

Examining the Level of Implementation of School-Wide Positive Behavioral Intervention
Support and Teacher Support of the Program Relative to the Number of Reported Office
Discipline Referrals

A Field Study Report
Presented to
The College of Graduate Studies
Austin Peay State University
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Educational Specialist

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To the College of Graduate Studies:

We are hereby submitting a Field Study written by Bethany Jones entitled, "Examining the Level of Implementation of School-Wide Positive Behavioral Intervention Support and Teacher Support of the Program Relative to the Number of Reported Office Discipline Referrals" (Under the direction of DR. BENITA BRUSTER). We have examined the final copy of this Field Study for form and content. We recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Educational Specialist in Instructional Technology.

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ABSTRACT

BETHANY JONES. “Examining the Level of Implementation of School-Wide Positive Behavioral Intervention Support and Teacher Support of the Program Relative to the Number of Reported Office Discipline Referrals” (Under the direction of DR. BENITA BRUSTER).

School-wide positive behavior support (SWPBS) is designed to proactively decrease problematic behavior and increase social competency in students (Flannery et al., 2013). This field study examines the level of implementation of SWPBS within a Title 1 school in Middle Tennessee and the effect of implementation level and level of teacher support of SWPBS, known at this school as Response to Instruction and Intervention for Behavior (RTI²-B), on the number of reported office discipline referrals. It is hypothesized that implementation and teacher support of RTI²-B have a positive effect on the number of office discipline referrals reported during the school’s first five years of operation. However, research within this field study yields no substantive difference in either category.

Keywords: School-Wide Positive Behavior Intervention and Support, SWPBS, SWPBIS, RTI²-B, Office Discipline Referrals, ODRs, Implementation Fidelity, Behavioral Support

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my incredible husband, David Jones, affectionately known as “Jones”; our amazing children: Carley Beth and Randall Jamison; my phenomenal parents: Randall and Litichia Lynch; and to my loving siblings: Maranda Lynch Knight, Heather Lynch Avrit, and my late sister, Valerie Lynch Chi.

Knowing I had you all in my corner, cheering for me, and supporting me gave me the motivation to persevere. I hope I have made you proud.

Though my precious mother and dear sister, Valerie, passed before seeing me completely accomplish this goal, I know they are smiling down on me with pride, and, for that reason, and for all of you, I am forever thankful and blessed beyond measure.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

“Schools are changing rapidly, and the pressure is on to find ways to effectively support the growing diversity of student needs found in general education classrooms” (Morrissey et al., 2010, p. 7). According to Sherrod et al. (2009), school personnel have seen increases in violent and disruptive behaviors taking place within the school environments. “Given the complexity of problems created by students engaged in disruptive behaviors, a variety of approaches and models have been used in an attempt to decrease discipline referrals” (Sherrod et al., 2009, p. 421). One approach schools have adopted to implement is that of School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS), which is a variation of Positive Behavior Support (PBS), Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS), and School-Wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS). Each term and acronym relates to positive discipline programs, yet they vary in terminology in regards to program-based or school/facility-based relationships.

SWPBS is designed to proactively decrease problematic behavior and increase social competency in students (Flannery et al., 2013). SWPBIS is a three-tiered model of prevention programmed and individually tailored to meet specific needs within the school setting. Studies have shown that “when implemented with fidelity, SWPBIS has been shown to result in decreases in office discipline referrals (ODRs) and out-of-school suspensions (OSS), as well as improved school climate, academic outcomes, and student engagement” (George et al., 2018, p. 393).

There are multiple reasons why a program such as SWPBIS may not be sustained. Coffey and Horner (2012) defined the features of sustainability as having a contextually appropriate innovation, staff buy-in, a shared vision, administrative support, leadership at various levels, ongoing technical assistance, data-based decision making and sharing, and continuous regeneration. Without successful implementation and fidelity, SWPBIS will lack sustainability, thus leading to sustained or increased levels of disruptive behaviors and discipline referrals (Gage et al., 2018).

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of SWPBIS on ODRs within an inner city, Title 1 elementary school, as well as the level of implementation fidelity and the impact of teacher support of the program. At this particular school, and within this particular district, SWPBIS is known as RTP²-B, Response to Instruction and Intervention for Behavior. This study examined the number of ODRs recorded for each of the five years the school has been in existence, containing academic years in which positive behavior supports were and were not implemented.

The independent variable of this study is the school's implementation level of RTP²-B, while the dependent variable is the school's number of documented ODRs.

Significance of Study

SWPBIS is a heavily researched and documented program that literature proves effective across multiple academic settings. It has been known to decrease problematic behaviors and increase student achievement. However, when not implemented with fidelity, programs such as SWPBIS falter. Analyzing the program's effectiveness on student behaviors according to the data in relation to ODRs will help raise teacher

awareness on the level of effectiveness. Furthermore, data resulting from the Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI; Algozinne et al., 2019) will determine the validity of the school's successful RTI²-B implementation in relation to fidelity.

Research Questions

The following Research Questions were examined within this field study:

1. To what percentage has Response to Instruction and Intervention for Behavior (RTI²-B) been implemented across Tiers 1 through 3?
2. Has the implementation of RTI²-B had a positive effect on student behaviors in relation to the number of office discipline referrals (ODRs) documented?
3. Does teacher buy-in and level of support of the program have an effect on the number of reported ODRs?

Null Hypotheses

1. There will be no statistically significant difference in the percentage of implementation across Tiers 1 through 3.
2. There will be no statistically significant positive effects of RTI²-B in relation to the school's documented ODRs.
3. There will be no statistically significant difference in the number of reported ODRs based on the level of teacher buy-in and support of RTI²-B.

