 2018-19. There was an increase in the number of students who did not receive OSS from 2017-18 (n = 74) to 2018-19 (n = 129) school year. Ideally, the number of students who do not receive any ISS and OSS should decrease from 2017-18 to 2018-19 but this was not the case. The goal is to reduce the number of students who do not get OSS. These figures indicated that students who did not receive OSS increased from 2017-18 to 2018-19 school years, indicating that SWPBIS may have had a positive influence on the OSS disciplinary rates.

On the other hand, the number of students who received one to 10 days in OSS decreased from 235 (58%) to 183 (54%). There was a decrease from 122 (30%) students during 2017-18 who received greater than 10 days to 29 (9%) in 2018-19. Overall, there was a decrease from 357 (88%) students who received OSS in 2017-18 compared to 212 (63%) in 2018-19. The goal was to decrease the number of students who received OSS from one year to the next. Although there were more students who received OSS than ISS from 2017-18 to 2018-19, OSS rates were far better than ISS rates for C. M. Middle School.

M. N. Middle School ISS and OSS Data 2017-18 and 2018-19

The means of ISS and OSS data for M. N. Middle School were compared for the academic years 2017-18 and 2018-19 across the three grade levels to see how SWPBIS implementation influenced the disciplinary rates. During 2017-18, the mean (M = 5.06, SD = 10.07) for OSS is greater than the mean for ISS (M = 1.16, SD = 2.44). During 2018-19, the mean (M = 4.61, SD = 10.08) for OSS is greater than the mean for ISS (M =

1.23, *SD*=1.96), as depicted in Table 43. The skewness, kurtosis, and range values were greater for OSS across both school years.

Table 43

M. N. Middle School Statistics for ISS and OSS Total Days Summary 2017-18 and 2018-19

	2017-18 ISS	2017-18 OSS	2018-19 ISS	2018-19 OSS
M	1.16	5.06	1.23	4.61
SD	2.44	10.07	1.95	10.08
Skewness	3.58	9.09	2.60	9.09
Kurtosis	15.50	104.60	7.78	104.45
Range	17	125	11	125

Note. *M* = Mean *SD* = Standard Deviation ISS=In-school suspension OSS=Out-of-school suspension

ISS rates. One hundred and ninety-five students were either in ISS or OSS for the 2017-18 school year. There were 122 (63%) students who did not receive ISS for 2017-18. Seventy (35%) students received from one to 10 days in ISS. Three (2%) students received greater than 10 days in ISS, for a total of 73 (37%) students who received ISS during 2017-18 at M. N. Middle School.

OSS rates. Twenty-two (11%) students did not receive OSS for 2017-18. There were 153 (78%) students who received one to 10 days in OSS. Twenty (11%) students received greater than 10 days in OSS, for a total of 173 (89%) students who received OSS during 2017-18 at M. N. Middle School, as depicted in Table 44.

Table 44

M. N. Middle School ISS and OSS Data 2017-18

Number of ISS Days	2017-18	Number of OSS Days	2017-18
No ISS Days	122 (63)	No OSS Days	22 (11)
1 to 10 days	70 (35)	1 to 10 days	153 (78)
Greater than 10 ISS days	3 (2)	Greater than 10 OSS days	20 (11)
Total ISS Students	73 (37)	Total OSS Students	173 (89)
Total # Students	195 (100%)	Total # Students	195 (100%)

Note. Numbers in parentheses indicate valid percent.

M. N. Middle School ISS and OSS Data 2018-19

ISS rates. One hundred ninety-eight students were either in ISS or OSS for the 2018-19 school year. Zero (100%) students received ISS for 2018-19. There were 97 (49%) students who received from one to 10 days in ISS. One (1%) student received greater than 10 days in ISS, for a total of 98 (50%) students who received ISS during 2018-19 at M. N. Middle School.

OSS rates. Forty-three (22%) students did not receive OSS for 2018-19. There were 141 (71%) students who received one to 10 days in OSS. Fourteen (7%) students received greater than 10 days in OSS, for a total of 155 (78%) students who received OSS during 2018-19 at M. N. Middle School, as shown in Table 45.

Table 45

M. N. Middle School ISS and OSS Data 2018-19

Number of ISS Days	2018-19	Number of OSS Days	2018-19
No ISS Days	0 (100)	No OSS Days	43 (22)
1 to 10 days	97 (49)	1 to 10 days	141 (71)
Greater than 10 ISS days	1 (1)	Greater than 10 OSS days	14 (7)
Total ISS Students	98 (50)	Total OSS Students	155 (78)
Total # Students	198 (100%)	Total # Students	198 (100%)

Note. Numbers in parentheses indicate valid percent.

M. N. Middle School: Comparison of ISS and OSS Rates

ISS rates. The reduction in ISS numbers for M. N. Middle School during the years 2017-18 and 2018-19 showed an increase over the school's ISS from 73 (37%) to 98 (50%) students who were in ISS from one year to the next. Ideally, the number of students who did not receive ISS and OSS should decrease from 2017-18 to 2018-19, but this was not the case. There was, however, a decrease in the number of students who received ISS from 2017-18 (n = 122) to 2018-19 (n = 0). A drastic decrease showed that no students (100%) received ISS from one year to the next; so, the figures dropped from 122 to none. There were only three students (2%) who received greater than 10 days in

2017-18 compared to only one student (1%) who received ISS in 2018-19. There was an increase in the number of students who received ISS from 2017-18 (*n* = 70) to 2018-19 (*n* = 97).

OSS rates. The reduction in OSS numbers for M. N. Middle School during the years 2017-18 and 2018-19 showed a decrease over the school's OSS total days summary from 173 (89%) to 155 (78%) students. There was a decrease in the number of students who received OSS during the 2017-18 and 2018-19 from 22 (11%) and 43 (22%) respectively. The goal is to not receive any suspensions during the academic school year. These figures indicated that there was an increase in the number of students who received OSS during the two years.

In contrast, there was a decrease in the number of students who received one to 10 OSS days from 2017-18 (*n* = 153) to 2018-19 (*n* = 141) school year for M. N. Middle School. There was also a decrease in the number of students who received OSS greater than 10 days from 2017-18 (*n* = 20) to 2018-19 (*n* = 14) school year. Over the two-year period, M. N. Middle School students fared better in decreasing the number of students who received ISS and OSS than C. M. Middle School students.

Qualitative Findings

Research Question 9. How do teachers' perceptions of their knowledge, experiences, training, and support within SWPBIS are related to their participation and non-participation on the SWPBIS team and their years of full-time teaching experience and a teacher's role as a team member in the SWPBIS team on implementing SWPBIS with fidelity? (qualitative). Nine teachers participated in the focus group. The quotations in this section are from participants. The researcher assigned each participant and their schools pseudonyms to protect and obscure their real identity. Table 46 shows their

pseudonyms, number of years of teaching experience, school assignments, and whether they were SWPBIS team members or not. All focus group teacher participants were females.

Table 46

Focus Group Demographics

Grade	Pseudonym	Years of Teaching Experience	School	SWPBIS Member
6A	Emma	1-5 years	C. M. Middle School	No
6B	Olivia	11-15 years	M. N. Middle School	Yes
6C	Ava	20+ years	C. M. Middle School	No
7A	Isabella	6-10 years	M. N. Middle School	Yes
7B	Mia	1-5 years	C. M. Middle School	No
7C	Charlotte	16-20 years	C. M. Middle School	No
8A	Amelia	1-5 years	M. N. Middle School	Yes
8B	Emily	11-15 years	M. N. Middle School	Yes
8C	Grace	20+ years	M. N. Middle School	Yes

Qualitative themes. Six distinct themes emerged from the analysis of the focus group transcripts. Some of the themes seemed to overlap into other themes and the division of those themes was created based on the frequency of those topics. The six themes were as follows: (1) buy-in, (2) consistency and fidelity of implementation, (3) training and knowledge, (4) teachers' perceptions on SWPBIS, (5) teachers' perceptions of staff training in SWPBIS, and (6) behavioral expectations. Table 47 shows 64 instances of the theme: teachers' perceptions of SWPBIS mentioned in this study of focus group middle school teachers. There were 30 mentions of behavioral expectations from the focus group. There were 18 mentions of consistency and fidelity of implementation from the focus group.

Table 47

Frequency of Themes

Themes	Frequency
1. Buy-in	8
2. Consistency and Fidelity of Implementation	18
3. Training and Knowledge	10
4. Teachers' Perceptions of SWPBIS	64
5. Teachers' Perceptions of Staff Training in SWPBIS	14
6. Behavioral Expectations	30

The six qualitative themes are presented in an integrated and display table that connects them with the survey questions in the quantitative phase (Table 48).

Table 48

Joint Display of Schoolwide Evaluation Tool (SET) Matching Guide with Survey Questions and Focus Group Questions

Survey Questions	Focus Group Questions/Documentation
BED 1. Is there documentation that staff has agreed to 5 or fewer positively stated rules or behavioral expectations? 2. Are the agreed upon rules and expectations publicly posted in 8 of 10 locations?	Discipline Handbook, instructional materials. Rules posted in classrooms, hallways, cafeteria, and other locations. Wall posters
BET 3. Is there documentation system for teaching behavioral expectations to students on an annual basis? 4. Do 90% of the staff state that teaching behavioral expectations to students has occurred this year? 5. Do 90% of the schoolwide team state that the schoolwide program has been taught/interviewed with staff on an annual basis? 6. Can at least 70% (15+ students) of the students state 67% of the school rules? 7. Can 90% of the staff list 67% of the school rules?	Have you taught the school rules/behavior expectations to your students this year? Has the schoolwide team taught/reviewed the schoolwide program to staff this year? What are the school rules/motto and what are they called?

OR Behavioral Expectations 8. Is there a documented system for rewarding student behavior? 9. Do 50% or more of the students indicate they have received a reward (other than verbal praise) for expected behaviors over the past two months? 10. Do 90% of the staff indicate they have delivered a reward (other than verbal praise) to students for expected behavior over the past two months?	Have you received/given a "gotcha" (positive referral) in the past two months? Focus group, lesson plans, instructional materials.

Theme 1: Buy-in. Buy-in refers to a commitment to the principles behind the philosophy of the intervention, such as explicit instruction, inclusion, or the use of positive school discipline practices (Pinkelman et al., 2015). Buy-in works with a top-down approach beginning with the administration and other administrative staff such as principals, assistant principals, instructional specialists, counselors, social workers, nurses, and other staff such as cafeteria staff, janitorial staff, secretaries, and paraprofessionals. If administration and other staff are not 100% invested in making a SWPBIS program work, it filters down to the teachers and staff. If the administrative and other staff are not enforcing SWPBIS, the question for teachers is, "Why make an effort to implement the program if it is not supported by the administration?" As a result, the program fails to make a difference in the school's climate. Descriptive analysis of the SET survey item on buy-in indicated that three (2.1%) teachers strongly disagreed with SWPBIS buy-in followed by 20 (24.1%) teachers who disagreed, and 21 (25.3%) teachers who were not sure. There were 26 (31.3%) teachers who agreed and 13 (15.7%) teachers who strongly agreed with this statement.

Some experienced teachers and even inexperienced teachers witnessed behavioral systems fluctuate after some use. They viewed SWPBIS as just one more idea that did not

last long. Other teachers observed SWPBIS as a whole new way of thinking about school discipline and behavior. Implementation of such a program is important for skeptics in schools. The biggest challenge was consistency. Teachers and staff must all use the system with fidelity for the successful implementation of SWPBIS on a school level. At the heart of a SWPBIS discipline system is a belief that the system helps all students to have self-discipline. Teachers buy-in is critical for SWPBIS to work. SWPBIS reward was developed to implement and administer the SWPBIS with ease for all those who are involved in the program. Administrators should reward teachers to encourage teacher buy-in because incentives can motivate the teachers to work more towards reducing the ISS and OSS referrals, decreasing the discipline problems, and also improving student buy-in.

Olivia (Grade 6 teacher) agreed with similar problems in her school:

> The greatest challenge at my school is lack of teacher and staff buy in, universal buy in, within the school and failure to implement from whomever the authority is. That has been one of the biggest failures for the implementation of SWPBIS.

Ava (Grade 6 teacher) recalled the major challenges for her school, saying:

> I will take you back a lot of farther. There is a great need for teacher training in the program and lack of knowledge about SWPBIS are major challenges for our school. Simply put, teachers do not know what they are doing. Teachers do not know why they are doing it. So, they do not have the necessary training and knowledge and therefore, they cannot implement with fidelity.

Charlotte, Grade 6 teacher, added her thoughts on the greatest challenge that was faculty and staff buy-in: “I think the challenge is faculty and staff buy-in.” Emily (Grade

8 teacher) commented, “Our program was implemented very well, but there was little teacher buy-in and student buy-in.”

Olivia (Grade 6 teacher) stated:

> I think that it is a good thing, and it could work. I really would like to see the program implemented full throttle within schools, but we are just not there at this point. But it is not a process without administrators, teachers, parents, and students buy-in the program and implementing it using all the procedures and following it consistently.

Ava (Grade 6 teacher) commented, “Teachers hear about SWPBIS schools, but they do not know what it is. That is the fault of administrators and teachers because no one has trained them or got them to buy-in to the program.” Ava agreed with Olivia:

> The use of the common language is not being used. Of course, the meaning of the acronym, SWPBIS, is often misunderstood by students, and some teachers who do not know what it stands for. Parents do not know what SWPBIS is.

Olivia (Grade 6 teacher) said:

> But it is not a process without administrators, teachers, parents, and students buy-in the program and implementing it using all the procedures and following it consistently. I think that SWPBIS is a good discipline program, and it could work. I really would like to see the program implemented full throttle within schools, but we are just not there at this point. The challenges are not understanding what the outcomes of the program will be. Teachers and schools are not trained on how to implement SWPBIS with fidelity and what that means.

Amelia (Grade 8 teacher) chimed in:

> I think the SWPBIS program is a viable program for schools that are having higher number of behavioral referrals and incidents. I think that it requires a districtwide mandate that is approved with teacher buy-in. With student buy-in, our biggest challenge is getting students who are the most difficult to buy into the program. But the real challenge is about teacher and staff buy-in.

Theme 2: Consistency and fidelity of implementation. Consistency in implementation means that teachers use the same rules in the classroom each day with each student, and there is uniformity in the administration and interpretation of the SPBIS program at all levels in the school. Consistency when implementing SWPBIS is one of the key components for a successful implementation. The program fails without schoolwide consistency. Specifically, data are needed that reflect the consistency with which classroom based SWPBIS practices are implemented. Evidence is also required to have strategies to resolve the challenges faced by school personnel to implement this program in the classroom and to ensure the best possible behavioral and academic outcomes for students.

Amelia (Grade 6 teacher) noted, “The program must be consistent among the schools in the district that are also implementing it.” Emma, Grade 6 teacher, described the inconsistency in the common language used at her school to define and work with all students. Emma commented:

> Boys like rituals and routines. At my school, we are supposed to walk on the right side of the hallway such as in routine destination areas. The problem is everybody is not consistent including the teachers. Consistency with the rules is not uniform across the board. Rules should be practiced in a consistent manner and routines

need to be developed that all teachers and students can follow. For example, what we do, how we follow the daily routines, how the rules are implemented in the hallways, cafeteria, and during dismissal are rules that all teachers and students can follow. There is a common language for the rules but there is no consistency with the language, or the routine practiced with the rules.

Similarly, Olivia (Grade 6 teacher) said:

I do not see or hear any of the common language in place. There are too many risks in schools if the common language is not in place where teachers and students understand what it is and how it is implemented based on the school rules. Students do not respect themselves, their parents, teachers, or the school. I really have not been able to observe the use of common language regarding SWPBIS in the current school in which I work.

Mia (Grade 7 teacher) remarked:

In my school, I do not recall the use of a common language, especially since the SWPBIS was just rolled out in January 2020. I agree with what other teacher participants said about how difficult it is to get students to do well in certain areas of behavior but there is no schoolwide language that is understood by or consistent with everyone.

Several teachers did not receive regular feedback on student behavior patterns. Emma, Grade 6 teacher, spoke openly regarding how her principal was inconsistent with consequences for students' misbehavior:

I can only speak for my immediate principal who is not consistent with consequence for students' misbehavior. The problem is that administrative actions are taking place when we write a student up for misbehavior. There is little

> feedback from the principal. When students are reprimanded, nothing is done. Teachers complain among us but there is little consistent support from the administration to control student behavior.

Isabella, Grade 7 teacher, continued in agreement with several teachers and believed that:

> The feedback is not consistent among all administrators. It depends on who the administrator is, who the referring teacher is, and who the student is. These are the three variables that determine the type of feedback and the amount of feedback that students and teachers receive.

Mia (Grade 7 teacher) declared: "I agree 100% with Isabella. The answer would be no feedback for student behavior patterns for my school. And it definitely depends on the administrator and the particular student." Emily (Grade 8 teacher) asserted, "There is no follow-up regarding regular feedback regarding student behavior patterns in my school, and that has a lot to do with the charter school concept. Yet we are constantly trying to get discipline down to zero offenses."

Grace, Grade 8 teacher, is in consensus with Emily because her school is similar to how it is at Emily's school. Grace continued to think the benefit here at her school and other schools because her school is located in a rural area with three assigned principals. She felt sure that most schools have at least one principal whether it is a metropolitan area, urban area, or rural area like her school. But her school has a plan. If teachers cannot show data for to use in the plan, then it shows that teachers are not doing their part.

The fidelity of implementing SWPBIS means that the procedures and processes of the program are followed with consistency in all classrooms. The tiers of implementing

SWPBIS are designed to refocus attention on positive behaviors. Escalation into discipline takes a longer route. If administration and other staff do not understand the tiers of implementation, implementing and enforcing the program may seem overwhelming and frustrating for both administrators, staff, and teachers. Implementing and enforcing the program may seem overwhelming and frustrating for administrators, staff, and teachers if the school personnel have limited knowledge and training of the tiers of implementation.

Teachers who perceived lack of administrative discipline as the only response to poor behavior usually blamed SWPBIS administrators for being too lenient. Teachers complained that nothing was done when they referred disruptive students to the principal's office. The tiered components of SWPBIS changed the focus of discipline by rewarding positive behavior. Redirection, refocusing, and recognition are all designed to direct students toward positive behavior, and it is important that implementation takes place with fidelity in the same fashion schoolwide (Medina, 2017; Redmond, 2010).

Olivia (Grade 6 teacher) acknowledged, "Teachers are not trained in how to implement SWPBIS with fidelity and do not know what fidelity means." Regarding implementation of SWPBIS with fidelity, Olivia declared:

> I really do not know a lot that is being implemented with the SWPBIS. Currently, the program is inconsistent in implementation. There are some schools that do a good job of implementing the program and others little or none of the components being implemented." Olivia added, "I am a little biased because SWPBIS was not the most interaction that I have ever seen because it was never fully implemented.