Limitations

1. The fidelity to which ODRs are documented cannot be determined.

2. The validity of ODRs could be affected by individual teachers' perceptions of the criteria that may warrant a student to be referred to the office for administrative discipline or behavioral consequence.
3. School personnel varied from year to year due to staff turnover; teachers transferring to and from other schools, non-renewed teachers, teacher retirement, and eliminated or added teacher positions. A lack in consistency of school personnel has an impact on the amount of training and the levels of teacher competency concerning the RTI²-B program, thus affecting the level or percentage of implementation and the effect the program may have on student behaviors, specifically in relation to the number of documented ODRs.
4. There was a limited sample size in relation to the voluntary participants on both surveys, with the TFI having a 23 of 65 (35%) participants, and the Support/ODR Survey having 34 out of 65 (52%) participants.

Assumptions

1. ODRs were reported and documented with fidelity.
2. Teachers have been trained and understand the RTI²-B program components and their purpose.
3. Teachers will answer honestly in relation to their perceptions of the level of implementation across each Tier of the RTI²-B program on the TFI and answer honestly in relation to their level of support and reported ODRs.

Definition of Terms

1. **Check-In/Check-Out (CICO):** An intervention used in Tier 2 of the SWPBIS program with documented evidence of decreasing problematic behaviors and

increasing academic success of students (Kittleman et al., 2018). CICO involves an adult mentorship of a student that oversees the student's self-monitoring, behavior management, academic goal-setting and problem-solving skills related to problematic behaviors through communication between the student and the adult mentor at the start and end of an academic school day (Sprague et al., 2013).

2. **Check-In/Check-Up/Check-Out (CICUCO):** An adaptation of the CICO intervention used in Tier 2 of SWPBIS. This intervention includes the traditional check-in and check-out components of the original CICO intervention, but entails additional student contact/communication with adult mentors in order to proactively eliminate or limit a lack of responsiveness to the original CICO intervention (Swoszowski et al., 2013).
3. **Contextually Appropriate Innovations:** Educational innovations that are appropriately aligned in accordance to the state and local education agencies' standards and requirements (Coffey & Horner, 2012).
4. **Continuous Regeneration:** Involves the consideration of current practice versus the desired outcomes (Coffey & Horner, 2012).
5. **Disruptive Behaviors:** Behaviors that interfere or interrupt a process. In relation to this study, disruptive behaviors include behaviors that interfere with learning and/or interrupt or impede the instructional process. Such behaviors can include calling out in class without permission, making vocalizations unrelated to instruction or the task at hand, making repetitive noises with tangible objects, talking to classmates, getting out of an assigned seat when staying seated is

expected, continuously calling out the teacher's name, and arguing with, mocking or offending others (Shumate & Wills, 2010).

6. **Facility-Wide Positive Behavior Intervention Support (FW-PBIS):** An adaptation to the SWPBIS program to accommodate the specific needs within a facility rather than that of a school. Specific to the review of the literature related to this study, adaptations were made in order to accommodate the specific needs of students within a juvenile justice (JJ) setting (Sprague et al., 2013).
7. **Fidelity:** The degree to which the core principles of PBIS are implemented as designed and intended (Noltemeyer et al., 2019).
8. **Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA):** A behavior intervention plan that is created when a student's misbehavior leads to disciplinary exclusion or placement in an alternative setting as a result of a manifestation of the student's documented disability, as required by Individuals with Disabilities Educational Act (IDEA) amendments of 2004 (Katsiyannis et al., 2016).
9. **Office Discipline Referrals (ODRs):** Referrals made by educators in order for administration to assist in, manage, or decide an applicable punishment and/or consequence following a problematic behavior. ODRs are known to be indicative of student behavioral issues and used as a source of reference in school and data-based decisions (Pas et al., 2011).
10. **Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS):** A tiered framework that provides behavioral intervention at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels to proactively address behavioral needs of all students (Swoszowski et al., 2013). In

this study and the review of the literature, positive behavior support (PBS), PBIS, SWPBS, and SWPBIS are used as interchangeable terms.

11. **Positive Behavior Support (PBS):** a three-tiered, proactive, systematic approach to discipline in addressing specific behavioral needs of students (Morrissey et al., 2010). In this study and the review of the literature, positive behavior support PBS, PBIS, SWPBS, and SWPBIS are used as interchangeable terms.
12. **Response to Instruction and Intervention for Behavior (RTI²-B):** A “Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) that offers a powerful, evidence-based approach for meeting the behavioral and social needs of students in Tennessee schools that helps schools create a positive culture for students and staff with the goal of improving academic and behavioral outcomes for all students” (Tennessee Behavior Supports Project, 2021).
13. **School-wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (SWPBIS):** A multi-tiered system of behavioral supports proven to be both effective and socially valid in decreasing problematic behaviors and increasing academic outcomes amongst students (Kittleman et al., 2018). In this study and the review of the literature, positive behavior support PBS, PBIS, SWPBS, and SWPBIS are used as interchangeable terms.
14. **School-wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS):** A tiered behavioral intervention framework used to support students within a school setting (Mitchell et al., 2011). In this study and the review of the literature, positive behavior support PBS, PBIS, SWPBS, and SWPBIS are used as interchangeable terms.

15. **Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI):** An SWPBIS implementation measure that assesses levels of fidelity in the implementation across all three tiers of support (Algozzine et al., 2019).
16. **Title 1 School:** A school that receives government funding based on the percentage of poverty level amongst student population. The goal of this extra funding is to provide additional educational opportunities and improve academic outcomes for students attending schools containing high percentage of economically disadvantaged students (Rucker, 2015).

Chapter II

Review of the Literature

Disruptive Behavior

Shumate and Wills (2010) defined disruptive behaviors as behaviors that interfere with learning and/or interrupt or impede the instructional process. Such behaviors included calling out in class without permission, making vocalizations unrelated to instruction or the task at hand, making repetitive noises with tangible objects, talking to classmates, getting out of an assigned seat when staying seated is expected, continuously calling out the teacher's name, and arguing with, mocking or offending others. Närhi et al. (2017) reported that disruptive student behaviors negatively affect students in relation to their academic achievement and post-school adjustments, as well as have a negative impact on teachers in relation to stressful working environments and feelings in reduction of wellbeing.

The more frequent the student disruptions, the less time devoted to instruction (Blank & Shavit, 2016). "Disruptions in the classroom interfere with the course of the lesson and have an immediate and accumulative effect on learning, and, as a result, on achievement" (Blank & Shavit, 2016, p. 11). Disruptive behaviors can affect all teachers, but, in a study regarding disruptive behaviors and novice teachers, Sezer (2017) found that some novice teachers experienced stress and anxiousness, the need for support from more experienced teachers, and thoughts of leaving their teaching placements.

Emotional and Behavioral Concerns

A large number of students and adolescents are at risk for having or developing emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD; National Research Council and Institute of

Medicine [NRC & IOM], 2009). Although most symptoms and signs of EBD have the potential to be detected at an early age, many experience a lack of support, a delay in being provided services, or fail to receive treatment (NRC & IOM, 2009). An estimated 25% of students with EBD are identified and serviced within a school setting. However, identification of these students with these disorders typically occurs after the opportunity to participate in behavioral interventions is available (Mitchell et al., 2011). Despite this fact, the importance of identification of students with EBD and the implementation of interventions are well documented throughout research, proving it to be a priority and a necessity, according to Mitchell, Stormont, and Kage (2011). “Implementation of SWPBS, or a tiered prevention framework, is a potential mechanism for using data to identify potential candidates, developing practices that reduce risk, and sustaining intervention efforts over time” (Mitchell et al., 2011, p. 257). Without early identification and implementation of such interventions, “outcomes for students experiencing EBD are very poor and include drop out, incarceration, homelessness, psychopathology, diminished functioning, inability to find and maintain employment, and problems developing healthy interpersonal relationships” (Mitchell et al., 2011, p. 241). When students with EBD display patterns or engage in challenging behaviors, they are more susceptible to poor or negative teacher interactions, rejection from their peers, or isolation (Dunlap et al., 2006). Consequently, these “challenging student behaviors often overwhelm district- and school-level personnel as they strive to address high rates of disciplinary incidents” (George et al., 2018, p. 393).

It has been estimated that 14-20% of young people, during their school career, experience a mental, emotional, or behavior challenge. More attention must be given to

this category because outcomes for those affected by EBD are worse in comparison to those students outside of it (Mitchell et al., 2019). Mitchell et al. (2019) noted scholars that support 47% of students with emotional disturbance (ED) typically receive at least one failing grade, less than half were found to be in general education settings, effective practices were underutilized within school settings, a 40% dropout rate, poor outcomes related to postsecondary and employment, and an estimated 40% resulting in having a criminal record shortly after leaving school.

As a result of this growing concern for students who experience EBD, schools are implementing practices that are known and have shown to prevent, treat, or reduce symptoms of such disorders. One such practice is that of SWPBS (Mitchell et al., 2011). “Research has shown that all students, and specifically those students with or at-risk of emotional and behavioral concerns benefit from learning environments that are consistent, predictable, positive, and safe, and school-wide positive behavioral interventions and supports (SWPBIS) has demonstrated its effectiveness for providing schools with the framework to create such environments for their students” (Nese et al., 2016, p. 268). SWPBIS has been linked to reductions in physical restraints, disciplinary consequences related to seclusion, such as timeouts and suspensions, as well as reductions concerning the involvement of law enforcement officers with students who experience EBD (Mitchell et al., 2019). Studies show that without intentional interventions, needs of emotionally and behaviorally challenged students will become increasingly evident, and, in some cases, chronic (Feuerborn & Chinn, 2012).

SWPBS

“Positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS) was first introduced with the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Act in 1997” (Sugai & Horner, 2019, p. 120). SWPBIS is an evidence-based framework consisting of a three-tiered behavioral prevention model and utilized to prevent problematic behaviors and promote positive school environments (Nese et al., 2016). It provides a framework for schools, consisting of behavioral supports and evidence-based practices for all students across all settings, and is used to strengthen academic outcomes, increase pro-social behaviors, and improve the overall learning environment for all students. (Gage et al., 2013; Noltemeyer et al., 2019; Sugai et al., 2014).

An increasing number of schools have implemented the SWPBS or the SWPBIS framework and are locally and governmentally supported in doing so. In 2014, The United States Department of Education’s Office of Safe Schools allocated \$53 million in grants to educational agencies in order to implement such multi-tiered behavioral support frameworks, calling it the School Climate Transformation (SCT; George et al., 2018). Since, studies have shown that “when implemented with fidelity, SWPBIS has been shown to result in decreases in office discipline referrals (ODRs) and out-of-school suspensions (OSS), as well as improved school climate, academic outcomes, and student engagement” (George et al., 2018, p. 393).

SWPBS Implementation Framework

Coffee and Horner (2012) listed the core components of SWPBIS to include a statement of purpose, school-wide expectations, procedures for teaching school-wide expectations, and a continuum of procedures for encouraging school-wide expectations, a

continuum of procedures for discouraging problem behaviors, and procedures for using data to monitor the impact of school-wide PBIS implementation. Swain-Bradway et al. (2015) added to these components by adding the directive and active teaching of expectations, determining and acknowledging students who engage in appropriate school conduct, consequences of inappropriate behavior, and support at both district and administrative levels.

The PBIS Implementation Blueprint consists of a leadership team responsible for establishing specific executive and implementation functions. Executive functions include stakeholder support, continuous funding, policy and systems alignment, and workforce capacity. Implementation functions involve components of training, coaching, performance evaluation, behavioral expertise, and local implementation demonstrations (Sugai & Horner, 2019).