Isabella, Grade 7 teacher, expressed that implementing SWPBIS was frustrating at times. She said, "Teachers do not really know what to do and it can get frustrating. No

one team will do one thing and then another team does another. And if changes are made weekly, frustration ensues." Mia (Grade 7 teacher) indicated, "Our school uses incentives for student behavior, but SWPBIS was not rolled out until January 2020." Olivia declared, "We should implement it with fidelity. SWPBIS begins with the first portion of defining the behaviors we want to see, the respect and the rituals and routines."

Conversely, several teacher participants were impressed with the implementation of the SWPBIS program and believed that it worked for severe student behavior problems using incentives. Ava (Grade 6 teacher) commented:

> SWPBIS in my previous school district was fully implemented. It was rolled out in phases. They did the matrix in the different areas. Now, there are incentive programs for students and for the teachers. In the current school district, there are parents who participate in the school with whom I work. There are components that are not for the schoolwide program.

Amelia, Grade 8 teacher, noted that "Incentives worked mostly for the students who gave us the most challenging problems with behavior." Grace (Grade 8 teacher) remarked, "We have incentives for 'troubled students' who often have difficulty earning incentives." However, Grace continued:

> I see providing incentives as being more effective because everybody including the assistant principal really got out there and was involved in this effort. Rules are posted in the classrooms, hallways, cafeteria, and in each area. Zero tolerance is in place. Teachers and administrators are keeping track of students who know the rules and those who do not.

Olivia, Grade 6 teacher, openly stated how proud she was of the SWPBIS program at her school as she saw it working:

> Well, as far as my school is concerned, I really do not know a lot that is being implemented with the SWPBIS. But I do know that my principal has incentives for students as the only positive behavior strategy that is used. But it is not consistent. I definitely think that SWPBIS works and I am proud of the program. Therefore, with SWPBIS, teachers are working in an environment where I have seen it work, full-fledged support from everyone, from the students, to the teachers, and to the bus drivers. When people are involved, it actually worked with some students. Children with the most difficult behavior were disciplined. However, I feel as though some teachers may not be putting forth the best effort. The program is a great idea. We should implement it with fidelity. SWPBIS begins with the first portion of defining the behaviors we want to see, the respect and the rituals and routines.

Theme 3: Training and knowledge. Training means teachers and staff are provided with initial and ongoing resources, videos, viewing vignettes, role-playing, and skills to help them manage disruptive students (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Orozco, 2018; Turnbull, 2002). Knowledge is information gained during and after training in SWPBIS. Teachers need to be trained in how to implement and use SWPBIS with students to control discipline in their classrooms, but they also need ongoing training and knowledge so they can develop skills and strategies to manage students' disruptive behavior. Olivia (Grade 6 teacher) stated, "Teachers and schools are not trained on how to implement SWPBIS with fidelity and what that means." Teachers need initial and ongoing training on the foundation and critical components of SWPBIS and the specific framework at their school. Teachers in high-need schools may require additional training and knowledge support when there are issues with buy-in and implementation.

Sometimes, teachers feel unprepared to handle challenging behavior and complex student behavior and academic problems and they do not have the knowledge and skills to implement positive, proactive strategies (McDaniel et al., 2017).

Teacher participants in the current study reported that the initial training and staff development was helpful. Grace (Grade 8 teacher) acknowledged:

> Our school uses SWPBIS, but it started 6 years ago. It was better implemented earlier because it was not as much to implement as it is now. I cannot even say it is not right because teachers sit in the training, some are doodling and acting like they are bored, others are talking about why it is not working, and a few may say, 'We should try it and it may work.'

Teachers may resort to negative, punitive ISS and OSS when power struggles with students occurred. Teachers suspended students because it gave them a break from them being in the classroom and the school for a few days. Teacher participants in this current study indicated that a disruptive school environment within the classroom creates frustration and feeling overwhelmed, sometimes suspending students provided a break from students with challenging behaviors. Typically, those same students returned from suspension with similar or worse behavior issues (McDaniel et al., 2017).

Emma, Grade 6 teacher, had challenges with the implementation of SWPBIS at her school:

> One of the major challenges in my school is teachers lack consistency in implementing SWPBIS with fidelity. One day it is working and the next day it is not because there is little or no consistency with the program. I do not think administrators and teachers spend enough time or spread the news about SWPBIS at our school because our school is a charter school. And that makes a big

> difference since we have a lot of discipline problems. The problem is when students enter at the beginning of the year in August, teachers review routines and practice procedures; then there are new students who enroll in October. What happens with them? Who reviews routines and practice procedures with them?
>
> Ava (Grade 6 teacher) recalled the major challenges for her school:
>
> There is a great need for teacher training in the program and lack of knowledge about SWPBIS are major challenges for our school. Teachers do not know what or why they are doing it. They do not have the necessary training and knowledge and therefore, they cannot implement SWPBIS with fidelity.

Explicit and ongoing training sets the tone and increases consistency and buy-in across the school (McDaniel et al., 2017). Since many high-need and hard-to-staff schools experience high teacher attrition, it is often difficult to get new teachers to buy-in with SWPBIS each year. However, teachers and school staff who are new to the school building should be trained about the SWPBIS purpose and strategies and what is expected in implementing the program (McDaniel et al., 2017). Teachers are more likely to buy-in to a school reform program when they receive adequate training, professional development, resources, support from program developers, and support from administration and staff members such as the school leadership team who addresses teacher concerns related to SWPBIS implementation (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Turnbull, 2002).

Creating norms and expectations for the common areas of the school help to establish the climate and initial staff buy-in. During the first 3 years at the target middle schools, student behavior issues decreased, academic achievement increased, and teacher turnover rate decreased. However, sustainability was an issue. To sustain SWPBIS,

teachers indicated a need for intensive training for new staff members as well as yearly refresher training and support for all staff members. Ava, Grade 6 teacher, provided a summary of what training and knowledge means when she said, “Teachers hear about SWPBIS schools, but they do not know what it is. That is the fault of administrators and teachers because no one has trained them or got them to buy-in to the program.”

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports is an evidence-based, data-driven framework proven to reduce disciplinary incidents, increase a school’s sense of safety and support improved academic outcomes. More than 1,200 schools in Georgia and 27,000 nationwide have been trained in PBIS. In the current study’s findings, all focus group teacher participants were knowledgeable about and familiar with the SWPBIS discipline program. Isabella (Grade 7), Olivia (Grade 6), and Emily (Grade 8) were remarkably familiar. Ava (Grade 6) and Mia (Grade 7) had some knowledge the program. Ava mentioned, “Yes, I am knowledgeable of school SWPBIS. Students currently participate in it. I currently work in the school with SWPBIS.” Emily asserted, “I am familiar with SWPBIS. We use it in my location, but it was more effective in my other location.”

Theme 4: Teachers’ perceptions of SWPBIS. Perceptions are a person’s viewpoint about a topic or issue. Teacher perceptions of SWPBIS discipline program were examined from different viewpoints, triangulating such as teacher buy-in, self-efficacy, BED, BET, OR, and tangible outcomes (ISS and OSS). Teacher opinions were explored in a focus group to better understand their in-depth perceptions, which could improve validity and reliability of the study’s findings. Many teachers believed that SWPBIS is a positive program and helped students, especially for those with severe problems who received rewards. SWPBIS was also good for students who were well-

behaved and received incentives. Mia, Grade 7 teacher, was uncertain about the effectiveness of SWPBIS program. Mia acknowledged:

> Personally, I do not my know if the SWPBIS program is working and if it is going to help at all. But the program is designed to improve children's behavior as well as the school environment to support teaching and learning. I am always willing to try something. Since we have not tried it, we do not know if it is going to work. However, it is our responsibility as teachers to try it to see if it will work.

Charlotte (7th grade teacher) declared:

> Just to put it simply, I perceive the SWPBIS program is something that could potentially work. But I have never been in a district or school that has actually implemented it and really pushed it out and it worked. I think that it will, but I just have not seen that thus far."

Amelia (Grade 6 teacher) chimed in:

> I think the SWPBIS program is a viable program for schools that are having higher number of behavioral referrals and incidents. I think that it requires a districtwide mandate that is approved with teacher buy-in. The program must be consistent among the schools in the district that are also implementing it.

Olivia (Grade 6 teacher) remarked:

> I am going to reference this example to another school where I used to work. Implementation is the first incident where a truly troubled student was always kept out of class. He was always suspended for various reasons. Because of the implementation of SWPBIS, I saw him turn around his behavior to the point that he was able to go from being the person who was always outside of the classroom or in the hallway to the person who was not suspended and remained in class most

of the time. So, he was really proud of himself and teachers encouraged and praised his good behavior. Teachers were able to teach, and students were able to learn, especially the student who used to be disruptive in class and no one was learning, and the teacher could not teach. There was a drastic decrease in the classroom distractions and an increase in classroom management. Everyone worked together.

Grace (Grade 8 teacher) declared, "Simply put, I perceive SWPBIS to be a wonderful discipline tool when teachers implement it with fidelity. Ava (Grade 6 teacher) thought:

> For those students who continue to have behavior issues, I think they end up manipulating teachers. And the students who are always behaving according to the rules end up with most of the rewards and incentives. They get incentives because if teachers and staff implemented SWPBIS with fidelity, students eventually get there and succeed. Teachers do not get tired of it nor do students. If the program guidelines are not consistent, teachers nor students will believe in it. But if the program helps students to be happy, then behavior problems diminish, especially when teachers present it to students with fidelity. Adding the counseling component with SWPBIS really helps troubled students work out their problems and find out why they are disruptive in class.

Amelia, Grade 8 teacher, understood that SWPBIS is a helpful discipline program:

> Yes, I think the discipline program is helpful because positive experiences provide some structure and makes them feel that someone is concerned about

them. And it gives them more positive attention. Positive attention is more important than negative attention that draws attention, too.

Emily (Grade 8 teacher) acknowledged, "Students come in contact with their teachers in the room and then teachers sell the program. As a result, students and teachers find themselves excited about the program as students learn about and understand how it works."

Ava (Grade 6 teacher) also described the success with SWPBIS at a previous school:

> In my previous school district, the self-monitoring included students who were unable to speak the language such as following the bus rules. And because of that, bus referrals decreased from high to normal. When SWPBIS was fully implemented, the rate of discipline, referrals, and discipline infractions decreased.

Isabella (Grade 6 teacher) thought:

I think probably the greatest part of the implementation of SWPBIS is teachers and staff were able to buy into it. I do not have a story of the greatest success because it was only implemented in January 2020. And, I have not really seen it in action, but teachers seem to be working on it.

Amelia (Grade 8 teacher) shared her experience with observing disruptive students become engaged in learning. She observed:

> I think our biggest part of the implementation of SWPBIS is seeing those students who came in with serious discipline problems changed, molded, and grew into what the expectations were and became examples and role models for incoming freshmen, sophomores, and transfer students. In summary, having expectations of student behaviors works.

Emily (Grade 8 teacher) mentioned, “The biggest part of the implementation of SWPBIS in our school was when the program was fully implemented, and the referrals and suspensions dropped drastically.”

Theme 5: Teachers’ perceptions on staff training in SWPBIS. Teacher perceptions on staff training in SWPBIS mean their viewpoints on all staff buy-in is needed to support the SWPBIS discipline program. Buy-in works with a top down approach beginning with the administration and other administrative staff such as principals, assistant principals, instructional specialists, counselors, social workers, and school nurses. Other staff include cafeteria, janitorial, clerical staff, and paraprofessionals. If administration and other staff are not 100% invested in making a SWPBIS program work, it begets to the teachers and staff. Charlotte, Grade 6 teacher, added her thoughts on the greatest challenge that was faculty and staff buy-in, “I think the challenge is faculty and staff buy-in.” Amelia (Grade 8 teacher) continued with student buy-in, “Our biggest challenge is getting students who are the most difficult to buy into the program.” Olivia (Grade 6 teacher) remarked:

> I think that SWPBIS is a good program, and it could work. I really would like to see the program fully implemented within schools, but we are just not there at this point. But it is not a process without administrators, teachers, parents, and students buying into the program and implementing it using all the procedures and following it consistently.

Descriptive analysis of the SET survey indicated that the school staff should also have training and provided knowledge and information on SWPBIS. The key question is, “Who will do the training and provide strategies for teachers to develop skills in

implementing SWPBIS with fidelity?" If new teachers and staff are not properly and adequately trained, they may not buy-in into the program, become discouraged and leave.

Olivia, Grade 6 teacher, believed that the school climate and culture are good, but staff members could buy-in with SWPBIS for it to work and become consistent with teachers and staff:

> I believe teachers should buy-in into the program and see if it is working. I definitely think there is a split among staff. Half of the staff would like to see why it would push into it and go into it, but then there are others who cannot see why we need the program. I am not that intuitive. I do not believe that may be the problem, because they have never seen it through. I have never worked in a situation where it works.

Isabella, Grade 7 teacher, continued with the staff members' perception of SWPBIS:

> It depends on the staff member, if it is a staff member who has had instructional professional issues, there will be some pushback from others that have come from previous SWPBIS as new teachers. Those staff best fit into the school culture and climate. Those teachers are fully embraced in it and buy-in to support it."

Theme 6: Behavioral expectations. Expectations are established to help students understand and know the type of behavior that is expected in the classroom and in the general school. The majority of teacher participants in the current study have high expectations for students. Teachers have behavior expectations of students in their classrooms, hallways, cafeteria, and on the school bus. Students are reminded of acceptable and unacceptable behavior. In the RtI program, the first layer is schoolwide, universal system for everyone. Children learn basic behavior expectations and usually

like to be respectful and kind. School staff regularly recognize and praise children for good behavior. They may also use small rewards, like tokens or prizes, to encourage children (Response to Intervention Action Network, 2019).

Grace (Grade 8 teacher) asserted:

> I think we have high expectations for students. They follow the rules being respectful, not only to the adults, but also to each other. They respect every new child to the school. Male students respect others and have behavior contracts. They go over all rules and regulations. We have some students on behavior contracts. We spend a lot of time during the first week going over all the rules and regulations finding out what students know, what is needed to make SWPBIS work, and what does that look like at our school.

Olivia, Grade 6 teacher, agreed with Grace. Olivia mentioned:

> We have high expectations for students in our school. The expectations are always there especially for the start of school. There are expectations of how teachers review them in class. And the lack of classroom management is an issue. A lot of times, we see those expectations with a good classroom management, but when we do not, sometimes those expectations have vanished.

Support of behavioral expectations were found in the current study based on the descriptive analysis that behavior expectations are specific and clear for students. Few teachers disagreed. However, the majority of teacher participants strongly agreed that students understand the behavior expectations and could identify those expectations that are posted throughout the school building.

Amelia (Grade 8 teacher) told the group:

Behavior expectations are posted throughout the building for students to see. Often, teachers have to develop lesson plans to plan for students to meet those expectations. Attending class on time is an expectation that we issue from the community into the school. In addition to making sure those expectations are known, we make sure that we have parent meetings to ensure that students do a good job of following expectations and parents also know those expectations. Also, we have quarterly class meetings during Monday through Thursday or Monday of the first quarter. Teachers also must set expectations for each classroom. Course syllabi are given and explained to the class and sent home for parent and student signatures so there is an understanding of what is expected in each course.

Ava interjected:

In the beginning, most of the expectations are the general rules from the teachers. But there is no coherency and consistency throughout the school from room to room on each grade level. While teachers may know the rules, there is no consistency in implementing the rules equally for all students. They should make sure that the behavior expectations are fulfilled on their teams. I have difficulty because the expectations are not there throughout the building. On the intercom, the principal announces what is expected and what would happen if rules are broken.

Isabella (Grade 7 teacher) stated:

At the beginning of the school year and each semester, teachers must have patience. And, then as the year goes on and we get deeper into the semester, we

start to see that it is not an expectation. In addition, those expectations are not the same across the board due to either teachers with classroom management issues or with a leadership follow-up. We have remarkably high expectations at my school, in terms of discipline. Dress code, however, is a huge issue at our school. And, as all the other teacher participants have said, as the school year progresses, those expectations are not really followed through with. I can say, I teach mathematics with my math team. As a team, we adhere to those expectations. The frustration is all teachers and students do not adhere to behavioral expectations.

Emily (Grade 8 teacher) remarked:

There are expectations because teachers meet in January for the next semester to analyze those expectations. And we are not allowed to do instruction that first week of the semester but to set expectations and to practice behavioral rules and regulations so that they are able to manage their behavior themselves.

Most of the teacher participants had high expectations for student behavior. As Grace (Grade 8 teacher) acknowledged:

Expectations at our school are extremely high. We spend a whole week practicing rituals and routines. Around testing time, there is an increase in misbehavior. Students are given warnings, time out, parent conferences are held, and behavior contracts are signed. It is really changed the aim of student behavior. These steps help to control behavior. Ultimately, students are sent to ISS or a recommendation is made for them to attend an alternate school that is an extension of regular school, but it is a school for incorrigible students.

Mixed-Methods Analysis

Research question 10. What are the teachers' perceptions of BED, BET, and an ongoing system for rewarding behavioral expectations within SWPBIS? (mixed-methods)

Research question 11. How do these perceptions influence their participation and non-participation on the SWPBIS team and their years of full-time teaching experience and a teacher's role as a team member in the SWPBIS team on implementing SWPBIS with fidelity? (mixed-methods)

In this study, the integration of quantitative and qualitative took place at three levels: (1) design-level through the implementation of the sequential explanatory design where the quantitative survey data was collected first followed by qualitative focus group data collection, (2) methods-level through connecting where the focus group teacher participants were recruited from the population of teachers who responded to the SET survey, and (3) the interpretation and reporting level where the joint display tables were used to derive new insights beyond the results obtained from the separate analysis of quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative inferential results from the SET survey were compared to the qualitative quotes.

Integration of this mixed-methods at the design level is an explanatory sequential design, which means that quantitative data were collected and analyzed first. Then, the quantitative findings were integrated using joint display tables to inform qualitative data collection and analysis to discover themes from teacher participants' responses to interview questions (Fetters, Curry, & Creswell, 2013). The connecting technique was used in the study to link the quantitative and qualitative data through the focus group sample that was selected from those teachers who completed the SET survey in the

quantitative phase of the study. The connecting technique was also used to corroborate the quantitative and qualitative findings.

The integration of quantitative and qualitative data at the interpretation and reporting level occurred through the narrative weaving approach or integrating through narratives and the joint display. The "weaving approach to integration involved writing both quantitative and qualitative findings together on a theme-by-theme basis" (Fetters et al., 2013, p. 2142).

Joint display tables were used to present and summarize the results from the quantitative survey along with the themes derived from the qualitative focus group discussion (Guetterman, 2019). Joint display tables were utilized for ISS, OSS, and focus group results. Teachers' responses from C. M. Middle School and M. N. Middle School who participated in the focus group were identified to evaluate and compare their responses from both schools and to see if the teachers from M. N. Middle School had more positive perceptions of SWPBIS than those of C. M. Middle School because the ISS and OSS rates in both years were lower for M. N. Middle School. The teachers from M. N. Middle School had more positive responses than teachers from C. M. Middle School, probably because there were fewer ISS and OSS occurrences in M. N. Middle School than in C. M. Middle School. There were a few teachers from C. M. Middle School who shared some positive comments about ISS and OSS regarding providing incentives.