Though leadership teams and their functions are established, teams find it difficult to know where to begin in planning, how to go about moving forward in implementation, how to guide investment and funding, and monitor progression of implementation (Horner et al., 2014). To remedy this issue, the PBIS framework added an action-planning format based on the National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) and the five stages of implementation from Fixsen et al. (2005). These five stages; exploration, installation, initial implementation, full implementation, and sustained and scaled implementation, guide leadership teams to assess their progression in the implementation process and determine and establish future planning (Sugai & Horner, 2019). Swain-Bradway et al. (2015) expounded on these five stages in their research.

During the stage of exploration and adoption, a district and administrative team determines the relationship of SWPBIS to the needs of the school, evidence-based practices, along with availability of resources. The staff within the school agrees, in majority, that SWPBIS is necessary to improve issues within the school concerning school climate, student behavior and engagement, and academic performance. The team encourages and enforces teacher participation and ensures training for all staff.

Program installation involves the administrative and SWPBIS team to view current school discipline policies and modify them as needed. The team identifies students that exhibit problematic behaviors, trains the staff on evidence-based practices on how to manage such behaviors, and supports teachers in implementing those practices within their classrooms.

Initial implementation of SWPBIS involved the daily use of evidence-based practices, though initial implementation may lack in consistency. Data are collected within the process, and is used by the team to develop an action plan for the future and make data-based decisions for the school.

Full operation of SWPBIS means that a large majority of school personnel have successfully integrated the practices into their classrooms and daily routines, the practices are evident in school policies, and decisions regarding implementation, professional development, and staff accountability within the school are data-driven and evidence-based.

The innovation and sustainability stage of implementation simply means that the leadership team and administrators within the district are consistently engaging in viewing data and district and school policies to modify current practices in order to meet

the evolving needs of school personnel and attending students (Swain-Bradway et al., 2015).

SWPBS Tiered Framework

The SWPBS tiered framework is comprised of a “three-tiered continuum of evidence-based practices and organizational systems, emphasizing data-driven decision making, team-based problem solving, and multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) to achieve academic and social success for students” (George et al., 2018, p. 393). This framework can be implemented at various levels; school-wide settings outside of the classroom, within the classroom setting, and implemented with individual students in accordance to their specific behavioral needs (Sherrod et al., 2009). In a typical PBIS system, Tier 1 consists of 80% of a school’s student population; Tier 2 applies to roughly 10-15% of the student population and is implemented, leaving the remaining approximate 5% of students within Tier 3 (McDaniel et al., 2015).

Within a Tier 1 level of behavioral support, interventions are applied to all students to establish a school norms of reinforcing positive behavior (Yeung et al., 2016). The purpose of providing Tier 1 supports to all students relates to the reduction of academic failure and to reduce or eliminate new problematic behaviors displayed by students (Mitchell et al., 2011). “The core elements of Tier I interventions include defining and teaching behavioral expectations, providing multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate appropriate skills and receive feedback/encouragement, and responding to problem behavior in a constructive and instructive manner” (Yeung et al., 2016, p. 147). Schools typically identify three to five positive behavioral expectations, the expectations are modeled in relation to how they are applicable across various school

settings, and the expectations are acknowledged and consistently reinforced when they are displayed by students (Noltemeyer et al., 2019). Tier I practices are embedded throughout the school, in all academic and nonacademic settings and implemented by school personnel (Mitchell et al., 2011). Though Tier 1 practices are taught to all students, a Student Support Team (SST), which typically consists of a member of school administration, a number of teachers, and a school psychologist who utilize data to identify students not responding to making adequate behavioral progress to Tier 1 supports and determine their eligibility for Tier 2 behavioral supports. Such data used to determine eligibility may include the number of student ODRs, scores from a Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) to identify specific areas of need, and/or scores from universal behavioral screeners to determine or identify students that may require more targeted interventions. Once a student is placed in a Tier 2 intervention, the student's progress is monitored and modified based on responsiveness to that specific intervention (McDaniel et al., 2015).

Tier 2 students participate in a much more personalized level of intervention in that it is identified as a specialized or targeted group for students that have been considered behaviorally at risk (Mitchell et al., 2011). "Tier II strategies extend the basic logic of PBIS by providing additional and more targeted opportunities for instruction and feedback as well as more environmental structures to increase the likelihood of success" (Yeung et al., 2016, p. 147). Anderson and Borgmeier (2010) defined Tier 2 interventions as interventions that are "designated to provide more explicit instruction in desired skills, more explicit prompts for desired behavior, and more frequent feedback on student performance" (p. 350). Tier 2 focuses on social skills instruction within small groups, the

teaching of self-regulation/self-management strategies, and the check-in/check-out (CICO) strategy, also known as the Behavior Education Program (BEP; McDaniel et al., 2015).

“CICO is a preventative Tier 2 intervention with demonstrated evidence in decreasing problem behaviors and increasing academic engagement for elementary and high school students” (Kittleman et al., 2018, p. 4). The CICO intervention involves setting daily behavioral goals in which the student participating in the intervention is trying to achieve and requires increasing amounts of prompts, teacher feedback, and progress monitoring from the student and teacher throughout the school day. The student “checks in” at the start of the school day, reviewing the goals and behavioral expectations for the day with a trained CICO member of personnel. At that time, the student is given their behavioral report/score card. This card is used to rate and provide specific feedback to students as a preventative, proactive measure to eliminate future behavioral problems. At the end of class periods, or specified times during the day, students rate themselves on their goals, based on their behavior in class. Classroom teachers also participate by rating the student on those same goals, providing specific, positive, and constructive feedback on the student’s card, conversing and conferencing with them and providing corrective feedback as needed. Students “check out” with the same member of personnel at the end of the day. Student scores are discussed and recorded to provide data specific to the intervention, student progress is celebrated, and goals are set for the following school day. Student point cards are typically sent home for parental/guardian review as well (Yeung et al., 2016).

Tier 3 supports are implemented for students that may have or display more problematic, complex, or extensive behavioral issues and/or are not responding to Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventions. Tier 3 requires much more data from multiple people, including the student's teacher, parent(s), and the school psychologist. Data may derive from rating scales, direct observations, or interviews from those that interact with the student on a regular basis. The collection of this data is intensive and extensive, as it is used to first ensure that Tier 2 interventions are being implemented with fidelity and to also determine what Tier 3 supports are needed. Tier 3 interventions may include wraparound services, which are family-centered and team-based planning interventions, or mental health counseling services (McDaniel et al., 2015). Furthermore, Tier 3 interventions may also be guided by a comprehensive student functional behavioral assessment (FBA) (Yeung et al., 2016).

Overall, the "SWPBS is a systematic approach to plan, develop, and provide primary prevention to all students (Tier 1); specialized group or targeted support to some students that may be at risk for academic and/or behavioral problems (Tier 2); and intensive individualized support for a small percentage of students who already exhibit patterns of chronic and persistent failure (Tier 3)" (Mitchell et al., 2011).

Adaptations for Implementation

There is a great amount of research to support PBIS as an effective practice in elementary and middle school, but research has begun to shift focus on adapting PBIS for high school settings (Morrissey et al., 2010). Kittleman et al. (2018) studied the effectiveness of PBIS at a high school level and discovered that adaptations to the implementation were necessary for the program to be applicable, as well as effective, for

students at the high school level. High schools differ from elementary and middle schools in relation to class sizes and overall student population. High schools have multiple departments that may vary in expectations of students. School culture in high schools also differs from that of elementary and middle schools in that the focus tends to be more on academics and the teaching of content, as opposed to a significant focus on social-behavioral skills. Due to these variances, implementation may involve a need for adaptations to accommodate the needs of high school students.

One adaptation that may be considered when implementing PBIS in high school settings is how problem behaviors and social responsibility are defined. This will aid in identifying and referring students in need of Tier 2 interventions, determining which students are not responding to Tier 1 interventions (Kittleman et al., 2018). Another adaptation discussed in a study performed by Kittleman et al. (2018) included daily point cards being shared electronically as a means to eliminate the potential stigma of students carrying around a daily point card from class to class. The electronic daily point card also provided an alternative to meeting face to face with the student, as the coach/student mentor provided electronic feedback to the student and parents/guardians. Kittleman and his colleagues also learned that high schools not only focused on behavioral goals for their students on the daily point cards, but they also included academic goals. Results from the study showed that goal-specific daily point cards aided teachers in meeting with students regarding their academic standing, thus resulted in potentially preventing course failure (Kittleman et al., 2018).

An additional study by Swoszowski et al. (2013) examined elementary-aged students attending education within a residential setting. The study focused on students

that were non-responsive to the Tier 2 intervention of CICO, displaying increasing amounts of off-task behavior. Due to limited amounts of resources, adults/mentors who implemented CICO within the setting added a mid-day check-up, required that students meet with their mentor an additional time. The additional check in created the Check-in/Check-up/Check-out (CICUCO) intervention, and may be an intriguing option to explore before considering or implementing a more intensive intervention. “Altering the CICO intervention by adding the check-up component allows students an opportunity to receive reinforcement more often and provides students with more frequent contact with their assigned mentor than is available through traditional CICO, which may be sufficient for motivating students to remain on task with behavioral goals; thus, leading to increased engagement in classroom instruction” (Swoszowski et al., 2013, p. 66).

Boyd and Anderson (2013) researched an additional adaptation to the well-known Tier 2 intervention of CICO known as Breaks are Better (BrB). The intervention was designed for students that exhibit behaviors regarding escape from or avoidance of instruction. The process of BrB was implemented in addition to CICO, as the student still carried the daily progress report (DPR), met with teachers to check in and check out, was provided with summative feedback, and the DPR was sent home for parent/guardian review. However, BrB differs from other Tier 2 interventions in that it allows students participating in the intervention to request a number of pre-determined, brief breaks throughout the day. During these breaks, the students may participate or engage in a pre-approved activity, providing an alternative response to escape and avoidance of work, which can typically lead to disruptive or off-task behaviors. Students were specifically trained on a break routine. Students were taught how to determine if the timing was

appropriate to ask for a break, how to signal to the teacher the need or request for a break, how to appropriately take a break, and, if the student was not given approval to take a break, how to continue to meet expectations in class. If the student was granted approval for a break, they were able to engage in the pre-approved activity without getting into trouble or being accused of being off-task during instructional or independent work time (Boyd & Anderson, 2013). Overall, Boyd and Anderson (2013) found this intervention to be successful in improving behavior and academic performance at school, also noting ease of implementation in addition to the Tier 2 CICO intervention.

Adaptations were also made to the traditional PBIS program to accommodate additional educational settings, such as juvenile justice settings, and incorporate facility-wide PBIS (FW-PBIS). Adaptations specifically made within the juvenile justice setting include the makeup of the leadership team, the establishment of the behavioral expectations, adapting the systemic behavioral teachings of Tier 1 to that of year round, 24/7 operating facilities, and the establishment of positive reinforcement systems and instructional and function-based responses to mild problem behavior. The implementation of FW-PBIS looks similar to SWPBIS, but adaptations were made in order to accommodate the specific needs of students within the juvenile justice setting (Sprague et al., 2013).

The state of Tennessee has adapted the SWPBIS program and created a program specifically for the region of middle Tennessee and has termed the program Response to Instruction and Intervention for Behavior (RTI²-B). The program has incorporated the same three-tiered behavioral approach. The Tennessee Behavior Supports Project stated that “the purpose of RTI²-B is to empower educators to equip all students with the

opportunity to meet high expectations regarding behavior and the support to reach every student. Also, students, families, and educators can work together to develop and contribute to a shared school vision” (“Supporting RTI²-B in Middle Tennessee Schools,” 2021).