Teachers' qualitative responses from C. M. Middle School and M. N. Middle School were compared with the ISS and OSS disciplinary rates to assess if the teachers from M. N. Middle School had higher positive perceptions on SWPBIS than teachers from C. M. Middle School. This mixed-methods analysis was conducted because the ISS

and OSS rates in both years were lower for M. N. Middle School. Hence, it is reasonable to postulate that teachers in M. N. Middle School would have higher perceptions.

Secondly, the findings showed that the teachers who had fewer years of teaching experience had more positive perceptions of SWPBIS than experienced teachers. Thirdly, the pattern to link the mean SWPBIS composite scores (by teaching experience) to the qualitative focus group response is that teachers who are new to the teaching profession have higher positive perceptions of SWPBIS than teachers who are experienced in the teaching profession. Finally, teachers who were members of the SWPBIS team had more positive qualitative responses on SWPBIS than teachers who were not members of the SWPBIS team. Do teachers from M. N. Middle School have more positive perceptions of SWPBIS than teachers from C. M. Middle School because the ISS and OSS rates of M. N. are lower than C. M. Middle School?

Positive responses. The teachers from M. N. Middle School had more positive responses than teachers from C. M. Middle School, probably because there were fewer ISS and OSS occurrences in M. N. Middle School than C. M. Middle School. Amelia, Grade 8 teacher, thought highly of the feedback she received from the administration in her school:

> For my inner-city school, I would say that the administration does a decent job in letting the teachers know. The principal gives feedback regarding disciplinary reports. The last report provided information on ISS and OSS feedback every afternoon from the school secretary. The administration involves teachers and staff and cares about keeping teachers informed.

Negative responses. There were some teachers from C. M. Middle School who shared some positive comments about ISS and OSS regarding providing incentives;

however, the majority of those teachers had negative comments regarding inconsistency with the rules for students and incentives. Emma, Grade 6 teacher, recalled openly how her principal is inconsistent with consequences for students' misbehavior:

> I can only speak for my immediate principal who is not consistent with consequence for students' misbehavior. The problem is that administrative actions are taking place when we write a student up for misbehavior, there is little feedback from the principal. When students are reprimanded, nothing is done. Teachers complain among us but there is little consistent support from the administration to control student behavior.

Emma continued by explaining that there were no major changes because teachers had yet to implement SWPBIS in the school:

> We have not had any major changes because teachers have not implemented it yet. They have been talking about implementing the program this fall 2020 but that is not a given because of the COVID-19 pandemic problem with schools being closed since April 2020. We have to teach online now. (see Table 49)

Table 49

Joint Display Table: Comparison of ISS and OSS with Focus Group

	C. M.	M. N.	Qualitative Quotes from Focus Group
	2017-18		*M. N. Middle School*
ISS	22.3	6.91	Amelia, an 8th grade teacher speaks highly of the feedback she receives from the administration in her school, "For my inner-city school, I would say that the administration does a decent job in letting the teachers know. The principal gives feedback regarding disciplinary reports. The last report provided information on ISS and OSS feedback every afternoon from the school secretary. The administration involves teachers and staff and cares about keeping teachers informed."
OSS	32.5	18	
			C. M. Middle School
			Emma (6th grade teacher) spoke openly regarding how her principal is inconsistent with consequences for students' misbehavior: "I can only speak for my immediate principal who is not consistent with consequence for students' misbehavior. The problem is that administrative actions are taking place when we write a student up for misbehavior, there is little feedback from the principal. When students are reprimanded, nothing is done. Teachers complain among us but there is little consistent support from the administration to control student

			behavior." Emma continued by explaining that there are no major changes because teachers have yet to implement SWPBIS in the school, "We have not had any major changes because teachers have not implemented it yet. They have been talking about implementing the program this fall 2020 but that is not a given because of the Coronavirus pandemic problem with schools being closed since April 2020. We have to teach online now."
	2018-19		*M. N. Middle School*
ISS	24.5	8.9	Grace (8th grade teacher) mentioned that although teachers are not doing their part, she added a positive note regarding regular feedback from the school's secretary, "The secretary updates discipline every day and indicates who is on the list as part of their feedback on student discipline. Therefore, teachers can have the information at the end of each day. Students are then given whatever level of punishment that fits the behavior exhibited during the day. The staff receives the information based on what happened during the day. What is needed is a representative from each grade level, or department to be more responsible for keeping the data and providing feedback to other teachers."
OSS	31.2	14.3	*C. M. Middle School*
			Charlotte (7th grade teacher) summed it up with, "Just to put it simply, I perceive the SWPBIS program is something that could potentially work. But I have never been in a district or school that has actually implemented it and really pushed it out and it worked. I think that it will, but I just have not seen that thus far.
t-Test Results	Overall, ISS and OSS numbers are less in M. N. Middle School than C. M. Middle School to a statistically significant degree.		*M. N. Middle School*
			Emily (8th grade teacher) stated, "Students come in contact with their teachers in the room and then teachers sell the program. As a result, students and teachers find themselves excited about the program as students learn about and understand how it works. The biggest part of the implementation of SWPBIS in our school was when the program was fully implemented, and the referrals and suspensions dropped drastically."
			C. M. Middle School
			Charlotte (7th grade teacher) commented, "I believe that it does help the student who wants to succeed, specifically, because administrators and teachers may not know what their home life is like. You do not know if they are getting rewarded or being loved, or whatever happens at home. Giving them accolades helps students to feel better about themselves as a person. The incentives may give them the motivation needed to keep succeeding." Charlotte (7th grade teacher) added her thoughts on the greatest challenge that was faculty and staff buy-in, "I think the challenge is faculty and staff buy-in."

A joint display (see Table 50) was made to connect the composite SWPBIS scores (BED, BET, and OR) based on years of teaching experience to the qualitative focus group responses. Overall, the mean composite scores for BET were highest between the three composite scores. The table shows that teachers with 6 to 10 years of full-time teaching experience were highest for the BED Mean composite score followed by teachers in the 1 to 5 years' experience. Teachers with 11 to 15 years' experience had the lowest composite scores for BED, BET, and OR. This trend is consistent with the

qualitative themes. Teachers in the 1 to 5 and 6 to 10 years of experience group had more positive perceptions of SWPBIS and believed in the program. Teachers in the 11 to 15 years had knowledge about the SWPBIS program but pointed out the issues with its implementation and that it was more effective in their prior school. The largest differences in teachers' perceptions was seen in the BED mean composite scores because the ANOVA results were statistically significant.

Table 50

Comparison of SWPBIS Perceptions with Quantitative ANOVA Results

Number of Years Teaching Experience	BED Mean Composite Score	BET Mean Composite Score	OR Mean Composite Score	Qualitative Quotes from Focus Group
1-5 Years	11.00	23.59	18.89	Amelia (Grade 8 teacher) believed that "SWPBIS is a helpful discipline program because positive experiences provide some structure and make them feel that someone is concerned about them. And it gives them more positive attention that is more important than negative attention than they normally would generate."
6-10 Years	12.62	23.25	18.67	Isabella (Grade 7 teacher) interjected, "Absolutely SWPBIS helps students if they want to participate and the student needs that type of guidance."
11-15 Years	8.15	19.92	14.83	Emily (Grade 8 teacher) added, "I am familiar with SWPBIS. We use it in my location, but it was more effective in my other location." Olivia (Grade 6 teacher) said, "Teachers and schools are not trained on how to

				implement SWPBIS with fidelity and do not know what that means."
16-20 Years	10.57	21.53	17.53	Charlotte (Grade 7 teacher) asserted, "Just to put it simply, I perceive the SWPBIS program is something that could potentially work. But I have never been in a district or school that has actually implemented it and really pushed it out and it worked. I think that it will, but I just have not seen that thus far."
20+ Years	10.92	22.42	18.00	Grace (Grade 8 teacher) commented, "Simply put, I perceive SWPBIS to be a wonderful discipline tool when teachers implement it with fidelity. Right now, everybody is missing. We need to make sure that adults buy-in and get on board with SWPBIS and are following the rules the way it has been laid out. Following through with fidelity is the key to a successful discipline program like SWPBIS. We need a buy-in from everybody."
ANOVA Results	Statistically Significant The results indicated that there was statistically significant difference in years of full-time teaching experience between 6-10 years	Statistically not-significant There were no statistically significant differences between groups (i.e., years of full-time teaching experience) for BET and	Statistically not-significant There were no statistically significant differences between groups (i.e., years of full-time teaching experience), as	**Behavioral Expectations Defined (BED)** Olivia, Grade 6 teacher, agreed with Grace. Olivia said, "We have high expectations for students in our school. The expectations are always there especially for the start of school. There are expectations of how teachers review them in class. And the lack of classroom management is an issue. A lot of times, we see those expectations with a

	and 11-15 years and between more than 20 years and 11-15 years.	years of full-time teaching experience.	demonstrated by one-way ANOVA for an ongoing System for Rewarding Behavioral Expectations and years of full-time teaching experience.	good classroom management, but when we do not, sometimes those expectations have vanished." **Behavioral Expectations Taught (BET)** Amelia (Grade 8 teacher) told the group, "Behavior expectations are posted throughout the building for students to see. Often, teachers have to develop lesson plans to plan for students to meet those expectations. Attending class on time is an expectation that we issue from the community into the school. In addition to making sure those expectations are known, we make sure that we have parent meetings to ensure that students do a good job of following expectations and parents also know those expectations. Also, we have quarterly class meetings during Monday through Thursday or Monday of the first quarter. Teachers also must set expectations for each classroom. Course syllabi are given and explained to the class and sent home for parent and student's signatures so there is an understanding of what is expected in each course." **Ongoing System for Rewarding Behavioral Expectations (OR)** Amelia (Grade 6 teacher) reported that "The only

	changes were the negative student behaviors declined. And more students were given as much incentives as we had." Emily (Grade 8 teacher) stated, "As a group of teachers, we need to back and look at things from a budget point of view. We want to do more for less. We should set aside more money in the budget for student incentives and rewards for good behavior to implement the program."

A joint display (see Table 51) was made to connect the composite SWPBIS scores (BED, BET, and OR) based on membership of SWPBIS team to the qualitative focus group responses. Overall, the mean composite scores for BED, BET, and OR was highest for teachers who were part of the SWPBIS team. The table shows that the *t*-test results were statistically significant for all three composite scores. This trend is consistent with the qualitative themes. Teachers in the SWPBIS team had more positive perceptions of SWPBIS and believed in the program. Teachers who were not a SWPBIS team member focused more on the limited effectiveness of the program and the challenges in its implementation rather than the positive results of the program.

Table 51

Comparison of Quantitative SWPBIS Perceptions with t-Test Results

SWPBIS Team Member	BED Mean Composite Score	BET Mean Composite Score	OR Mean Composite Score	Qualitative Quotes from Focus Group
Yes	11.77 Statistically Significant The findings for research question 1 and the test for BED were statistically significant, t (27) = 2.62, p = .010. Teacher participants who were non-SWPBIS members (n = 51, M = 10.10, SD = 2.38) were assumed to be less knowledgeable and knew less about policy and procedures than SWPBIS members (n = 30, M = 11.77, SD = 3.03).	24.00 Statistically Significant The findings for research question 2 show a statistically significant difference between the mean BET scores between the SWPBIS team members and non-SWPBIS team members (n = 78, t = 2.53, p < .023). Teachers who were SWPBIS team members had higher means (M=24.00, SD=5.30) for BET than those teachers who were non-SWPBIS members	19.38 Statistically Significant There was a statistically significant difference between OR scores between the SWPBIS team members and non-SWPBIS team members (n = 78, t = 2.53, p < .023). Teachers who were SWPBIS team members had higher means (M = 24.00, SD = 5.30) for ongoing rewards than those teachers who were non-SWPBIS members (M = 21.54, SD = 4.08).	Amelia (Grade 8 teacher) shared her experience with observing disruptive students becoming engaged in learning. She noticed, "I think our biggest part of the implementation of SWPBIS is seeing those students who came in with serious discipline problems changed, molded, and grew into what the expectations were and became examples and role models for incoming freshmen, sophomores, and transfer students. In summary, having expectations of student behaviors works." Amelia (Grade 8 teacher) also believed that "SWPBIS is a helpful discipline program because positive experiences provide some structure and make them feel that someone is concerned about them. And it gives them more positive attention that is more important than negative attention than they normally would generate. The only changes were the negative student behaviors declined. And more students were given as much incentives as we had." Isabella (Grade 7 teacher): "Absolutely SWPBIS helps students if they want to

SWPBIS Team Member	BED Mean Composite Score	BET Mean Composite Score	OR Mean Composite Score	Qualitative Quotes from Focus Group
		(*M*=21.54, *SD*=4.08).		participate and the student needs that type of guidance."
No	10.18 Same as Yes	21.54 Same as Yes	17.08 Same as Yes	Ava, Grade 6 teacher, recalled the major challenges for her school. "There is a great need for teacher training in the program and lack of knowledge about SWPBIS are major challenges for our school. Teachers do not know what or why they are doing it. They do not have the necessary training and knowledge and therefore, they cannot implement SWPBIS with fidelity."
t-Test Results The *t*-test results showed that ISS and OSS suspensions in M. N. Middle School were less than C. M. Middle School.	Statistically Significant BED	Statistically Significant BET	Statistically Significant OR	Charlotte (Grade 7 teacher): "Just to put it simply, I perceive the SWPBIS program is something that could potentially work. But I have never been in a district or school that has actually implemented it and really pushed it out and it worked. I think that it will, but I just have not seen that thus far."

Summary

The results for Research Questions 1, 2, and 3 were statistically significant. The teachers' perception scores of BED, BET, and OR were statistically significant differences based on teacher's membership in the SWPBIS team.

The results for Research Question 4 were statistically significant. The teachers' perception scores of BED had statistically significant differences based on years of full-time teaching experience. The mid-phase (6-10 years) career teachers had higher scores on BED to a statistically significant degree than did the more experienced teachers (11-15 years and more than 20 years). The results for Research Question 5 (BED) and Research Question 6 (OR) were not statistically significant.

The results for Research Question 7 were statistically significant. The ISS suspension rates were lower in M. N. Middle School than C. M. Middle School to a statistically significant degree. The results for Research Question 8 were statistically significant. The OSS suspension rates were lower in M. N. Middle School than C. M. middle school to a statistically significant degree.

The qualitative findings for Research Question 9 showed that all focus group participants held high expectations for student behavior. Most teachers believed buy-in for the SWPBIS program was an issue and that several program elements were not being implemented as they should have when it was introduced six years prior.

The mixed methods question 10 showed BED survey item "SWPBIS is presented and explained to new staff" indicated that there were 40 teachers who agreed and 16 teachers who strongly agreed with this statement. For the survey item "Majority of staff buy-in or support SWPBIS effort," results indicated 26 teachers who agreed and 13 teachers who strongly agreed with this statement.

BET and SWPBIS team member survey item "School rules are appropriate" indicated 50 teachers who agreed and 25 teachers who strongly agreed with this statement. The qualitative findings for research question 10 ongoing reward showed that all focus group participants held high expectations for student behavior. Most teachers

believed buy-in for the SWPBIS program was an issue and several program elements were not being implemented as they should have when it was introduced six years prior.

The mixed-methods Research Question 11 for OR behavioral expectations and SWPBIS team member showed the survey item “Positive reinforcements are used to support expectations and rules” indicated 47 teachers and 18 teachers strongly agreed. The survey item “Reinforcements are modified based on data trends” indicated 37 teachers and 8 teachers who strongly agreed. For the survey item “Positive reinforcements are tracked,” results indicated 37 teachers and 14 teachers who strongly agreed.

Approximately 45% of teachers did not agree or were not sure if the SWPBIS reinforcements were modified based on data trends. Almost 40% of teachers did not agree or were not sure if positive reinforcements were tracked. Half of the teachers did not believe or were not sure of the SWPBIS team obtaining feedback from students.

Chapter V

Discussion

The purpose of this mixed-methods, sequential, explanatory study was to examine middle school teachers' perceptions (e.g., BED, BET, and OR) of their efforts toward implementing SWPBIS with fidelity in an urban school district in the Southeastern United States. The independent variables were SWPBIS team member and years of full-time teaching experience. The dependent variables were the three areas of BED, BET, and OR behavioral expectations. For the quantitative phase of the study, three areas and dependent variables were explored when teachers responded to questions using the SET. For the qualitative phase of the study, teachers' perceptions were explored to obtain a rich, in-depth description of how their perceptions of their knowledge, experiences, training, and support within SWPBIS are related to their participation and non-participation on the SWPBIS team and their years of full-time teaching experience on implementing SWPBIS with fidelity. Chapter V presents a summary of the study and an analysis of the quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods findings. Any delimitations that might influence the results are mentioned. Limitations of the study provide limitations that were not in the control of the researcher. Limitations are the shortcomings, conditions, or influences that cannot be controlled by the researcher and that place restrictions on the methodology and conclusions. Recommendations for future research are presented to suggest where other studies may be conducted based on the results and conclusions of this study. Implications of the study include general implications, implications for current practice, and policy implications.

Quantitative Results Summary

Research Question 1 examined if there were statistically significant differences in teachers' perceptions of BED based on teacher's membership in the SWPBIS team. The independent sample *t*-test results showed that there were statistically significant differences among sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers' perceptions in BED within SWPBIS when they were part of the SWPBIS team versus when they are not. The mean was higher for SWPBIS team members than for non-SWPBIS members, which means the groups are statistically different in their means. The null hypothesis was rejected.

Research Question 2 examined if there were statistically significant differences in teachers' perceptions of behavior expectations taught based on teacher's membership in the SWPBIS team. The independent sample *t*-test results showed that there were statistically significant differences in teachers' perceptions of BET when they were part of the SWPBIS team versus when they were not. The mean for BET was higher for SWPBIS team members than for non-SWPBIS members. The null hypothesis was rejected.

Research Question 3 examined if there were statistically significant differences in teacher perceptions of ongoing system for rewarding behavioral expectations based on teacher's membership in the SWPBIS team. The independent sample *t*-test results showed that there were statistically significant differences in teacher perceptions of ongoing system for rewarding behavioral expectation when they were part of the SWPBIS team versus when they were not. The mean was higher for SWPBIS team members than for non-SWPBIS member. The null hypothesis was rejected. Teachers with fewer years of experience (1-5 years; 6-10 years) had more positive perceptions of SWPBIS than more experienced teachers (11-15 years; 16-20 years; 20+ years). Thirdly,

new teachers have higher positive perceptions of SWPBIS than experienced teachers. Finally, teachers who are SWPBIS team members had more positive qualitative responses on SWPBIS than teachers who are not members of SWPBIS.

Research Question 4 examined if there were statistically significant differences in teachers' perceptions of BED based on years of full-time teaching experience. The ANOVA results showed that there was a statistically significant difference in in teachers' perceptions of BED based on years of full-time teaching experience. Teachers with 6-10 years of full-time teaching experience had the highest mean in BED, followed by teachers with 1-5 years. The mean for teachers with more than 20 years of full-time teaching experience mean was followed by the mean for teachers with 16-20 years of full-time teaching experience. The null hypothesis was rejected.