Sustainability Features of PBIS

Coffee and Horner (2012) presented the following features affecting sustainability of implemented practices: a contextually appropriate innovation, staff buy-in, a shared vision, administrative support, leadership at various levels, ongoing technical assistance, data-based decision making and sharing, and continuous regeneration.

A contextually appropriate innovation must be aligned according to the state and local education agencies’ standards and requirements. When a determination is made to consider the level of appropriateness, consideration of each level within the school system should be made (Coffey & Horner, 2012).

Pinkleman et al. (2015) noted staff buy-in to be the highest identifiable enabler and barrier when it comes to the sustainability of SWPBIS. Coffey and Horner (2012), defined buy-in as “verbal statements supporting change and the overt nonverbal behaviors necessary for change to take place” (p. 408). Before a decision is made to implement an innovation within the school, it is recommended that 80% of school staff buy-in to the change, prior to implementation, in order for the implementation to be successful (Coffey & Horner, 2012). Ideas of PBIS programs are communicated through informative trainings for all school staff. “Presentations by teachers and administrators from schools operating under situations similar to the trainees’ schools are very useful in motivating teachers to implement the program” (Yeung et al., 2016, p. 161).

The research of Swain-Bradway et al. (2015) noted a different approach related to teacher buy-in. A SWPBIS facilitator recognized the personnel within his school solely viewing their roles and responsibilities directly and exclusively to that of academics. Before implementing and beginning training on the SWPBIS program, he assured that the correlation between academic achievement and social behavior was made indisputably evident through professional development and training. The vocabulary used to communicate the policies and practices of SWPBIS is not used in such trainings; rather, it is the focus of the relationship between academic success and social behavior. The facilitator found that, once teachers gained understanding of this relationship, they were more susceptible to teacher buy-in when later introduced to the policies and practices of SWPBIS.

School personnel should share the vision of an innovation's core components and desired outcomes for students. This should involve a detailed plan of implementation and sustainability, as imprecision and inconclusiveness often lead to ineffective implementation and unsuccessful outcomes (Coffey & Horner, 2012). "The shared vision can also provide opportunities for stakeholders to work collaboratively toward a common goal, thus strengthening the stakeholders' bond and power" (Smith, 2011, p. 125).

Coffey and Horner (2012) found administrative support to be the most accentuated feature of sustainability. Principals play a pivotal role in procuring and allocating resources, familiarizing staff members on school procedures, coordinating training, setting expectations, and providing feedback through evaluations (Yeung et al., 2016). McIntosh et al. (2013) found that school administrators contribute to the sustainability of programs when they treat such programs, like that of PBIS, as a priority.

Administrative support is also significantly related to the teachers' confidence in addressing behavioral challenges within their classrooms, which is directly related to that of PBIS (Miller-Richter et al., 2012). "Administrator commitment is often regarded as the driving force for the shift of school culture from punishing problem behavior to reinforcing appropriate behavior" (Yeung et al., 2016, p. 161). Administrators also contribute to the success of implementation by enforcing the use and functioning of teacher and staff teams, allowing time for these teams to meet, providing them access to high-quality data, and assisting in the advancement of their expertise in utilizing data for decision-making (McIntosh et al., 2014).

Though principals hold the primary leadership position within the school, when implementing a new innovation, leadership should derive from various levels. Due to documented high turnover rates among administrative positions and schools having a limited number of principals, leadership of innovation implementation should also stem from practitioners. "Practitioner leadership, especially when the practitioner is well respected by other school personnel, has led to greater commitment and use of the innovation" (Coffey & Horner, 2012, p. 409).

Ongoing technical assistance, such as training and coaching, should be provided to staff, as it is a vital contribution to the success and sustainability of any innovation (Coffey & Horner, 2012). "Explicit training sets the tone and increases consistency and buy-in across the school" (McDaniel et al., 2017, p. 40). In order to increase teacher and staff competence in relation to the innovation, the quality of training and coaching should be considered, and focus on skill building and practical classroom challenges, rather than theoretical information, should be a requirement (Coffey & Horner, 2012). PBIS is

considered to be a valid evidence-based approach to behavior, whereas behavior management courses in teacher education programs are often based on philosophical theories and theoretical situations. Teachers new to the field of education are more likely to respond reactively to student problematic behaviors due to the lack of appropriate training, thus proving the importance of appropriate training (Yeung et al., 2016). Furthermore, activities within these teacher trainings should be aligned with the core principles of the innovation to assure understanding and increase the probability of sustainability (Coffey & Horner, 2012).

Reinke et al. (2014) reported that teachers consider classroom management to be the most challenging and need consistent support and feedback regarding their performance when implementing a new program. When teachers had a sense they are able to manage behavior effectively, they experience feelings of adequacy and competence, have a decreased sense of exhaustion related to teaching, and experience fewer disruptive behaviors in class. With adequate support, teachers became confident that social behavioral interventions they were striving to implement had a positive impact on their students (Reinke et al., 2014).

Schools should have procedures or systems in place involving the collection, recording, and analyzing of data. Data should be available and accessible to all staff in order to provide opportunities for staff to commemorate improvements and achievements, contribute corrective feedback, and assure fidelity of the administration of the innovation and the monitoring of data accordingly (Coffey & Horner, 2012). “Schools consistently implementing the core components of PBIS are more likely to achieve desired changes in student behavior” (Noltemeyer et al., 2019). Swain-Bradway et al.

(2015) noted that one of the lessons learned in their research of SWPBIS in high schools was that “ongoing data sharing is a way to invite teachers into a conversation that validates their hard work and effort” (p. 248). Consistent monitoring of data also led to improvements and the refining of implementation, which is directly related to continuous regeneration (Coffey & Horner, 2012).

Noltemeyer et al. (2018) noted multiple assessment tools used to measure the degree of implementation for PBIS. However, the Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI) was one of the most commonly utilized assessments. Noltemeyer et al. (2017) found that the TFI was a requirement for most states implementing PBIS. The TFI is not only used to measure levels of implementation, but it is also used to aid in action planning for the future. Measurements of implementation fidelity are conducted across the three tiers; Tier 1: Universal SWPBIS Features, Tier 2: Targeted SWPBIS Features, and Tier 3: Intensive SWPBIS Features (Algozzine et al., 2019). The TFI uses scores derived from a Likert-type scale, with a score of 0 describing the item as not implemented, a score of 1 describing the item is partially implemented, and a score of 2 describing the item as fully implemented (Noltemeyer et al., 2019). According to the TFI manual (Algozzine et al., 2019), “as a general rule, a score of 70% for each tier is accepted as a level of implementation that will result in improved student outcomes” (p. 3). Overall, the TFI can be utilized to determine if a school is implementing or needs to implement SWPBIS, provide guidance in implementing practices for all three tiers, help with the sustaining of the program, or identifying schools deserving of recognition for their level of implementation (Algozzine et al., 2019).

Continuous regeneration involves the consideration of current practice versus the desired outcomes. In order to prevent decreased fidelity and interest in program implementation, there is an urgency to ensure teachers and staff be provided training opportunities to increase levels of competency in the innovation and its implementation, which is also directly related to all other sustainability factors, specifically administrative support in the use of team functioning and ongoing technical assistance and training (Coffey & Horner, 2012).

Similar to Coffey and Horner, Yeung et al. (2016), through analyzing existing literature, found there are four dimensions regarding that of sustainability; ongoing professional development and technical assistance, administrative support, an emphasis on fidelity in implementation, and proper and effective evaluation of fidelity of implementation as well. All dimensions are interconnected and tend to enhance the other three dimensions (Yeung et al., 2016).

Barriers for Implementation, Sustainability, and Successful Outcomes

Research has indicated that positive behavior interventions have a positive effect on students in educational settings, but most do not maintain sustainability over time (Yeung et al., 2016). Sugai and Horner (2019) found that, of the schools implementing PBIS, only 65% are implementing at or above criterion. Failure in sustaining programs, such as PBIS, contributed to significant costs of wasted time and funding, along with the loss of benefit from students that have achieved progress and gains from the initial implementation of such programs (Yeung et al., 2016).

Implementing innovations, like that of PBIS, lead to many challenges on a state, district, and school level. Resource demands, retention of personnel, and personnel

rejection of new practices and approaches often lead to the lack of investment of supports needed to implement and sustain evidence-based practices (Nese et al., 2016). At a school level, implementation presents challenges for staff in that many of the school's systems and practices that have been in place for years, or even decades, may require complete realignment in order to adapt to those systems and evidence-based practices that align with SWPBIS, which could take a considerable amount of time and consistent effort in order to achieve (Swain-Bradway et al., 2015).

Despite the documented positive outcomes related to SWPBS, low percentages of teacher buy-in was problematic, as Feuerborn and Chinn (2012) noted that many schools still relied on punitive strategies, enforcing a more reactive approach to disciplinary issues, rather than that of positive reinforcement which is promoted within SWPBIS. These teacher perceptions related to misunderstandings, philosophical beliefs, and limited knowledge of behavioral principles of the SWPBIS program influenced the success and sustainability of SWPBIS. Difficulties in staff willingness to collaboratively problem-solve with other staff members and student families also presented issues. Skepticism from staff regarding justifying whether programs such as SWPBIS are needed and questioning the level of effectiveness for their school and their students presented multiple barriers for implementation and sustainability as well (Feuerborn and Chinn, 2012). "Without high commitment and strong belief, staff may resist following positive behavior interventions at the classroom level even when the school has introduced it as a priority" (Yeung et al., 2016, p. 160).

Challenges present themselves in all schools, but McDaniel et al. (2017) discovered that multiple barriers for positive discipline programs present themselves

within high-need schools. Noted challenges included buy-in on the state, district, and administrative levels. State support entails prioritizing and promoting PBIS as an initiative and allocating resources to provide training and awareness. The state should also monitor the implementation, as well as the fidelity in following the evidence-based practices associated with PBIS. Districts should provide an even level of support to all schools. However, schools considered “high-need” could require additional resources. Therefore, district support should appropriately match the needs of each individual school (McDaniel et al., 2017).

Bambara et al. (2012) identified three barriers that contribute to the sustainability of SWPBIS as schools having limited time for planning, implementing the program, and the ability to meet as a team. Administrative support, in regards to the PBIS program, involves the administrator justifiably agreeing with its principles, allowing teachers the time to attend trainings and collaborate within their teams, and designating appropriate resources necessary for implementation (Yeung et al., 2016). “When the administrator is not supportive or there are changes in leadership, priorities shift away from PBIS. Buy-in and teacher momentum for PBIS drift and administrators spend more time with reactive, punitive disciplinary issues” (McDaniel et al., 2017, p. 39).

Student related issues, in regard to behavioral expectations, can present barriers in successful implementation of PBIS. Student confusion in the variations of expectations within private home settings and public community and school settings alter the success of PBIS due to modifications in behavior in accordance to their environment. “When there is a misalignment between behavior expectations across the home, community, and school settings, schools need to focus on explicitly teaching students new, appropriate

skills; use consistent language when referring to expected behaviors; and provide effective and regular reinforcement when positive, expected behaviors occur” (McDaniel et al, 2017, p. 40).

Lack of involvement from the community and student families results in a scarcity of shared values related to positive behavioral support programs within schools labeled as high need. Often times, due to poor communication between home and school environments, educational approaches that are taught and instilled in the home are not aligned with the proactive practices of PBIS taught within the school environment. Issues related to cultures containing low poverty levels in high-need schools are also factors of low sustainability as well (McDaniel et al., 2017).