Research Question 5 examined if there were statistically significant differences in teachers' perceptions of based on years of full-time teaching experience. The ANOVA results showed that was no statistically significant difference in teachers' perceptions of ongoing system for rewarding behavioral expectations based on years of full-time teaching experience. The mean for teachers with 1-5 years of full-time teaching experience was the highest mean in OR followed by the mean for teachers with 6-10 years. The mean for teachers with more than 20 years of full-time teaching experience was followed by the mean for teachers with 16-20 years of full-time teaching experience. The null hypothesis could not be rejected.

Research Question 6 examined if there were statistically significant differences in teachers' perceptions of based on years of full-time teaching experience. The ANOVA results showed that was no statistically significant difference in teachers' perceptions of ongoing system for rewarding behavioral expectations based on years of full-time

teaching experience. The mean for teachers with 1-5 years of full-time teaching experience had the highest mean in OR followed by the mean for teachers with 6-10 years. The mean for teachers with more than 20 years of full-time teaching experience was followed by the mean for teachers with 16-20 years of full-time teaching experience. The null hypothesis could not be rejected. One reason for the statistically non-significant results in research questions 5 and 6 could be because teachers did not have a strong belief in the effectiveness of the SWPBIS program and the incentives/rewards associated with it. Hence, teachers were reluctant to implement the system in their classrooms because lack of inconsistency and lack of clarity were found in the SWPBIS policies.

ANOVA Results for ISS and OSS

Responses of teachers from C. M. Middle School and M. N. Middle School who participated in the focus group were identified first, to compare their responses to see if the teachers from the latter school were more positive towards SWPBIS than those from the former school because the ISS and OSS rates in both years were lower for M. N. Middle School. Responses of teachers from M. N. Middle School were more positive than teachers from C. M. Middle School, probably because there were fewer ISS and OSS rates. Few teachers from C. M. Middle School shared some positive comments about ISS and OSS regarding providing incentives. As ISS and OSS numbers were lower in M. N. Middle School than in C. M. Middle school to a statistically significant degree, the present study corroborated McIntosh et al.'s finding that suspension rates were 20% lower in schools that implemented SWPBIS with fidelity.

Qualitative Results Summary

Six distinct themes emerged from the analysis of the focus group transcripts. Some of the themes seemed to overlap into other themes, and the division of those

themes was created based on the frequency of those topics. The six themes were as follows: (1) buy-in, (2) consistency and fidelity of implementation, (3) training and knowledge, (4) teachers' perceptions on SWPBIS, (5) teachers' perceptions of staff training in SWPBIS, and (6) behavioral expectations. The six themes were presented in an integrated joint display table that crosstabs the themes with the quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods research questions.

Teachers are more likely to buy-in to a school reform program when they receive adequate training, professional development, and resources, support from program developers, and support from staff members such as the school leadership team who addresses teacher concerns related to implementation (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Turnbull, 2002). Participants in the current study reported that the initial training and staff development were helpful. Creation of norms for the SWPBIS components (e.g., BED, BET, and OR) would help the school to establish the climate and initial teacher and staff buy-in.

During the first three years, both schools experienced decreased behavior issues, increased academic achievement, and decreased teacher turnover rate. However, sustainability was an issue. To sustain SWPBIS, the staff indicated a need for intensive training for new staff members as well as yearly refresher training and support for all staff members. The results of Bowling's (2018) study supported the need for local school districts to provide annual intensive training for all staff members at SWPBIS schools and to better prepare and train new teachers in the area of classroom management.

Most of the teacher participants in the focus group agreed that lack of teacher buy-in to implement SWPBIS with fidelity was one of the barriers to the program's success. Descriptive analysis of the SET survey item on buy-in indicated that there were

26 teachers who agreed and 13 teachers who strongly agreed with this statement. Teachers buy-in is critical for SWPBIS to work. Administrators should reward teachers to encourage teacher buy-in because incentives can motivate the teachers to work more towards reducing the ISS and OSS referrals, decreasing the discipline problems, and also improving student buy-in.

BED. The school is being identified with the teachers' names in this portion of the study because the researcher wanted to know if teachers who were SWPBIS team members had more positive responses toward SWPBIS than teachers who were non-SWPBIS members. Nine teachers participated in the focus group. The quotations in this section are from participants. The researcher assigned each participant and their schools pseudonyms to protect and obscure their real identity. Previously shown Table 46 (Focus Group Demographics) in Chapter IV (see p. 152) displays teachers' and schools' pseudonyms, number of years of teaching experience, school assignments, and whether they are SWPBIS team members or non-SWPBIS team members.

The majority of participants in this study have high expectations for students. Grace (Grade 8 teacher, M. N. Middle School) said:

> I think we have high expectations for students. They follow the rules being respectful, not only to the adults, but also to each other. They respect every new child to the school. Male students respect others and have behavior contracts. Teachers reviewed all rules and regulations. We have some students on behavior contracts. We spend a lot of time during the first week going over all the rules and regulations finding out what students know, what is needed to make SWPBIS work, and what does that look like at our school.

In contrast, Charlotte (Grade 7 teacher, C. M. Middle School) asserted:

> Just to put it simply, I perceive the SWPBIS program is something that could potentially work. But I have never seen it in a district or school that has actually implemented it and really pushed it out and it worked. I think that it will, but I just have not seen that thus far.

BET. Amelia (Grade 8 teacher, M. N. Middle School) told the group:

> Behavior expectations are posted throughout the building for students to see. Often, teachers have to develop lesson plans to plan for students to meet those expectations. Attending class on time is an expectation that we issue from the community into the school. In addition to making sure those expectations are known, we make sure that we have parent meetings to ensure that students do a good job of following expectations and parents also know those expectations. Also, we have quarterly class meetings during Monday through Thursday or Monday of the first quarter. Teachers also must set expectations for each classroom. Course syllabi are given and explained to the class and sent home for parent and student signatures so there is an understanding of what is expected in each course.

In contrast, Ava, Grade 6 teacher, C. M. Middle School, recalled the major challenges for her school:

> There is a great need for teacher training in the program and lack of knowledge about SWPBIS are major challenges for our school. Teachers do not know what or why they are doing it. They do not have the necessary training and knowledge and therefore, they cannot implement SWPBIS with fidelity.

OR. Many teachers believed that SWPBIS is a positive program and helps students, especially for those with severe problems who receive rewards. It is also good for students who are well-behaved and receive incentives. Olivia (Grade 6 teacher, M. N. Middle School) began the discussion with:

> I think SWPBIS does help students, especially for the students who want to be positive. I think students want and deserve instant feedback because the majority of students are not complying with the rules. Sometimes students are not getting anything or what they are supposed to get. For example, a student comes to school every day and does what he/she is supposed to do and be respectful. But when you see this kind of behavior, you try to stay positive with them and give them extra feedback about their respectful behavior. Boys typically are sent to counselors for misbehavior or to mentoring groups. Even rewards are provided to well-behaved students that is positive also for athletes.

In contrast, Ava (Grade 6 teacher, C. M. Middle School) stated:

> For those students who continue to have behavior issues, I think they end up manipulating teachers. And the students who are always behaving according to the rules end up with most of the rewards and incentives. They get incentives because if teachers and staff implemented SWPBIS with fidelity, students eventually get there and succeed. Teachers do not get tired of it nor do students. If the program guidelines are not consistent, teachers nor students will believe in it. But if the program helps students to be happy, then behavior problems diminish, especially when teachers present it to students with fidelity. Adding the counseling component with SWPBIS really helps troubled students work out their problems and find out why they are disruptive in class.

Mixed-Methods Results

The current study's findings showed that the early (1-5 years) and mid-career (11-15 years) teachers had more positive perceptions of SWPBIS and believed in the program. Teachers in the 11 to 15 years group had knowledge about the SWPBIS program but pointed out the issues with its implementation and indicated that it was more effective in their prior school. The two middle schools in the current study exhibited problematic, disruptive student behavior, decline in academic performance, and lack of teacher buy-in to implement the SWPBIS program despite the program being used for six years.

Although Reinke, Herman, and Stormont (2013) did not examine years of teaching experience, direct observations of 33 elementary classrooms were used to evaluate behavior management strategies that aligned with SWPBIS. Classrooms had positively stated rules posted at high rates. Use of praise and positive to negative interactions were not effective in some classrooms where teachers had difficulty with behavior management of students. Teachers who praised students often experienced more effectiveness with classroom management compared to teachers in classrooms with higher rates of disruptive student behavior. The earlier study of Reinke et al.'s corroborated with the current focus group findings which showed that the majority of participants held high expectations for student behavior.

Flannery, Fenning, Kato, and McIntosh (2014) examined the effects of SWPBIS on the levels of individual student problem behaviors during a 3-year effectiveness trial for 36,653 students in 12 high schools (eight high schools implemented SWPBIS, and four schools served as comparison schools). Results showed a statistically significant decrease in students' disciplinary referrals in SWPBIS schools, with an increase in

comparison schools. In addition, as fidelity of implementation increased, office discipline referrals significantly decreased. The results of Flannery et al.'s study was similar to the current study's results. The disciplinary referrals in SWPBIS schools decreased in Flannery et al.'s study. The ISS and OSS rates (used as a measure for disciplinary referrals) were lower in M. N. Middle School where teachers had positive perceptions about SWPBIS implementation with fidelity.

Several focus group participants from M. N. Middle School were more positive in implementing SWPBIS with fidelity than teachers in C. M. Middle School who had fewer positive beliefs about the program. One participant observed disruptive students with serious discipline problems changing and upholding teacher expectations in serving as role models for incoming students after experiencing SWPBIS program guidelines.

The current study's findings showed that teachers who were SWPBIS team members had higher means than those teachers who were non-SWPBIS members. Teacher participants who were SWPBIS members were assumed to be more knowledgeable and to have known more about policy and procedures than non-SWPBIS members. Schaper, McIntosh, and Hoselton (2016) documented four years of fidelity growth during installation and initial implementation of SWPBIS in school teams throughout the United States that were routinely checked to monitor their fidelity of implementing SWPBIS. The fidelity outcome was assessed with the Team Implementation Checklist and was completed several times per year by the SWPBIS teams. An earlier study of Schaper et al. confirmed the findings with the current study regarding SWPBIS team members who were more knowledgeable than non-SWPBIS team members. The current findings were confirmed by the results from multilevel fidelity growth models that showed the number of years of implementation, location,

school type, and enrollment size were significant predictors of the average rate of fidelity change per month of school (Schaper et al., 2016).

Lack of teacher buy-in for the system existed because all areas of change were not addressed prior to the beginning of implementation. In the current study, positive effects on school climate were realized (e.g., reduction in the disciplinary referrals in M. N. Middle School when compared to C. M. Middle School), despite full implementation and a lack of teacher buy-in. The current mixed-methods study examined only two middle schools with 84 teachers and nine focus group teacher perceptions of SWPBIS and its influence on implementation with fidelity. Dean's (2018) study was conducted in a school that was in its first year of SWPBIS implementation, whereas in the current study, the SWPBIS program was already in place for a few years in both middle schools. The results from Dean's study were similar to those of the current study, where there was lack of buy-in and lack of fidelity of implementation. Dean conducted an explanatory, sequential mixed-methods study to examine teacher and administrator perceptions of SWPBIS in a high school located in Georgia. Similar to the current study, which used the same research design, Dean examined academic, social, and behavioral skills in both high school teacher and administrator perceptions of SWPBIS. One of Dean's findings showed that administrators had a more comprehensive understanding of SWPBIS, although both groups revealed that the utilization of SWPBIS could provide potential benefits to the overall success of the school, especially with regard to school climate. However, the teachers reported that several school level factors had to be changed for SWPBIS to completely impact school climate.

Orozco (2018) explored how school staff members perceived the implementation of PBIS at a local middle school. Orozco sought to determine how the implementation of

PBIS components influenced student behavior through the examination of scholarly articles and longitudinal studies. Additionally, it sought to determine how evaluation instruments supported the implementation and maintenance of PBIS with fidelity and identified the critical features used to sustain the framework. A similar mixed methods research design was used in the current study but only focused on middle school teacher perceptions of SWPBIS implementation with fidelity. The current findings confirmed the earlier study of Orozco's findings with middle school teachers and staff perceptions. The current study's findings revealed that the three components of BED, BET, and OR behavioral expectations were statistically significant for years of teaching experience and being a SWPBIS member. The results of the PBIS Self-Assessment Survey and interviews in Orozco's study showed that the majority of staff members perceived these components to be successfully implemented and associated the program to improve student behavior in the first six weeks of implementation. The teachers and staff in Orozco's study perceived that the PBIS leadership team should coordinate resources and professional development to support staff members in their ongoing effort to improve student behavior and school climate. An earlier study corroborated with the present findings from the focus group participants regarding the professional development and training perceived in Orozco's study.

Cooper (2013) also used a mixed-methods approach to evaluate the outcome of the intervention on the recidivism rates of students assigned to ISS and to explore high school students,' teachers,' and administrators' perceptions of the effects of the intervention on student behavior. The current study utilized a mixed-methods approach and examined middle school teacher perceptions of the implementation of SWPBIS with fidelity. The current study used SWPBIS in its response to disruptive middle school

students, while Cooper utilized the RtI to equip ISS programs with high school students who had consistent ISS disciplinary issues. In addition, a survey, a focus group, and 2-year ISS and OSS rates for middle school students were analyzed. Cooper used only ISS rates for 3 years for comparison during the intervention year. An earlier study of Cooper confirmed the present study's findings for using SWPBIS to deter disruptive behavior and decreasing ISS and OSS rates. Findings in Cooper's study showed a statistically significant decrease in recidivism rates of students in Grade 9 when compared to the intervention year. Although the current study did not examine recidivism rates, the findings showed that ISS and OSS rates in M. N. Middle School decreased because teachers in that school had positive attitudes towards implementing SWPBIS with fidelity compared to a similar school. The findings promoted the usage of ISS programs as an effective means of delivering RtI interventions to behaviorally at-risk students in a high school. However, the findings also indicated a need for program modifications to have a stronger influence on reducing recidivism rates across all grade levels.

Dittrich (2019) investigated the difference between the implementation of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and student achievement scores and the number of failing grades in a middle west United States suburban public middle school through a mixed methods research study. Similar to the current study, Dittrich used the mixed methods research design with middle school students' achievement scores, failing grades, office discipline referrals, average daily attendance, and percentages of students scoring proficient, or advanced on the Missouri Assessment Program tests. Although the current study examined middle school students' ISS and OSS rates, Dittrich's findings were consistent with the current study's findings where the ISS and OSS rates decreased with teachers' positive attitudes toward SWPBIS

implementation with fidelity. Dittrich's results showed a difference in the number of office referrals, number of failing grades, and percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced on the Missouri Assessment Program. However, the findings were not statistically significant. In the current study, the ISS and OSS rates showed statistically significant differences for BED, BET, and OR.

Limitations of the Study

Several limitations should be noted when interpreting the findings. Current studies provided important advice to both educators and researchers by identification of factors to sustain the implementation of SWPBIS. However, there were also limitations in the present study. First, this study was conducted in two middle schools within an urban school district in Georgia to identify middle school teachers' perceptions of SWPBIS. This limits the generalizability of research findings to other settings, participants (e.g., administrators, school principals, coordinators), and geographic locations. This study only examined teachers' perceptions of SWPBIS and did not consider the insights of principals and staff members in both schools. Second, data were collected through self-report measure of SET survey in the quantitative phase, which can be biased because teachers could have provided more positive responses to the survey items (Salters-Pedneault, 2019). Thirdly, social desirability bias could be another factor that could have masked teachers' responses (King & Bruner, 2000). Fourth, the data collection was cross-sectional for the survey and focus group session. Hence, the longitudinal development of teachers' perceptions of SWPBIS and teacher buy-in could not be examined. Common method variance is not a limitation in this study since the SET survey and focus group session were used for data collection (Podsakoff, MacKenize, Lee, & Nathan, 2003). Finally, the qualitative data collection was limited to an online focus group session

(which occurred via Zoom) due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It was difficult for the researcher to take notes of all non-verbal behavior that could have occurred during the focus group session due to the online environment.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research should explore the challenges and barriers related to sustainability at a national and an international level. The results of this study provided valuable information that can guide future research on SWPBIS sustainability. Perhaps the most important factors in the current study from focus group participants are challenges and barriers to sustainability. Several middle school teachers mentioned that, after 6 years, SWPBIS had "died out" and neither teachers nor students seemed interested in its implementation. Future research should examine which factors promote or impede the sustainability of SWPBIS. In other words, how long will this program last, or will teachers have the ability and capability for SWPBIS to maintain the program at a certain level of fidelity. Finally, experimental, and quasi-experimental studies should determine if challenges and barriers affect the sustainability of SWPBIS.

In the present study, teacher buy-in was the most frequently identified challenge. Future research could examine the common activities and factors that simultaneously improve administrator and teacher buy-in to solidify the sustained implementation of SWPBIS. These factors include school administrator support, consistency of implementation, staff training, and resource allocation as it relates to funding and time. Similar lines of research could examine the factors that commonly impede the sustained implementation of SWPBIS. Although not one of the most frequently identified enablers or barriers, training was the fifth most frequently cited theme in the current study in terms of total responses. Essential to the documented success within the SWPBIS literature is

ongoing, systemic, skills-based professional development with technical assistance (Horner et al., 2014). McIntosh et al. (2016) noted that schools were more likely to sustain implementation efforts if teachers implemented SWPBIS with fidelity and ongoing technical assistance to reduce the likelihood of inconsistent or incorrect implementation. An additional predictor of sustainability was state-level priority and support provided to SWPBIS implementation (McIntosh et al., 2016). To ensure fidelity of implementation at the school level, teachers must have access to skills-based professional development, ongoing technical assistance, a range of support materials and exemplars, and performance feedback provided by qualified trainers and coaches (Lewis & Thomas, 2014).

Implementation with fidelity requires preservice educator preparation programs to prepare teachers, administrators, and related personnel to work in teams, use data to guide decision making, identify and match evidence-based practices to student need, and continually evaluate implementation fidelity (Lewis & Thomas, 2014). Future studies can explore the influence of professional development programs on pre-service teacher preparation on SWPBIS. These programs can be developed through partnerships between educators in the profession, school districts, regional educational cooperatives, state departments of education in partnership, and universities to provide continued in-service professional development opportunities to pre-service teachers. Staff training might be an important variable to consider for the sustained implementation of SWPBIS. Research indicates that effective staff training includes didactic instruction regarding the theoretical foundations of the practice, modeling, practice, performance feedback, coaching, and follow-up support (Fixsen et al., 2005; Joyce & Showers, 2002). Although the research is clear that these components of staff training are important, the specific activities involved

in each of the components, and how they affect sustainability, have yet to be examined. Future studies should explore the specifics of the staff training and what factors promote or impede the sustained use of effective SWPBIS practices with fidelity by the school staff.

SWPBIS research literature is also limited to the classroom implementation of SWPBIS and which factors promote or inhibit its long-term fidelity and effectiveness. Students spend the vast majority of their school day in the classroom. Classroom teachers have several opportunities to implement SWPBIS practices in their classrooms through the creation of a learning environment that increases the likelihood of students learning academic and behavioral skills. Although SWPBIS is a school-wide approach, the quality and durability of implementation may be contingent on the extent to which individual teachers implement SWPBIS classroom practices with high fidelity. The programs with high implementation fidelity have a more positive impact on student outcomes. Thus, future research should focus on classroom-level implementation of SWPBIS. Research supported the implication that if teachers do not implement SWPBIS with fidelity, then it may not work (Farlex, Inc., 2018; Hannigan & Hannigan, 2016; Nelen et al., 2019; Scott, 2018).

Future research should compare and contrast educators' perceptions from regions that are nationally representative. Teachers' perceptions should be considered from different locations (i.e., rural versus urban), settings (e.g., school level factors such as climate, principal support, Title I versus non-Title I, availability of resources related to SWPBIS training and professional development), and past experiences and preparation. The current study results indicated that teachers who were new to the profession and were members of SWPBIS team had more positive perceptions about SWPBIS. This finding

indicated a need to further explore the reasons why teachers who were more experienced had fewer positive perceptions of SWPBIS.

Future research is clearly warranted to examine the longitudinal impact of a complete continuum of supports that are implemented with fidelity on improving the outcomes for children and youth. Specifically, additional replications with Tier 2 and 3 supports, within a continuum of SWPBIS, are critical to demonstrate the value of linking social and emotional supports to universal supports. For example, the impact of Tier 2 and 3 supports in students at risk, and especially for those with emotional behavior disabilities, remains a critical target for future research.

Future research should also examine elementary, middle, and high school principals', teachers', and staff's perceptions on the long-term sustainability of SWPBIS program by taking a multi-level approach where insights on the fidelity of implementation from all the three parties are simultaneously examined. Future research could also longitudinally examine the process of SWPBIS implementation to understand the activities and factors that promote or impede the long-term sustainability of SWPBIS program. Furthermore, in-depth research using methodologically robust mixed-methods designs is also required to understand how schools overcome failures or barriers to implement the SWPBIS program on a long-term basis.

Implementation with fidelity requires preservice educator preparation programs to prepare teachers, administrators, and related personnel to work in teams and use data to guide decision making. Future research can identify and match evidence-based practices to meet student needs and continually evaluate implementation fidelity (Lewis & Thomas, 2014). Educators in the profession, school districts, regional educational

cooperatives, and state departments of education in partnership with universities could provide continued in-service SWPBIS professional development opportunities.

As such, teacher training might be an important variable to consider for the sustained implementation of SWPBIS. Although the research is clear that these components of staff training are important, the specific activities involved in each of the components, and how they affect sustainability, have yet to be defined. With an improved understanding of sustainability, schools can be better informed on how to increase the sustained use of effective practices resulting in improved outcomes for students who are at an increased risk for poor academic and social outcomes, such as those students identified with Emotional Behavior Disorders.

Study Implications

To the best of the researcher's knowledge, this is the first study that has utilized Vroom's (1964) Expectancy Theory of Motivation to understand the processes surrounding how teachers' perceptions influenced their decisions to effectively implement the SWPBIS with fidelity. Gaining a clearer understanding of what teachers perceived as motivational may be essential for implementing SWPBIS with fidelity. The current study provides valuable insights to policy development and program implementation with regard to SWPBIS implementation (Kelley & Finnigan, 2003; Kelley, Heneman, & Milanowski, 2002; Kuranchie-Mensah & Amponash-Tawiah, 2016; Rice, Malen, Jackson, & Hoyer, 2015). When teachers invest more effort and time in implementing SWPBIS, clarity, fairness, and value could lead to improvement in student-level outcomes. An implication is that experienced teachers and those who are not a part of the SWPBIS team have limited confidence on the effectiveness of SWPBIS, which

suggested that teachers do not see tangible outcomes in the form of incentives, rewards, and consistency in the application of SWPBIS policies.

Another implication of Vroom's (1978) theory of motivation, with respect to teachers' SWPBIS perceptions and buy-in, was that teachers in the current study, especially experienced teachers and those who were not part of the SWPBIS team, had limited confidence in how effective SWPBIS was in reducing ISS and OSS suspensions among the student population. Student behavior and discipline did not decline with the exception of those students in M. N. Middle School who experienced fewer ISS and OSS discipline problems than those in C. M. Middle School. Overall, most of the teachers in the focus group did not believe that participation in the SWPBIS discipline aided in students behaving better. Therefore, those teachers had more ISS and OSS suspension problems in their school, causing them not to implement SWPBIS with fidelity and resulting in a lack of buy-in. Other study implications were teachers' lack of motivation to implement the program with fidelity and students' lack of motivation to improve their behavior in lieu of rewards and incentives that were not distributed with equity and fidelity.

Furthermore, SWPBIS is a generic framework which needs to be customized to the issues and needs within the school and/or school district. The "one-type fits all approach" makes it harder for teachers to accept the SWPBIS program as they do not see it as useful for accommodating and/or providing solutions based on their challenges and needs within their school environment. Hence, resources that are customized to the teacher and student needs in a particular school and/or school district can improve the long-term effectiveness of SWPBIS system. The inconsistency in the incentives and reward policies within SWPBIS brings in the issue of fairness, where it is hard to

understand what type of activities and/or results will lead to which type and amount of incentives. This makes it harder for teachers to believe in the program, especially with other competing priorities of teaching, testing, and student achievement.

Another important motivational factor to consider here is the direct link between the work activities and accomplishment of professional goals. Teachers see a direct link between teaching, testing, student test scores, and their key evaluation, effectiveness scores, which is used for performance evaluation. However, they do not see a clear link between the benefits of implementing SWPBIS with fidelity and their performance goals. Teachers do not see that SWPBIS implementation with fidelity could eventually lead to improvement in student behavior and decrease in ISS and OSS disciplinary rates, which could directly influence student achievement and affect the teacher's performance evaluation. An important practical implication of this study is for the district-level administrators to implement a system in which teachers' accomplishments in implementing SWPBIS program with fidelity are recorded in the formative and summative evaluations. This would serve as an important motivational factor for the teachers to believe and buy-in to the SWPBIS program on a long-term basis.

In line with this reasoning, the resources and activities that are developed on SWPBIS framework should be tailored to help the teachers understand the link between ongoing training in the SWPBIS program and their professional development goals. This understanding can serve as an important motivational factor that may encourage teachers to believe in the SWPBIS program and implement it with fidelity. Furthermore, the quantitative and qualitative results from the current study indicated that there is lack of consistency in the rules and policies on the SWPBIS program. Teachers in this study found it difficult to understand which particular SWPBIS activities could lead to what

results. It is imperative that the district- and school-level administrators ensure that SWPBIS policies on definitions, implementation, and rewards are clearly and consistently applied within all schools. Development of a troubleshooting guidebook in which clear solutions in accordance with SWPBIS framework are provided to resolve an academic and/or behavioral issue can be an important resource for the teachers.

The mean composite scores of BED, BET, and OR were higher for teachers who had 1 to 5 years and 6 to 10 years teaching experience than those teachers who were more experienced. The qualitative findings also corroborated the quantitative finding, where teachers with 1 to 10 years' experience had a more positive outlook towards SWPBIS and its benefits. This finding indicated that the school district administrators could provide intensive resources and training on the SWPBIS program to novice and mid-career phase teachers. Intensive resources and training on the SWPBIS program might help to garner positive beliefs about the program in teachers who are new to the teaching profession so that the process of buy-in is created and reinforced from the time they join the school. A review of the results implied that schools with increased disruptive behaviors and suspensions may be particularly motivated to adopt a discipline program. The results of this study will be disseminated to teachers, principals, and district-level administrators through various means of communication, such as newsletters, word-of-mouth, board meetings, and teacher learning communities.

Conclusion

The results provided evidence to support the conclusion that individuals who participated as SWPBIS team members have fewer tendencies towards being SWPBIS team members who may be more knowledgeable, more experienced with the process, planning, and policymaking for SWPBIS than non-SWPBIS team members. As a result,

team members may have higher perceptions and higher BED than non-team members. One of the conclusions for such findings is that all teachers and staff members should be apprised of SWPBIS process, planning, and policymaking, rather than just making it possible for SWPBIS team members.

As a result, team members may have higher perceptions and higher BED, BET, and OR than non-team members. The results provided evidence to support the conclusion that individuals who participated as SWPBIS team members have more knowledge and more experience with planning and defining SWPBIS than non-SWPBIS team members. The *t*-test results for ISS and OSS provided evidence to support the conclusion that there are statistically significant differences in the ISS and OSS rates between the two middle schools for teachers who implemented SWPBIS with fidelity and had positive attitudes toward the program.

The success and continued funding of related research and evaluation efforts, with the federally funded technical assistance center, remains a critical step to meet the ongoing research and implementation needs of educators. The term Multi-Tier System of Supports is used to describe how schools go about providing supports for each child. These supports help each child to be successful and inform the processes and tools teachers, behavioral specialists, and other related service providers use to make decisions (Institute of Education Sciences, 2020). The newly reauthorized ESEA required states to address how they build, support, and measure outcomes of Multi-Tier System of Supports for academic and social behavior. Likewise, the current requirements of IDEA mandate that when students with disabilities are subjected to repeated exclusionary discipline practices, teachers can build in individual supports, and they are encouraged to build in comprehensive schoolwide supports (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). State

departments of education should organize the regulations, as well as the spirit and intent of the legislation, into policies that reflect current best practice and that are agreeable to revisions as research, evaluation, and demonstration efforts continue to identify effective systems of support for all students, especially students with Emotional Behavior Disorders.

REFERENCES

Adams, D. (2015). *Implementation of school-wide positive behavior supports in the neoliberal context in an urban elementary school* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY. https://surface.syr.edu/etd/300

Albrecht, S. F., Mathur, S. R., Jones, R. E., & Alazemi, S. (2015). A school-wide three-tiered program of social skills intervention: Results of a three-year cohort study. *Education and Treatment of Children*, *38*(4), 565-586.

Alter, C., & Vlasak, E. (2014). Back to school meets positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS). *Exceptional Parent*, *44*(5), 50-52.

Amegin, B. (2018). *Understanding teachers' perceptions of PBIS at a middle school site*. (Unpublished master's thesis). California State University, San Marcos, CA. http://dspace.calstate.edu/bitstream/handle/10211.3/205323/AmeginBreanna_Summer2018.pdf?sequence=1

American Psychological Association. (2016). Revision of ethical standard 3.04 of the "*Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct*" (2002, as amended 2010). *American Psychologist*, *71*, 900-920.

American Psychological Association. (2017). *Bylaws of the American Psychological Association*. Washington, DC: Author.

Amineh, R., & Davatgari, H. (2015). Review of constructivism and social constructivism. *Journal of Social Sciences, Literature and Languages*, *1*(1), 9-16.

Anderson, J., & Rainie, L. (2018). *Concerns about the future of people's well-being*. https://www.pewinternet.org/2018/04/17/concerns-about-the-future-of-peoples-well-being/

Anderson-Saunders, K. (2016). *Elementary school teachers' perceptions of positive behavioral interventions and supports implementation and effectiveness* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Walden University, Minneapolis, MN. https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3738&context=dissertations

Augustine, C. H., Engberg, J., Grim, G. E., Lee, E., Wang, L., Christianson, K., & Joseph, A. A. (2018). *Can restorative practices improve school climate and curb suspensions*? National Institute for Justice. RAND Corporation Santa Monica, CA. https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR2800/RR2840/RAND_RR2840.pdf

Baker, T. C., Wise, J., Kelley, G., & Skiba, R. J. (2016). Identifying barriers: Creating solutions to improve family engagement. *Social Community Journal*, *26*(2), 161-184. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1124003.pdf

Bal, A. (2011). *Culturally responsive school-wide positive behavioral interventions and supports framework*. Madison, WI: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

Bal, A. (2016). From intervention to innovation: A cultural-historical approach to the racialization of school discipline. *Interchange*, *47*, 409–427. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10780-016-9280-z

Bal, A. (2018). Culturally responsive positive behavioral interventions and supports: A process–oriented framework for systemic transformation. *Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies*, *40*(2), 1-31. https://doi.org/10.1080/10714413.2017.1417579

Bal, A., Betters-Bubon, J., & Fish, R. (2017). A multilevel analysis of statewide disproportionality in exclusionary discipline and the identification of emotional disturbance. *Education and Urban Society*, *51*(2), 247-268. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013124517716260

Bal, A., Kozleski, E. B., Schrader, E. M., Rodriguez, E. M., & Pelton, S. (2014). Systemic transformation from the ground–up. *Remedial and Special Education*, *35*, 327–339. https://doi.org/10.1177/0741932514536995

Bambara, L. M., Goh, A., Kern, L., & Caskie, G. (2012). Perceived barriers and enablers to implementing individualized positive behavior interventions and supports in school settings. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, *14*(4), 228–240. https://doi.org/10.1177/1098300712437219

Bambara, L. M., Nonnemacher, S., & Kern, L. (2009). Sustaining school-based individualized positive behavior support perceived barriers and enablers. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, *11*(3), 161–176. https://doi.org.10.1177/1098300708330878

Bartlett, II, J. E., Kotrlik, J. W., & Higgins, C. C. (2001). Organizational research: Determining appropriate sample size in survey research. *Information Technology Learning and Performance Journal*, *19*(1), 43-50.

Bathgate, M., Crowell, A., Schunn, C., Cannady, M., & Dorph, R. (2015). The learning benefits of being willing and able to engage in scientific argumentation. *International Journal of Science Education*, *37*(10), 1590-1612. https://doi.org/10.1080/09500693.2015.1045958

Belmont Report. (2014). Ethical principles and guidelines for the protection of human subjects of research. *Journal of the American College of Dentists*, *81*(3), 4-13.

Bennett, T. (2017). *Creating a culture: How school leaders can optimize behavior*. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/602487/Tom_Bennett_Independent_Review_of_Behavior_in_Schools.pdf

Benner, M., Brown, C., & Jeffrey, A. (2019). *Elevating student voice in education*. Center for American Progress. https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education-k-12/reports/2019/08/14/473197/elevating-student-voice-education/

Betz, J. (2010). *Motivating students to learn more: A case study in architectural education*. American Society for Engineering Education. file:///C:/Users/anglr/Downloads/motivating-students-to-learn-more-a-case-study-in-architectural-education.pdf

Birt, L., Scott, S., Cavers, D., Campbell, C., & Walter, F. (2016). Member checking: A tool to enhance trustworthiness or merely a nod to validation? *Sage Open, 26*(13), 1802-1811. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732316654870

Bolderston, A. (2012). Conducting a research interview. *Journal of Medical Imaging and Radiation Services, 43*(2012), 66-76. https://www.jmirs.org/article/S1939-8654(11)00132-9/pdf

Bowling, C. G. (2018). *Teachers and administrators' perceptions of PBIS as a school-wide discipline approach* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Appalachian State University, Boone, NC. https://libres.uncg.edu/ir/asu/f/Bowling_Cheryl_2018_Dissertation.pdf

Bradshaw, C. P. (2013). Preventing bullying through positive behavioral interventions and supports (SWPBIS): A multi-tiered approach to prevention and integration. *Theory into Practice, 52*(4), 288-295.

Bradshaw, C. P., Mitchell, M. M., & Leaf, P. J. (2010). Examining the effects of schoolwide positive behavioral interventions and supports on student outcomes: Results from a randomized controlled effectiveness trial in elementary schools. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 12*(3), 133-148. https://doi.org/1098300709334798v1

Bradshaw, C. P., Pas, E. T, Debnam, K. J, & Johnson, S. L. (2015). A focus on implementation of positive behavioral interventions and supports (SWPBIS) in high schools: Associations with bullying and other indicators of school disorder. *School Psychology Review*, *44*(4), 480–498. https://doi.org/10.17105/spr-15-0105.1

Bradshaw, C. P., Waasdorp, T. E., & Leaf, P. J. (2012). Effects of school-wide positive behavioral interventions and supports on child behavior problems. *Pediatrics, 130*(5), e1136-e1145. https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2012-0243

Brown, S. V. (2018). *School-wide positive behavioral interventions and supports: A case study analyzing principal leadership and discipline direction in one middle school* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA. https://scholarworks.gsu.edu/eps_diss/176

Bursztyn, L., & Jensen, R. (2016). Social image and economic behavior in the field: Identifying, understanding, and shaping social pressure. *Annual Review of Economics, 9*(2017), 1-32. http://home.uchicago.edu/~bursztyn/Bursztyn_Jensen_ARE_Social_Image_December2016.pdf

Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. (2019). *School-wide*. https://www.pbis.org/topics/school-wide

Chang, M.-L., & Engelhard, G., Jr. (2015). Examining the teachers' sense of Efficacy scale at the item level with Rasch measurement model. *Journal of Psychoeducational Assessment, 34*(2), 177-191. https://doi.org/10.1177/0734282915593835

Chatlani, S. (2017). *How administrators can get teacher buy-in on change initiatives*. https://www.educationdive.com/news/how-administrators-can-get-teacher-buy-in-on-change-initiatives/446550/

Childs, K. E., Kincaid, D., George, H. P., & Gage, N. A. (2015). The relationship between school-wide implementation of positive behavior intervention and supports and student discipline outcomes. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 18*(2), 89-99. https://doi.org/10.1177/1098300715590398

Clarke, A. (1999). Focus group interviews on health-care research. *Professional Nurse, 14*, 395–397.

Cook, C. R., Frye, M., Slemrod, T., Lyon, A. R., Renshaw, T. L., & Zhang, Y. (2015). An integrated approach to universal prevention: Independent and combined effects of SWPBIS and SEL on youths' mental health. *School Psychology Quarterly, 30*(2), 166-183. https://doi.org/10.1037/spq0000102

Cooper, R. N. (2013). *Response to Intervention (RtI): A mixed methods study evaluating the effects of behavior training software on behavior of in-school suspension students* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Northeastern University, Boston, MA. https://repository.library.northeastern.edu/files/neu:1136/fulltext.pdf

Council on School Health. (2013). Out-of-school suspension and expulsion. *Pediatrics, 112*(5), e1000-e1007. American Academy of Pediatrics. https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/pediatrics/early/2013/02/20/peds.2012-3932.full.pdf

Cressey, J., Whitcomb, S., Mcgilvray-Rivet, S., Morrison, R., & Shander-Reynolds, K. (2014). Handling SWPBIS with care: Scaling up to school-wide implementation. *Professional School Counseling*, *18*(1), 90-99.

Cuncic, A. (2019). Understanding internal and external validity: How these concepts are applied in research. https://www.verywellmind.com/internal-and-external-validity-4584479

Darling-Hammond, L., & Cook-Harvey, C. M. (2018). *Educating the whole child: Improving school climate to support student success*. Learning Policy Institute. https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Educating_Whole_Child_REPORT.pdf

Darling-Hammond, L., Flook, L., Cook-Harvey, C., Barron, B. & Osher, D. (2019). Implications for educational practice of the science of learning and development. *Applied Developmental Science*, *24*(2), 97-140. https://doi.org/10.1080/10888691.2018.1537791

Darling-Hammond, L., Hyler, M. E., & Gardner, M. (2017). *Effective teacher professional development*. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.

Dean, J. E. (2018). *A mixed-methods study of high school teachers' and administrators' perceptions of school-wide positive behavior interventions and supports* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Columbus State University, Columbus, GA.

de Boer, E., Janssen, F. J. J. M., & van Driel, J. H. (2016). Using an attribution support tool to enhance teacher efficacy of student scient teachers. *Journal of Science Teacher Education*, *27*(3), 303-324. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10972-016-9461-8

Denham, S. A. (2018). *Keeping SEL developmental: The importance of a developmental lens for fostering and assessing SEL competencies*. https://measuringsel.casel.org/frameworks/

Desautels, L. (2018). *Aiming for discipline instead of punishment*. https://www.edutopia.org/article/aiming-discipline-instead-punishment

DiCicco-Bloom, B., & Crabtree, B. F. (2006). The qualitative research interviews. *Medical Education*, *40*, 314–321.

Dimmitt, C., Carey, J., McGannon, W., & Henningson, I. (2005). Identifying a school counseling research agenda: A Delphi study. *Counselor Education & Supervision*, *44*, 214-228. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.l556-6978.2005.tb01748.x

Discipline Foundation Policy. (2017). *School-wide positive behavior interventions and support*s. Los Angeles Unified School District. https://achieve.lausd.net/cms/lib/CA01000043/Centricity/domain/651/pdfs/swpbis%20resources/SWSPBIS_Handbook_March_2017.pdf

Dittrich, T. (2019). *A mixed methods investigation of positive behavior interventions and supports in a Midwest middle school* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). California State University, San Marcos, CA.

Donohue, M. D. (2014). *Implementation of school-wide positive behavior interventions and supports (SWPBIS): School counselors' perceptions of student outcomes, school climate, and professional effectiveness* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Connecticut, Mansfield, CT.

Dowling, N. (2018). High school teachers' perceptions of cyberbullying prevention and intervention strategies. *ETD Collection for Tennessee State University* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Tennessee State University, Nashville, TN. https://digitalscholarship.tnstate.edu/dissertations/AAI10751456

Dutton, T. A., Varjas, K., Meyers, J., & Smith-Collins, A. S. (2010). General education teachers' perceptions of behavior management and intervention strategies. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, *12*(2), 86–102. https://doi.org/10.1177/1098300708330879

Edwards, T. A. (2016). *Sustained implementation of school-wide positive behavior interventions and supports through continuous regeneration* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Washington, Tacoma, WA. https://digitalcommons.tacoma.uw.edu/edd_capstones/8

Einat T., & Einat A. (2015). To learn or not to learn—this is the question: Learning-disabled inmates' attitudes toward school, scholastic experiences, and the onset of criminal behavior. *Prison Journal*, *95*, 423–448. https://doi.org/10.1177/0032885515596509

Elfner-Child, K., Kincaid, D., & Peshak, G. H. (2009). A model for statewide evaluation of a universal positive behavior support initiative. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, *12*(4), 198–210. https://doi.org/10.1177/1098300709340699

Elmer, T., Rabenschlag, F., Schori, D., Zuaboni, G., Kozel, B., Jaeger, S., Mahlke, C., Heumann, K., Theodoridou, A., & Jaeger, M. (2018). *Psychiatry Research*, *262*, 400-406. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2017.09.014

Fallon, L. M., Sanetti, L., & McCarthy, S. R. (2014). School-wide positive behavior support in the classroom: Assessing perceived challenges to consistent implementation in Connecticut schools. *Education and Treatment of Children*, *37*(1), 1024-1045. https://doi.org/10.1353/etc.2014.0001

Farlex, Inc. (2018). *In the free dictionary*. http://www.thefreedictionary.com

Farrington, C. A. (2019). *Noncognitive outcomes of liberal arts education*. The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. https://mellon.org/media/filer_public/fb/38/fb38e766-2b78-4ee6-b869-2b3ee91f3b81/camille_farrington_on_noncognitive_outcomes.pdf

Farrington, C. A., Porter, S., & Klugman, J. (2019). *Do classroom environments matter for noncognitive aspects of student performance and students' course grades*? Working Paper. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Consortium on School Research.

Faul, F., Erdfelder, E., Buchner, A., & Lang, A.-G. (2016). Statistical power analyses using G*Power 3.1.9.2: Tests for correlation and regression analyses. *Behavior Research Methods*, *41*, 1149-1160.

Faul, F., Erdfelder, E., Lang, A.-G., & Buchner, A. (2016). G*Power 3.1.9.2: A flexible statistical power analysis program for the social, behavioral, and biomedical sciences. *Behavior Research Methods*, *39*, 175-191.

Fenning, P. A., Pulaski, S., Gomez, M., Morello, M., Maciel, L., Maroney, E., & Maltese, R. (2011). Call to action: A critical need for designing alternatives to suspension and expulsion. *Journal of School Violence*, *11*(2), 105-117. https://doi.org/10.1080/15388220.2011.646643

Fernandez-Suarez, A., Herrero, J., Perez, B., Juarros-Basterretxea, J., & Rodriguez-Dias, F. J. (2016). Risk factors for school dropout in a sample of juvenile offenders. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *7*, 1-7. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2016.01993

Fetters, M. D., Curry, L. A., & Creswell, J. W. (2013). Achieving integration in mixed methods designs—principles and practices. *Health Research and Educational Trust*, *48*(6), 2134-2156. https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6773.12117

Feuerborn, L., & Chinn, D. (2012). Teacher perceptions of student needs and implications for positive behavior supports. *Behavior Disorders*, *37*(4), 219-231.

Finfgeld-Connett, D. (2010). Generalizability and transferability of meta-synthesis research findings. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, *66*, 246–254.

Fisher, F., Lange, K., Klose, K., Greiner, W., & Kraemer, A. (2016). Barriers and strategies in guideline implementation: A scoping review. *Healthcare*, *4*(3), 36-48. https://doi.org/10.3390/healthcare4030036

Flannery, K. B., Fenning, P., Kato, M. M., & McIntosh, K. (2014). Effects of school-wide positive behavioral interventions and supports and fidelity of implementation on problem behavior in high schools. *School Psychology Quarterly*, *29*(2), 111-124. https://doi.org/10.1037/spq0000039

Flannery, K. B., Hershfeldt, P., & Freeman J. (2018). *Lessons learned on implementation of PBIS in high schools: Current trends and future directions*. Center for Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (funded by the Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education). Eugene, OR: University of Oregon Press. https://pbismissouri.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Monograph-PBIS-in-High-Schools.pdf

Frey, A. J., Park, K. L., Browne-Ferrigno, T., & Korfhage, T. L. (2010). The social validity of program-wide positive behavior support. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 12*(4), 222–235. https://doi.org/10.1177/1098300709343723

Freedberg, L. (2019). *California to extend ban on pushing students out of school for disruptive behavior*. EdSource. https://edsource.org/2019/california-to-ban-pushing-students-out-of-school-for-disruptive-behavior/617326

Funches, T. S. (2017). *Elementary teachers' perceptions on how positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) relate to academic achievement* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation), Concordia University, Portland, OR. https://commons.cu-portland.edu/edudissertations/91

Gage, N. A., & MacSuga-Gage, A. S. (2017). Salient classroom management skills: Finding the most effective skills to increase student engagement and decrease disruptions. *Report on Emotional and Behavioral Disorders in Youth*, *17*(1), 13-18.

Gay, R. L. (2016). *Exploring barriers to implementing a school-wide positive behavioral intervention and support program* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Walden University, Minneapolis, MN. https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=3172&context=dissertations

Geltner, J. A. (2007). *Curriculum components of classroom management training for school counselors: A Delphi study* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Florida, Gainesville, FL.

Georgia Department of Education. (2014). Positive behavioral interventions and supports of Georgia. *Strategic Plan, 2014-2020*, 1-30.

Gernandez-Suarez, A., Herrero, J., Juarros-Basterretxea, J., & Rodriguez-Diaz, F. J. (2016). Risk risks for school dropout in a sample of juvenile offenders. *Frontiers in Psychology, 7*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsy.g.2016.01993

Gershoff, E. T., & Font, S. A. (2016). Corporal punishment in UNITED STATES public schools: Prevalence, disparities in use, and status in state and federal policy. *Social Policy Report, 30*(1). https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5766273/

Goodman-Scott, E., Betters-Bubon, J., & Donohue, P. (2015). Aligning comprehensive school counseling programs and positive behavioral interventions and supports to maximize school counselors' efforts. *Professional School Counseling*, *19*(1), 57-67.

Graham, L. L. (1980). *Expectancy theory as a predictor of college student grand point average, satisfaction, and participation* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS.

Gray, A. M., Sirinides, P. M., Fink, R., Flack, A., DuBois, T., Morrison, K., & Hill, K. (2017). *Discipline in context: Suspension, climate, and PBIS in the school district of Philadelphia*. Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE) Research Reports. http://repository.upenn.edu/cpre_researchreports/106

Greene, P. (2019). *Report on teacher attitudes about discipline reform: It's complicated.* https://www.forbes.com/sites/petergreene/2019/08/01/report-on-teacher-attitudes-about-discipline-reform-its-complicated/#715998318719

Grimes, D. (2018). Strong social-emotional skills=student success. *Principal*, 97(3), 18-21.

Gross-Portney, L., & Watkins, M. P. (2000). *Foundations of clinical research: Applications to practice* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall Health.

Hall, E., Chai, W., & Albrecht, J. (2016). A qualitative phenomenological exploration of teachers' experience with nutrition education. *American Journal of Health Education*, *47*(3), 136-148.

Han, J., & Yin, H. (2016). Teacher motivation: Definition, research development and implications for teachers. *Journal of Cogent Education*, *3*(1), 1-18. https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2016.1217819

Han, S. S., & Weiss, B. (2005). Sustainability of teacher implementation of school-based mental health programs. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, *33*, 665-679.

Hansen, J. M., Labat, M. B., & Labat, C. A. (2014). The relationship between teacher perceptions of positive behavior intervention support and the implementation process. *Delta Journal of Education*, *4*(2), 61-79. http://www.deltastate.edu/PDFFiles/DJE/fall2014/ms4f2014-hansen-labat-final1302015.pdf

Hannigan, J., & Hannigan, J. (2016). *It's not PBIS that's not working*. Corwin Connect. https://corwin-connect.com/2016/06/not-pbis-thats-not-working/

Harper, A. (2018). *Proactive discipline can lower likelihood of problematic classroom behavior*. https://www.educationdive.com/news/proactive-discipline-can-lower-likelihood-of-problematic-classroom-behavior/540963/

Harrison, H., Birks, M., Franklin, R., & Mills, J. (2017). Case study research: Foundations and methodological orientations. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research, 18*(1), Article 19, 1-25. https://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/2655/4079

Hartley, J. D. (2013). B. F. Skinner: A pioneer of research and instructional technology. In Hefling, K., & Yost, P. (2014, January 8). *Obama administration recommends ending zero tolerance policies in schools*. The Rundown. PBS News Hour.

Hem, M. H., Molewijk, B., Gjerberg, E., Lillemoen, L., & Pedersen, R. (2018). The significance of ethics reflection groups in mental health care: A focus group study among health care professionals. *British MedCentral Medical Ethics*, *19*(54), 1-7. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12910-018-0297-y

Heng, S. (2019). *A qualitative study on the intermediate teacher's perception of the implementation of the PBIS plan at an urban school in central California* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Northcentral University, San Diego, CA. https://search.proquest.com/openview/7068d6a1faa083532974cb3d2d9b08d0/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750&diss=y

Horga, G., Kaur, T., & Peterson, B. S. (2014). Annual research review: Current limitations and future directions in MRI studies of child- and adult-onset developmental psychopathologies. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, *55*(6), 659-680. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcpp.12185

Horner, R. H. (2015). *Linking academic and behavior supports through PBIS*. Paper presented at Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports: OSEP Technical Assistance Center. http://www.pbis.org/presentations

Horner, R. H., Sugai, G. M., & Anderson, C. M. (2010). Examining the evidence base for school-wide positive behavior support. *Focus on Exceptional Children*, *42*(8), 1-14. https://doi.org/10.17161/fec.v42i8.6906

Horner, R. H., Sugai, G. M., Smolkowski, K., Eber, L., Nakasato, J., Todd, A., & Esperanza, J. (2009). A randomized, wait-list controlled effectiveness trial assessing school-wide positive behavior support in elementary schools. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, *11*, 133-145.

Horner, R. H., Todd, A. W., Lewis-Palmer, T., Irvin, L. K., Sugai, G., & Boland, J. B. (2004). The school-wide evaluation tool (SET): A research instrument for assessing school-wide positive behavior support. *Journal of Positive Behavioral Interventions, 6*(1), 3-12. https://doi.org/10.1177/10983007040060010201

Hunsaker, M. R. (2019). *The problems with the manage-and-discipline approach to PBIS*. https://whyhaventtheydonethatyet.wordpress.com/2019/07/02/the-problems-with-the-manage-and-discipline-approach-to-pbis/

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, 20 USC. § 1400 et seq.2004, Reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990.

Institute of Education Sciences. (2020). *Appendixes: What tools have states developed or adapted to assess schools' implementation of a multi-tiered system of supports/responses to intervention framework*? Regional Educational Laboratory Appalachian (pp. 1-64). https://go.usa.gov/xdHvJ

Jaggers, J. W., Robison, S. B., Rhodes, J. L. F., Guan, X., & Church, W. T. (2016). Predicting adult criminality among Louisiana's urban youth: Poverty, academic risk, and delinquency. *Journal of the Society for Social Work and Research, 7*, 2334–2315. https://doi.org/10.1086/685089

James, A. (2017). *Planning and conducting interviews and focus groups*. https://www.srhe.ac.uk/downloads/events/330__alanajames.pdf

Jamshed, S. (2014). Qualitative research method-interviewing and observation. *Journal of Basic and Clinical Pharmacy*, *5*(4), 87-88. https://doi.org/10.4103/0976-0105.141942

Johnson, L. E., Wang, E. W., Gilinsky, N., He, Z., Carpenter, C., Nelson, et al. (2013). Youth outcomes following implementation of universal SWPBIS strategies in a Texas secure juvenile facility. *Education and Treatment of Children*, *36*(3), 135-145.

Jolivette, K., McDaniel, S. C., Sprague, J., Swain-Bradway, J., & Ennis, R. P. (2012). Embedding the positive behavioral interventions and supports framework into the complex array of practices within alternative education settings: A decision making process. *Assessment for Effective Intervention*, *38*(1), 15-29. https://doi.org/10.1177/1534508412454450

Jones, E. P. (2018). *The link between suspensions, expulsions, and dropout rates*. https://www.americaspromise.org/opinion/link-between-suspensions-expulsions-and-dropout-rates

Kelley, C. J., Heneman, III, Herbert, & Milanowski, A. (2002). Teacher motivation and school-based performance awards. *Education Administration Quarterly*, *38*, 372-401. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161x02383004

Kelley, C. J., & Finnigan, K. (2003). The effects of organizational context on teacher expectancy. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *39*, 603-634. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013151X03257299

Kim, C. (2019). *Factors sustaining effect and implementation of school-wide positive interventions and supports*. Culminating Projects in Special Education. 69. https://repository.stcloudstate.edu/sped_etds/69

King, M. F., & Bruner, G. C. (2000). Social desirability bias: A neglected aspect of validity testing. *Psychology and Marketing*, *17*(2), 79-103.

Kincaid, D., Childs, K., Blase, K. A., & Wallace, F. (2007). Identifying barriers and facilitators in implementing schoolwide positive behavior support. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, *9*, 174-184. https://doi.org/10.1177/10983007070090030501

Kincaid, D., Childs, K., & George, H. (2010). *School-wide benchmarks of quality* (Revised). (Unpublished research instrument), University of South Florida, Tampa, FL.

Kitishat, A., & Al-Friehat, H. (2013). Undesirable behavior in class: Reasons and solutions. *Research Journal of Science & IT Management*, *2*(5), 37-42.

Korstjens, I., & Moser, A. (2018). Series: Practical guidance to qualitative research. Part 4: Trustworthiness and publishing. *European Journal of General Practice*, *24*(1), 120-124. https://doi.org/10.1080/13814788.2017.1375092

Kostyo, S., Cardichon, J., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2018). *Making ESSA's equity promise real: State strategies to close the opportunity gap*. Learning Policy Institute. https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/essa-equity-promise-suspension-brief

Kottkamp, R. B., & Mulhern, J. A. (1987). Teacher expectance motivation, open to closed climate and pupil control ideology in high schools. *Journal of Research and Development in Education*, *20*, 9-18.

Kremer, K. P., Flower, A., Huang, J., & Vaughn, M. G. (2016). Behavior problems and children's academic achievement: A test of growth-curve models with gender and racial differences. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *67*, 95-104. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2016.06.003

Kuhn, M. E. (2014). *A mixed methods approach to examining the getting ready intervention for supporting young children with challenging behaviors* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lincoln, NE.

Kuranchie-Mensah, E. B., & Amponash-Tawiah, K. (2016). Employee motivation and work performance: A comparative study of mining companies in Ghana. *Journal of Industrial Engineering and Management*, *9*(2), 255-309. http://dx.doi.org/10.3926/jiem.1530

Landay, F. J., & Becker, W. S. (1987). Motivation theory reconsidered. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, *9*, 1-38.

Lane, K. L., Kalberg, J. R., Bruhn, A. L., Driscoll, S. A., Wehby, J. H., & Elliott, S. (2009). Assessing social validity of school-wide positive behavior support plans: Evidence for the reliability and structure of the primary intervention rating scale. *School Psychology Review*, *38*, 135-144.

Ledox, S. F. (2012). Behaviorism at 100. *American Scientist*, *100*, 60-65.

Lee, A. M. I. (2019). *PBIS: What you need to know*. https://www.understood.org/en/learning-attention-issues/treatments-approaches/educational-strategies/pbis-how-schools-support-positive-behavior

Lee, K., Mustaffa, M., & Tan, S. (2017). Visual arts in counseling adults with depressive disorders. *British Journal of Guidance and Counseling*, *45*(1), 56-76.

Leung, L. (2015). Validity, reliability, and generalizability in qualitative research. *Journal of Family Medicine and Primary Care*, *4*(3), 324-327. https://doi.org/10.4103/2249-4863.161306

Lewis, T. J., McIntosh, K., Simonsen, B., Mitchell, B. S., & Hatton, H. L. (2017). School-wide systems of positive behavior support: Implications for students at risk and with emotional/behavioral disorders. *American Educational Research Association Open*, *3*(2). https://doi.org/10.1177/2332858417711428

Lewis, T. J., & Thomas, C. N. (2014). *Educator preparation within the context of schoolwide positive behavior and academic supports*. Handbook of Research on Special Education Teacher Preparation. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203817032

Locke, E. A., & Latham, G. P. (2002). Building a practically useful theory of goal setting and task motivation: A 35-year odyssey. *The American Psychologist*, *57*(9), 705-717.

Losen, D. J., Hodson, C., Keith, M. S., Morrison, K., & Belway, S. (2015). *Are we closing the school discipline gap*? The Center for Civil Rights Remedies. https://www.civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/resources/projects/center-for-civil-rights-remedies/school-to-prison-folder/federal-reports/are-we-closing-the-school-discipline-gap/AreWeClosingTheSchoolDisciplineGap_FINAL221.pdf

Losen, D. J., & Martin, K. (2018). *The unequal impact of suspension on the opportunity to learn in California: What the 2016-17 rates tells us about progress*. The Center for Civil Rights Remedies. https://www.civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/research/k-12-education/school-discipline/the-unequal-impact-of-suspension-on-the-opportunity-to-learn-in-ca/Suspension_Impact_California_2018_R6.pdf

Luiselli, J. K., Putman, R. F., & Suderland, M. (2002). Longitudinal evaluation of behavior support intervention in a public middle school. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, *4*(3), 182-188.

Lynass, L., Tsai, S., Richman, T. D., & Cheney, D. (2011). Social expectations and behavior indicators in school-wide positive behavior supports: A national study of behavior matrices. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 14*(3), 153-161. https://doi.org/10.1177/1098300711412076

Malafronte, K. (2019). These California teachers say the PBIS discipline model is broken. *USA Today* (March 15, 2019). https://www.campussafetymagazine.com/safety/teachers-pbis-discipline/

Marchant, M., Heath, M. A., & Miramontes, N. Y. (2012). Merging empiricism and humanism: Role of social validity in the school-wide positive behavior support model. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, *15*(4), 221-230. https://doi.org/10.1177/1098300712459356

Marchbanks, M. P., III, Blake, J. J., Booth, E. A., Carmichael, D., Siebert, A. L., & Fabelo, T. (2013). *The economic effects of exclusionary discipline on grade retention and high school dropout*. Civil Rights Remedies and the Research-to-Practice Collaborative, National Conference on Race and Gender Disparities in Discipline. https://civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/resources/projects/center-for-civil-rights-remedies/school-to-prison-folder/state-reports/the-economic-effects-of-exclusionary-discipline-on-grade-retention-and-high-school-dropout

Marin, A. M., & Filce, H. G. (2013). The relationship between implementation of school-wide positive behavior intervention and supports and performance on state accountability measures. *Sage Open*, *3*(4), 1-10. https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244013503831

Martin, D. C. (2013). *Teachers' perceptions and satisfaction with PBIS in a Southeast Georgia school district* (Unpublished master's thesis). Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, GA. https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/etd/874

Mathur, S. R., & Nelson, C. M. (2013). SWPBIS as prevention for high-risk youth in restrictive settings: Where do we go from here? *Education and Treatment of Children*, *36*(3), 175-181.

McDaniel, S. C., Kim, S., & Guyotte, K. W. (2017). *Perceptions of implementing positive Behavior interventions and supports in high-need school contexts through the voice of local stakeholders*. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1175692.pdf

McHugh, R. M., Horner, C. G., Colditz, J. B., & Wallace, T. L. (2013). Bridges and barriers adolescent perceptions of student–teacher relationships. *Urban Education*, *48*(1), 9-43. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085912451585

McIntosh, K., Gion, C., & Bastable, E. (2018). *Do schools implementing SWPBIS have decreased racial and ethnic disproportionality in school discipline*? https://www.the74million.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Do-Schools-Implementing-SWPBIS-Have-Decreased-Racial-and-Ethnic-Disproportionality-in-School-Discipline.pdf

McIntosh, K., Kelm, J. L., & Canizal Delabra, A. (2016). In search of how principals change: A qualitative study of events that help and hinder administrator support for schoolwide PBIS. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 18*, 100-110. https://doi.org/10.1177/1098300715599960

McIntosh, K., Mercer, S. H., Nese, R. N. T., Strickland-Cohen, M. K., & Hoselton, R. (2016). Predictors of sustained implementation of school-wide positive behavioral interventions and supports. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 18*(4), 209–218. https://doi.org/10.1177/1098300715599737

McIntosh, K., Predy, L. K., Upreti, G., Hume, A. E., Turri, M. G., & Mathews, S. (2014). Perceptions of contextual features related to implementation and sustainability of school-wide positive behavior support. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, *16*(1), 31-43. https://doi.org/10.1177/1098300712470723

McLeod, S. A. (2019). *Qualitative vs. quantitative research*. Simply Psychology. https://www.simplypsychology.org/qualitative-quantitative.html

Medina, L. G. (2017). *The effects classroom experiences and student conduct have on a teacher's self-efficacy in schools with positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS)* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Brandman University, Irvine, CA. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED576541

Mental Health America. (2019). *Position statement 45: Discipline and positive behavior support in schools*. https://www.mhanational.org/issues/position-statement-45-discipline-and-positive-behavior-support-schools

Michail, S. (2011, July). Understanding school responses to students' challenging behavior: A review of literature. *Improving Schools*, *14*(2), 156-171. https://doi.org/10.1177/1365480211407764

Milsom, A., & Dietz, L. (2009). Defining college readiness for students with learning disabilities: A Delphi study. *Professional School Counseling*, *12*(4), 315-323. https://doi.org/10.5330/PSC.n.2010-12.315

Miramontes, N. Y., Marchant, M., Heath, M. A., & Fischer, L. (2011). Social validity of a positive behavior interventions and support Model. *Education and Treatment of Children*, *34*(4), 445-468.

Miskel, C., McDonald, D., & Bloom, S. (1983). Structural and expectancy linkages within schools and organizational effectiveness. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *19*(1), 49-82. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161x83019001004

Molewijk, B., Hem, M. H., & Pederson, R. (2015). Dealing with ethical challenges: A focus group study with professionals in mental health care. *British MedCentral Medical Ethics*, *16*(4), 1-12. http://www.biomedcentral.com/1472-6939/16/4

Molloy, L. E, Moore, J. E., Trail, J., Epps, J. J. V., & Hopfer, S. (2013). Understanding real-world implementation quality and "active ingredients" of SWPBIS. *Society for Prevention Research, 14*, 593–605.

Morgan, D. L. (2009). *Focus groups as qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Morin, A. (2019). *Why kids get bored at school and how to help*. https://www.verywellfamily.com/reasons-kids-are-bored-at-school-620804

Morrissey, K. L., Bohanon, H., & Fenning, P. (2010). Positive behavior support. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, *42*(5), 26-35. https://doi.org/10.1177/004005991004200503

Mowday, R. T. (1978). The exercise of upward influence in organizations. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *23*, 137-156.

National Academy of Sciences, National Academy of Engineering, and Institute of Medicine of the National Academies. (2009). *On being a scientist: A guide to responsible conduct in research* (3rd ed.). Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. https://doi.org/10.17226/12192

National Center on Response to Intervention. (2010). *What is response to intervention or RtI*? https://www.parentcenterhub.org/rti/

National Education Association. (2018). *Discipline: Order in the classroom*! http://www.nea.org/tools/31410.htm

Nelen, M. J. M., Willemse, T. M., & van Oudheusden, M. A. (2019). Cultural challenges in adapting SWPBIS to a Dutch context. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*. https://doi.org/10.1177/1098300719876096

Nocera, E. J., Whitbread, K. M., & Nocera, G. P. (2014). Impact of school-wide positive behavior supports on student behavior in the middle grades. *Research in Middle Level Education, 37*(8), 1-14. https://doi.org/10.1080/19404476.2014.11462111

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, Pub. L. No. 107-110, 115, Stat. 1425(2002).

Noltemeyer, A. L., Ward, R. M., & Mcloughlin, C. (2015). Relationship between school suspension and student outcomes: A meta-analysis. *School Psychology Review*, *44*(2), 224-240. https://edsource.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Noltemeyer_Ward_2015_Meta-Analysis.pdf

Nunnally, E. (2020). *The implementation of organizational systems to reduce novice teacher attrition: A case study of one high-needs school* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA. https://scholarworks.gsu.edu/eps_diss/219

Nworie, J. (2011). Using the Delphi Technique in educational technology research. *Tech Trends*, *55*(5), 24-30. https://doi.org/10.1007/sl1528-011-0524-6

O'Donnell, C. L. (2008). Defining, conceptualizing, and measuring fidelity of implementation and its relationship to outcomes in K-12 curriculum intervention research. *Review of Research in Education*, *78*(1), 33-84. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654307313793

Oostdam, R. J., Koerhuis, M. J. C., & Fukkink, R. G. (2019). Maladaptive behavior in relation to the basic psychological needs of students in secondary education. *European Journal of Psychology of Education*, *34*(3), 601-619.

Opsal, A., Kristensen, Q., Verderhus, J. K., & Clausen, T. (2016). Perceived coercion to enter treatment among involuntarily and voluntarily admitted patients with substance use disorders. *British MedCentral Health Services Research*, *16*(656), 1-10. https://doi.org/10.1186/s129130016-1906-4

Orozco, A. (2018). *School staff perceptions on the implementation of positive behavior intervention and supports (PBIS) at the middle school level*. (Unpublished Master's Thesis), Lidenwood University, Saint Charles, MO.

Osher, D., Cantor, P., Berg, J., Steyer, L., & Rose, T. (2018). Drivers of human development: How relationships and context shape learning and development. *Applied Developmental Science*, *24*(1), 6-36. https://doi.org/10.1080/10888691.2017.1398650

Owen, J., Wettach, J., & Hoffman, K. C. (2015). *Instead of suspension: Alternative strategies for effective school discipline*. Duke Center for Child and Family Policy and Duke Law School. https://law.duke.edu/childedlaw/schooldiscipline/downloads/instead_of_suspension.pdf

Pas, E. T., Bradshaw, C. P., Hershfeldt, P. A., & Leaf, P. (2010). A multilevel exploration of the influence of teacher efficacy and burnout on response to student problem behavior and school-based service use. *School Psychology Quarterly*, *25*(1), 13-17. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0018576

Pavlovich, D. Y. (2008). *The effects of positive behavior intervention support on office discipline referrals, third and fourth grade reading and math scores, and perceptions of teachers regarding discipline and safety in Alabama elementary schools* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS.

Penk, C., & Schipolowski, S. (2015). Is it all about value? Bringing back the expectancy component to the assessment of test-taking motivation. *Learning and Individual Differences*, *42*, 27-35. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lindif.2015.08.002

Pinkelman, S., McIntosh, K., Rasplica, C., Berg, T., & Strickland-Cohen, M. K. (2015). Perceived enablers and barriers related to sustainability of schoolwide positive behavioral interventions and supports. *Behavioral Disorders*, *40*, 171-183.

Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., & Lee, J.-Y. (2003). Common method biases in behavioral research: A critical review of the literature and recommended remedies. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *88*(5), 879-903.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. (2018). *Positive behavioral interventions and supports*. https://www.pbis.org/resource/222/school-wide-evaluation-tool-set-v-2-1

Qahtani, N. S. S. A. (2016). The undesirable behaviors of students in academic classrooms, and the discipline strategies used by faculty members to control such behaviors from the perspective of the college of education students in King Saud University. *International Education Studies*, *9*(3), 197-211. https://doi.org/10.5539/ies.v9n3p197

Quad, A. (2016). *Research tools: Interviews and questionnaires*. Research Methodology in Education. https://lled500.trubox.ca/2016/225

Rafa, A. (2018). *Suspensions and expulsions: What is the issue and why does it matter*? https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED581500

Reinke, W. M., Herman, K. C., &, Stormont, M. (2013). Classroom-level positive behavior supports in schools implementing SWPBIS: Identifying areas for enhancement. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, *15*(1), 39-50. https://doi.org/10.1177/1098300712459079

Response to Intervention Action Network. (2019). *What is RTI*? National Center for Learning Disabilities. http://www.rtinetwork.org/learn/what/whatisrti

Roberts-Clawson, M. (2017). *Teacher perceptions of using positive behavior interventions and supports as behavioral interventions in a pre-K-5 elementary school: A phenomenological study* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, TN.

Rodriguez, V. (2018). *Positive behavior intervention and support*. https://www.sanjacinto.k12.ca.us/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=330910&type=d&pREC_ID=1379288

Rogers, R. (2018). Coding and writing analytic memos on qualitative data: A review of Johnny Saldaña's the coding manual for qualitative researchers. *The Qualitative Report*, *23*(4), 889-892. https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol23/iss4/12

Rubie-Davis, C., Flint, A., & McDonald, L. G. (2012). Teacher beliefs, teacher characteristics, and school contextual factors: What are the relationships? *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, *82*, 270-288.

Rumberger, R. W., & Losen, D. J. (2016). *The high cost of harsh discipline and its disparate impact*. The Civil Rights Project, Los Angeles, CA. https://www.civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/resources/projects/center-for-civil-rights-remedies/school-to-prison-folder/federal-reports/the-high-cost-of-harsh-discipline-and-its-disparate-impact

Runyan, H. I. (2012). *Classroom management competencies for school counselors: A Delphi study* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA.

Saldaña, J. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (3rd ed.). London, UK: Sage.

Salehi, H., Taghavi, E., & Yunus, M. M. (2015). Relationship between teachers' job satisfaction and their attitudes towards students' beliefs and motivation. *English Language Teaching*, *8*(7), 46-81. https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v8n7p46

Salters-Pedneault, K. (2019). *The use of self-report data in psychology*. https://www.verywellmind.com/definition-of-self-report-425267

Schaper, A., McIntosh, K., & Hoselton, R. (2016). Within-year fidelity growth of SWPBIS during installation and initial implementation. *School Psychology Quarterly*, *31*(3), 358-368. https://doi.org/10.1037/spq0000125

Schoonenbooom, J., & Johnson, R. B. (2017). How to construct a mixed methods research design. *Kolner Zeitschrift Fur Soziologie Und Sozialpsychologie*, *69*(Suppl 2), 107-131. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11577-017-0454-1

Scott, L. M. (2018). *Classroom teachers' perceptions of the PBIS program in an inner-city school* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Hampton University, Hampton, VA.

Self, J., & Dulaney, C. (2018). *S. C. teachers face threats and physical harm in the classroom: May end up quitting*. https://www.thestate.com/news/local/education/article205561524.html

Shamnadh, M., & Anzari, A. (2019). Misbehavior of school students in classrooms: Main causes and effective strategies to manage it. *International Journal of Science & Engineering Development Research*, *4*(3), 318-321. http://www.ijsdr.org/papers/IJSDR1903053.pdf

Shemwell, J. T., Chase, C. C., & Schwartz, D. L. (2015). Seeking the general explanation: A test of inductive activities for learning and transfer. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, *52*(1), 58-83. https://doi.org/10.1002/tea.21185

Shaw, S. C. K., & Anderson, J. L. (2018). *Phenomenological research in medical education: An overview of its philosophy, approaches, and conduct*. Sage. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781526447319

Sherrod, M. D., Getch, Y. Q., & Ziomek-Daigle, J. (2009). The impact of positive behavior support to decrease discipline referrals with elementary students. *Professional School Counseling*, *12*(6), 421-427.

Shores, C., & Chester, K. (2009). *Using RTI for school improvement.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Simon, M. K., & Goes, J. (2013). *Scope, limitations, and delimitations*. Dissertation and Scholarly Research: Recipes for Success. Seattle, WA: Dissertation Success LLC. http://www.dissertationrecipes.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/limitationscopedelimitation1.pdf

Skiba, R. J., Michael, R. S., Nardo, A. C., & Peterson, R. L. (2002). The color of discipline: Sources of racial and gender disproportionality in school punishment. *The Urban Review*, *34*(4), 317-342. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1021320817372

Skiba, R. J., Reynolds, C. R., Graham, S., Sheras, P., Coroley, C., & Garcia-Vazquez, E. (2006). *Are zero tolerance policies effective in the schools? An evidentiary review and recommendations*. https://www.apa.org/pubs/info/reports/zero-tolerance-report.pdf

Skiba, R. J., Ritter, S., Simmons, A., Peterson, R., & Miller, C. (2005). *The safe and responsive schools project: A school reform model for implementing best practices in violence prevention* (pp. 631-650). http://www.indiana.edu/~equity/docs/A_School_Reform_Model.pdf

Skjott, L. M., & Korsgaard, S. (2019). Coding qualitative data: A synthesis guiding the novice. *Qualitative Research Journal*, *19*(3), 259-270. https://doi.org/100.1108/QRJ-12-2018-0012

Skulmoski, G., & Hartman, F. (2007). Delphi method for graduate research. *Journal of Information Technology Education*, *6*, 1-21.

Smith, B. (2009). Maybe I will, maybe I won't: What the connected perspectives of motivation theory and organizational commitment may contribute to our understanding of strategy implementation. *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, *17*(6), 473-485.

Smith, B., & McGannon, K. R. (2018). Developing rigor in qualitative research: Problems and opportunities within sport and exercise psychology. *International Review of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, *11*(1), 101-121. https://doi.org/10.1080/1750984X.2017.1317357

Smolkowski, K., Strycker, L., & Ward, B. (2016). Scale-up of safe & civil schools' model for school-wide positive behavioral interventions and supports. *Psychology in the Schools*, *53*(4), 339-358.

Solomon, B. G., Klein, S. A., Hintze, J. M., Cressey, J. M., & Peller, S. L. (2012). A meta-analysis of school-wide positive behavior support: An exploratory study using single-case synthesis. *Psychology in the Schools*, *49*(2), 105-121. https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.20625

Sovacool, B. K., Axsen, J., & Sorrell, S. (2018). Promoting novelty, rigor, and style in energy social science: Towards codes of Practice for practice for appropriate methods and research design. *Energy Research & Social Science*, *45*, 12-42. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2018.07.007

Sprick, R. S., Knight, J., Reinke, W., & McKale, T. (2007). *Coaching classroom management: Strategies and tools for administrators and coaches*. Eugene, OR: Pacific Northwest.

Spring, J. (2011). *The American school: A global context from the Puritans to the Obama Era* (8th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

States, J., Detrich, R., & Keyworth, R. (2015). *School suspension and student outcomes*. Oakland, CA: The Wing Institute. https://www.winginstitute.org/does-suspension-impact-student

Steinberg, M. P., & Lacoe, J. (2017). What do we know about school discipline reform? *Education Next*, *17*(1), 1-6. https://www.educationnext.org/what-do-we-know-about-school-discipline-reform-suspensions-expulsions/

Student Advocacy. (2015). *A planning guide to promote alternatives to suspensions: Intervention guide*. http://studentadvocacy.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Intervention-Guide.pdf

Sugai, G., Lewis-Palmer, T. L., Todd, A. W., & Horner, R. H. (2001). *School-wide Evaluation Tool (SET)*. Eugene, OR: Educational and Community Supports. https://www.pbisapps.org/Resources/SWIS%20Publications/School-Wide%20Evaluation%20Tool%20(SET).pdf

Sugai, G., & Horner, R. H. (2006). A promising approach for expanding and sustaining school-wide positive behavior support. *School Psychology Review*, *35*, 245-259.

Sugai, G., & Simonsen, B. (2012). *Positive behavioral interventions and supports: History, defining features and misconceptions*. https://www.pbis.org/

Sun, R. C. F., & Shek, D. T. L. (2012). Student classroom misbehavior: An exploratory study based on teachers' perceptions. *Scientific World Journal*, *2012*. https://doi.org/10.1100/2012/208907

Swain-Bradway, J., Pinkney, C., & Flannery, K. B. (2015). Implementing school-wide positive behavior interventions and supports in high schools: Contextual factors and stages of implementation. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, *47*, 245-255.

Taber, K. S. (2018). The use of Cronbach's alpha when developing and reporting research instrument in science education. *Research in Science Education*, *48*(6), 1273-1296. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11165-016-9602-2

Taylor-Greene, S., Brown, D., Nelson, L., Longton, J., Gassman, T., Cohen, J., Swartz, J., Homer, R., Sugai, G., & Hall, S. (1997). School-wide behavioral support: Starting the year off right. *Journal of Behavioral Education*, *7*(1), 99-112.

Teherani, A., Martimianakis, T., Stenfors-Hayes, T., Wadhwa, A., & Varpio, L. (2015). Choosing a qualitative research approach. *Journal of Graduate Medical Education*, *7*(4), 669-670. https://doi.org/10.4300/JGME-D-15-00414.1

Thomas, J. Y., & Brady, K. P. (2005). The Elementary and Secondary Education Act at 40: Equity, accountability, and the evolving federal role in public education. *Review of Research in Education*, *29*(1), 51-67. https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732x029001051

Thompson, A. M., & Webber, K. C. (2010). Realigning student and teacher perceptions of school rules: A behavior management strategy for students with challenging behaviors. *Children and Schools*, *32*(2), 71-79.

Tillery, A. D., Varjas, K., Meyers, J., & Collins, A. S. (2010). General education teachers' perceptions of behavior management and intervention strategies. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, *12*(2), 86-102.

Todd, A. W., Lewis-Palmer, T., Horner, R. H. Sugai, S., Sampson, N. K., & Phillips, D. (2012). *Schoolwide Evaluation Tool (SET): Implementation manual (version 2.0)*. University of Oregon. https://www.pbis.org/common/cms/files/pbisresources/SET_Manual_02282012.pdf

Todd, A. W., Horner, R. H., & Tobin, T. J. (2010). *School-wide Information System (SWIS)^{TM} documentation project: Referral form definitions* (version 4.3). Eugene, OR: University of Oregon.

Thornton, L. J. S. (2012). *Teacher perceptions regarding positive behavior intervention support* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS. 790. https://aquila.usm.edu/dissertations/790

Turnbull, B. (2002). Teachers' participation and buy-in: Implications for school reform initiatives. *Learning Environments Research*, *5*, 235-252.

Turse, K. A., & Albrech, S. F. (2015). The ABCs of RTI: An introduction to the building blocks of response to intervention. *Preventing School Failure*, *59*(2), 83–89.

U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. (2019). *Beyond suspensions: Examining school discipline policies and connections to the school-to-prison pipeline for students of color with disabilities*. Washington, DC. https://www.usccr.gov/pubs/2019/07-23-Beyond-Suspensions.pdf

U.S. Department of Education. (2019). *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)*. https://www.ed.gov/essa

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights. (2018). *School climate and safety*. 2015-16 Civil Rights Data Collection. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/crdc-2015-16.html

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education. (2019). *Parent and educator guide to school climate resources*. https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essaguidetoschoolclimate041019.pdf

U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. (1979). *The Belmont report: Ethical principles and guidelines for the protection of human subjects of research*. National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, Bethesda, MD. hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/belmont.html

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education. (2010). Implementation blueprint and self-assessment schoolwide. *Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports* (pp. 1-111). http://www.njpbs.org/Intervention_Resources/documents/SWPBS_ImplementationBlueprint_vSep_23_2010.pdf

VanParys Couet, J. M. (2014). *Effects of positive behavior intervention and supports on teacher self-efficacy and teaching anxiety* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Walden University, Minneapolis, MN. https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1068&context=archivedposters

Van Woerkom, M. (2018). *A proactive approach to discipline*. https://www.edutopia.org/article/proactive-approach-discipline

Vroom, V. H. (1964). *Work and motivation*. New York, NY: Wiley.

Vincent, C., Spaulding, S., & Tobin, T. J. (2010). A reexamination of the psychometric properties of the schoolwide evaluation tool (SET). *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, *12*, 161-179.

Wang, H., & Hall, N. C. (2018). A systematic review of teachers' causal attributions: Prevalence, correlates, and consequences. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *9*, Article ID 2305. http://dx.doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.02305

Warren, J., Bohanon, H., Tumbull, A., Salor, W., Wickham, D., Griggs, P., & Beech, S. E. (2006). School-wide positive behavior support: addressing behavior problems that impede student learning. *Educational Psychology Review*, *19*(2), 187-198.

Weinbaum, C., Landree, E., Blumenthal, M. S., Piqaudo, T., & Gutierrez, C. I. (2019). *Ethics in scientific research: An examination of ethical principles and emerging topics*. RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, CA. https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR2900/RR2912/RAND_RR2912.pdf

Weiss, H. B., Bouffard, S. M., Bridglall, B. L., & Gordon, E. W. (2009). *Reframing family involvement in education: Supporting families to support educational equity (Equity Matters: Research Review No. 5)*. New York, NY: Columbia University Teachers College.

Wertz, F. (2005). Phenomenological research methods for counseling psychology. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *52*(2), 167-177.

Wiersma, W., & Jurs, S. (2009). *Research methods in education: An introduction* (9th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Education.

Wilhelm, W. (2001). Alchemy of the oracle: The Delphi Technique. *Delta Pi Epsilon Journal*, *43*(1), 6-26.

Wood, L., Bauman, E., Rudo, Z., & Dimock, V. (2017). *How family, school, and community engagement can improve student achievement and influence school reform*. Nellie Mae Education Foundation. https://www.nmefoundation.org/getattachment/67f7c030-df45-4076-a23f-0d7f0596983f/Final-Report-Family-Engagement-AIR.pdf

Wright, K. B. (2017). Researching Internet-based populations: Advantages and disadvantages of online survey research, online questionnaire authoring software packages, and web survey services. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, *10*(3), 1-27. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2005.tb00259.x

APPENDICES

Appendix A
Schoolwide Evaluation Tool (SET)

Something about You:

Gender:

a. Male
b. Female

Ethnicity:

a. African American
b. Asian
c. Hispanic
d. Native American
e. Pacific Islander
f. Caucasian

Age:

a. 21-29
b. 30-38
c. 39-47
d. 48-56
e. 57-65
f. Over 65

Years of employment with the school district:

a. 1-5 years
b. 6-10 years
c. 11-15 years
d. 16-20 years
e. More than 20 years

Years of full-time teaching experience:

a. 1-5 years
b. 6-10 years
c. 11-15 years
d. 16-20 years
e. More than 20 years

Grade level that I currently teach:

a. 6th
b. 7th
c. 8th

Member of the SWPBIS team:

a. Yes
b. No

Directions: Please read each question and select the items that best fit your response regarding implementation of the SWPBIS program. Your identity is anonymous, and responses are confidential. Use the scale below to record your responses.

1= Strongly disagree
2= Disagree
3= Not sure
4= Agree
5= Strongly agree

Behavioral Expectations Defined:

1. The administration is visible and supportive of SWPBIS. 1 2 3 4 5
2. The SWPBIS program is presented and explained to new staff members. 1 2 3 4 5
3. The majority (80%) of the staff "buy in" or support the SWPBIS effort. 1 2 3 4 5
4. There is documentation that 5 or fewer positively stated school rules/behavioral expectations are posted in the Discipline Handbook and instructional materials. 1 2 3 4 5
5. The agreed upon rules and expectations are publicly posted in hallways, cafeteria, classrooms, principal's office, and restrooms. 1 2 3 4 5

Behavioral Expectations Taught

6. There is a documented system for teaching behavioral expectations to students on a monthly basis (e.g., lesson plan books, instructional materials). 1 2 3 4 5
7. At least 80% of the staff believe that teaching of behavioral expectations to students has occurred this year. 1 2 3 4 5
8. At least 80% of the staff believe that the schoolwide program has been trained/reviewed with staff on an annual basis in workshops. 1 2 3 4 5
9. At least 80% of the students know the school rules. 1 2 3 4 5
10. At least 80% or more of the staff know the school rules. 1 2 3 4 5

Establish Schoolwide Expectations:

11. The school rules or SWPBIS expectations are appropriate. 1 2 3 4 5
12. These rules are posted in all areas of the building. 1 2 3 4 5
13. Behavioral expectations are specific and described for each setting in the building. 1 2 3 4 5
14. There were lesson plans to teach the SWPBIS expectations and teachers are familiar with them. 1 2 3 4 5
15. Students are familiar with SWPBIS expectations. 1 2 3 4 5
16. New students are oriented to school rules and consequences. 1 2 3 4 5

Ongoing Rewards Behavioral Expectations:

17. Positive reinforcements are used to support establish expectations and rules. 1 2 3 4 5
18. Reinforcements are modified based on trends in the data. 1 2 3 4 5
19. Positive reinforcements are tracked. 1 2 3 4 5

20. Social acknowledgements are tied to tangible rewards. 1 2 3 4 5
21. The team obtains feedback from students on reinforcements. 1 2 3 4 5
22. There is a documented system for rewarding student behavior. 1 2 3 4 5
23. At least 50% or more students have received a reward (other than verbal praise) for expected behaviors over
24. the past two months. 1 2 3 4 5
25. At least 80% of staff have delivered a reward (other than verbal praise) to students for expected
26. behavior over the past two months. 1 2 3 4 5

Violations:

27. The distinctions between classroom versus office managed violations are clear. 1 2 3 4 5
28. There is a continuum of disciplinary steps to follow with minor incidents. 1 2 3 4 5
29. The referral process for behavioral violations is comprehensive and understood by teachers and staff. 1 2 3 4 5
30. Teachers and staff are informed of the process that is periodically reviewed. 1 2 3 4 5
31. The principals hold teachers accountable for following the disciplinary steps. 1 2 3 4 5
32. All teachers and staff members have a readily available crisis plan for addressing dangerous situations. 1 2 3 4 5

Build Capacity for Function-based Support:

33. Resources are available for providing group or individual student behavioral support. 1 2 3 4 5
34. A team exists to assist with conducting a functional Behavioral assessment (FBA) and writing a Behavioral Intervention Plan. 1 2 3 4 5
35. There is a system for identifying students with more than two office referrals. 1 2 3 4 5
36. Frequent discipline offenders are referred to appropriate targeted interventions. 1 2 3 4 5

Build District Level Support:

37. Your school has a SWPBIS Coach who is easily accessible. 1 2 3 4 5
38. Your school has adequate funding for planned schoolwide activities. 1 2 3 4 5
39. Areas in need of professional development have been identified. 1 2 3 4 5
40. Parents are informed and included in the school's SWPBIS efforts. 1 2 3 4 5

Thank you for your valuable input and participation in this survey.

Appendix B

Focus Group Questions and Protocol

Focus Group Directions: As the moderator of this focus group, I will ask you some questions about the SWPBIS discipline program. Feel free to respond but allow others to contribute to the conversation. Your responses will be audio- and videotaped. When you provided informed consent to participate in this study, you also gave consent to be audio-recorded. Each of you will select another name that you would like to use on the tape when you introduce yourselves before you speak. Before speaking, you must say your name so during transcription of the tapes, I will know who said what. Your real names will not be used in this study. There will be no identifying marks that will let others know when they read it who you are. The transcriber of these tapes will not be able to recognize who you are because they are not associated with this school or this study.

Interview Questions:

1. Are you knowledgeable about SWPBIS?
2. Please share your experiences with the implementation of SWPBIS.
3. Describe the common language in context of SWPBIS that is in place and used by all staff in all settings to define and work with all students.
4. What are the behavioral expectations at this school?
5. Do you feel that staff receives regular feedback on student behavior patterns? Explain.
6. As a teacher, how do you perceive the SWPBIS program?
7. How do other staff members perceive the SWPBIS program?
8. What role does SWPBIS play in the lives of students who help them want to succeed (or contribute to their success)?
9. Please share the major changes that have occurred in your building as a result of implementation of SWPBIS?
10. As part of the implementation of SWPBIS, describe the greatest successes that have resulted.
11. What challenges/successes have existed with the implementation of SWPBIS?

Appendix C

Letter for Principals

Dear Middle School Principal,

My name is Tiffany J. Baskin-Downs, and I am a doctoral student at in the Ed.D. program (Curriculum and Leadership track) in the College of Education and Health Professions at Columbus State University, Columbus, Georgia. The purpose of my dissertation is to examine middle teachers' perceptions of their efforts toward Schoolwide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) implementation in the school. The findings from my research study could provide useful information to the school district to identify processes through which SWPBIS can be implemented with fidelity by fostering teacher buy-in and self-efficacy. The study findings could also help teachers to improve student-level outcomes such as attendance, behavior, and other disciplinary issues. The study has already been approved by the school district's Institutional Review Board.

In phase one, middle school teachers (6th, 7th, and 8th grade levels) from will be sent an online Qualtrics survey to assess teacher perceptions of SWPBIS in their school. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. The survey responses will be anonymous and confidential. In the second phase, a focus group will be conducted in which teachers will be asked questions on the SWPBIS discipline program. The focus group will consist of middle school teachers from the same two schools (approximately six to ten participants and will be approximately 60 minutes in duration. The focus group session will be audio- and videotaped. Teachers will have to option to voluntarily participate in the study. Student data will also be collected on the disciplinary rates for the middle-school grade levels from the school district's accountability office. Data will not be collected during instructional time or any other time in which the teacher is engaged in completing his/her work responsibilities.

An explanatory sequential mixed methods research design will be used where data obtained from the survey and focus group will be triangulated to improve the validity and reliability of the study results. Email addresses of all grades 6-8 teachers from both schools will be given to the researcher from the school district' office if you give permission to conduct the study at your school. All participants will receive a hyperlink to the survey. Participants will be asked to participate in the survey that will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Participants will be given the purpose of the study prior to participation. Ensuring that participants are provided with, and fully understand the context of the study is necessary before consenting to take part in the study. All participants must be at least 21 years old.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, participants will voluntarily participate in a teleconference focus group during their time away from school or in the privacy of their homes. Teachers can decide to be a part of this study or not and may withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty or loss of benefits and no consequences. The

results of the research study may be published. Participant identity and the school's identity will remain anonymous and teachers' names will not be made known to any outside party. All the data collected from the surveys and focus group will be aggregated and then analyzed if you give permission to conduct the study in your school.

Confidentiality will be secured during and after the online survey has been completed and submitted. Information provided will be kept strictly confidential. There were no foreseeable risks to the participants. Although there may be no direct benefits to them, a possible benefit from their being part of this study is to understand from the results of a study on the SWPBIS discipline program. There is no financial compensation for participating in this research study. I am requesting permission to invite all Grades 6, 7, and 8 teachers to voluntarily participate in my study. Data collected from this project could be used in future research projects.

The survey data in Qualtrics is protected by sophisticated firewall systems and high-tech security scans are performed regularly to ensure that data in servers are secure and only authorized personnel can access the data. In addition, Transport Layer Security (TLS) encryption (also known as HTTPS) for all transmitted data is utilized. The IP addresses of the participants will not be accessible to Principal Investigator (PI) and Co-principal Investigator (Co-PI). All the survey, focus group, audio and video recordings, and disciplinary data will be stored in password-protected computers within the Co-PI and office located in the workplace. All hard copies of informed consent forms, transcripts, and paper documentation will be securely stored and maintained at the PI's office within the school premise in a locked file cabinet with sole key access to only the PI. Data will be kept secure for one year, and then destroyed by deleting electronic copies of survey, focus group, and disciplinary data from the PI's and Co-PI's hard drive and shredding all hard copies of informed consent forms, audio and video recordings, transcripts and paper documentation after the research project is complete. No personal information (i.e., addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, social security numbers) will be collected. All the data will be aggregated and analyzed. No individual responses either from quantitative or qualitative analysis will be reported. Your identity, and the school's identity will remain anonymous and teachers' names will not be made known to any outside party.

If you would like to know more information about this study, feel free to contact Columbus State Dr. Parul Acharya at acharya_parul@columbusstate.edu or call (706) 507-8523. If you have any questions, please contact the researcher, Tiffany J. Baskin-Downs at tiffany.jb.downs@gmail.com or call (678) 923-6949. Please contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at CSU (irb@columbusstate.edu) or school district IRB personnel, Dr. Linda Frazer at 678-676-0325 if you have any questions about your rights as a research participant. Please provide a letter of support if you grant me permission to conduct the research study at your school.
Sincerely,

Tiffany J. Baskin-Downs, Doctoral Candidate
College of Education and Health Professions
Columbus State University
Columbus, GA

Appendix D

2017-18 Frequency Table of OSS Data

Type of OSS Violations

		N	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
OSS	02 Possess. of Unapproved Item - Elec. Communic. Device	5	1.3	1.3	1.3
	02 Possess. of Unapproved Item_Use - Elec. Communic. Device	3	.8	.8	2.1
	03A Weapons/Knife_2" or longer	1	.3	.3	2.4
	03A Weapons/Other_Possess. or Use	1	.3	.3	2.6
	03B Weapons/Other Devices_Possess. or Use	1	.3	.3	2.9
	05B Drugs_Possession_Other	14	3.7	3.7	6.6
	06A Arson_Minor or no damage	2	.5	.5	7.1
	06B Break and Enter/Burglary_All types	1	.3	.3	7.4
	06B Larceny/Theft_Value $25-$99	1	.3	.3	7.7
	06B Larceny/Theft_Value $250 or more	2	.5	.5	8.2
	07A Threat/Intimidation_Individual	12	3.2	3.2	11.3
	07B Fighting_Mild/Moderate Injuries	3	.8	.8	12.1
	07B Fighting_No Injuries	156	41.2	41.2	53.3
	07B Fighting_Severe Injuries or Multi	3	.8	.8	54.1
	07C Battery_Mild/Moderate	15	4.0	4.0	58.0
	07F Bystander Battery_No Injuries	2	.5	.5	58.6
	07G Bullying_General_1st Incident	6	1.6	1.6	60.2

08A Rude/Disrespectful Behavior	28	7.4	7.4	67.5
08B Refusal to Follow Instructions	17	4.5	4.5	72.0
10 Skipping Class or Required Activity	18	4.7	4.7	76.8
11 Classroom Disturbance_Moderate	17	4.5	4.5	81.3
11 Disorderly Conduct_Severe	33	8.7	8.7	90.0
12A General School Disturbance_Severe	19	5.0	5.0	95.0
13 Profanity/Obscenity	7	1.8	1.8	96.8
16 Bus Misbehavior_Severe	1	.3	.3	97.1
19A Repeated Violations_Multi severe	1	.3	.3	97.4
22 Providing False Reports	1	.3	.3	97.6
23A Sexual Misconduct_Lewd behavior	1	.3	.3	97.9
23A Sexual Misconduct_Sexual activities	4	1.1	1.1	98.9
23B Sexual Harassmt. Directed to Individual	1	.3	.3	99.2
25 Dress Code_Multiple offenses	1	.3	.3	99.5
25 Dress Code_Non-Suggestive Clothing	2	.5	.5	100.0
Total	379	100.0	100.0	