McDaniel et al. (2017) also noted the importance of assuring schools have designated and dedicated coaches for the PBIS program. When coaches were not responsible for their assigned roles within the program, it typically resulted in other school personnel, such as administrators, school psychologists, counselors, and special education teachers, taking on those responsibilities, causing them to become overwhelmed, and, in some instances, lead to a faltering program (McDaniel et al., 2017).

Outcomes Related to PBIS Implementation

Programs implemented to purposefully enhance social and emotional skills and aid in remedying problematic behaviors often resulted in increased academic achievement and appropriate behaviors (Sherrod et al., 2009). Studies have shown that SWPBIS has aided in making significant gains and improvements within schools regarding school climate, consequences concerning disciplinary actions, organization,

bullying, and academic achievement, along with decreased behavioral incidences and school suspensions (Gage et al., 2018).

In a study conducted by Sherrod et al., (2009) in a Southeastern suburban elementary school experiencing increased discipline referrals, the outcomes of SWPBIS were examined. Interventions were put into place on two levels; a school-wide approach to behavioral intervention and a targeted group approach. The targeted group contained students that received three or more discipline referrals within the fall semester and were invited to participate in the counseling group, called Positive Results in Discipline Education (PRIDE). Once the students gained parental consent to participate, the students participated in counselor-led sessions once a week for 30 minutes for 8 weeks. Lessons were focused on the behavioral needs of students within the school setting, including a focus on rules, problem-solving methods to build better relationships, anger and how it affects others, making a personal connection between distracting behaviors and their effect on their academics, positive communication skills, shedding associating negative behavior labels, and a lesson of reflection based on the previous lessons.

Results of Sherrod's and his colleagues' study derived from both approaches; the school-wide approach and the targeted-group approach. To measure the effectiveness on the school-wide approach, data were collected for two academic school years regarding the top six office referral categories within the school; inappropriate behavior, bus referral, physical aggression, not following directions, being disruptive, and being disrespectful. During the 2006-2007 academic school year, the school had 219 discipline referrals, and, for the 2007-2008 academic school year, that number decreased by 26%, having only 162 discipline referrals. However, of the six categories, four are noted as

having had positive changes with decreases ranging from 43 percent-66 percent, whereas the categories of being disrespectful and disruptive had a negative change with increases of 63% and 25%. Results from the targeted PRIDE group were similar, noting positive changes ranging from 15%-20%, and a negative change of 25%. Overall, the data collected from this study shows that positive behavioral interventions improve student behaviors and decrease student discipline referrals (Sherrod et al., 2009).

Related to the works of Sherrod and his colleagues, Curtis et al. (2010) investigated the implementation of SWPBS and its effect on behavioral referrals, extended time outs within the school, out of school suspensions (OSS), and loss of instructional days due to behavior within a rural Kindergarten through fifth grade school. After four years of SWPBS implementation, there was a 40% decrease in behavior referrals, a 67% decrease in OSS, a 56.5% decrease of loss of instructional days, but the difference in extended time outs was not statistically significant (Curtis et al., 2010).

Similarly, McCrary et al. (2012) researched the effects of SWPBS on students that attend impoverished rural community schools within two school districts. Four schools were the focus, and grades within the schools ranged from fourth to twelfth grade. As a result of the SWPBIS implementations, all schools yielded positive results. School administrators determined the data of which they would like to focus and share. One school reported a 59% drop in office referrals, and another reported a 54% decrease of student failure rates. Two schools, one of which fed into the other, decided to focus results on in school suspensions (ISS) and disciplinary placements. While one school reported multi-day ISS referrals decreasing from 331 to 11 and one day ISS referrals decreasing from 497 to 59, the feeder school reported an average of a 47.6% decrease in

the number of disciplinary placements, such as ISS, OSS, the Juvenile Justice Alternative Educational Program, and the District Alternative Educational Program (McCrary et al., 2012).

Researchers at Loyola University Chicago conducted a case study within an urban public high school in Chicago. Professors and graduate students from the university met with faculty from the high school and, as a team, developed a plan of implementing PBS within the school. Students were informed of the elements of PBS and appropriate school behaviors through student orientations, role play activities, and rewarded with a ticket system. The case study was conducted over the course of three years, and PBS implementation resulted in a decrease of ODR's, noting that PBS had a positive impact on student behaviors (Morrissey et al., 2010). In relation to the research from Morrissey and colleagues, through research conducted in an Iranian study in the city of Ahwaz, Somayaeh et al. (2013) found that positive discipline can have a positive effect on increasing levels of student commitment, their motivation to learn, and their self-control.

Gage et al. (2018) studied data from 1,755 public elementary and intermediate schools in the state of Georgia that were implementing SWPBIS in the 2015-2016 school year, focusing on analyzing effects of SWPBIS on disciplinary incidents and schools suspensions. The state of Georgia, through its Department of Education, supports the implementation of SWPBIS, providing districts and schools with planning time, training, and coaching. To sum up their research, Gage and his colleagues found that all schools within their study implementing SWPBIS with fidelity resulted in decreased student behavioral occurrences and suspensions. However, those schools implementing with a

higher level of fidelity experienced higher levels of reductions in behavioral difficulties (Gage et al., 2018).

Chapter III

Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to measure the level of implementation of SWPBIS within a Title 1 school in the state of Tennessee, as measured by the Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI) developed by Algozinne and colleagues (2019). Participants' results from completing the TFI provide efficient data in determining the levels of fidelity that each tier of the SWPBIS program, or RTI²-B, as the school calls their program, is being implemented within their school. Degrees of implementation are determined based upon a Likert-scale, ranging from categories 0 through 2, representing determinations of Not Implemented, Partially Implemented, and Fully Implemented. The inventory is divided into three sections and produces scale scores for each of the three tiers; Tier 1: Universal SWPBIS Features, Tier 2: Targeted SWPBIS Features, and Tier 3: Intensive SWPBIS Features (Algozinne et al., 2019).

This study also examined the effectiveness of RTI²-B implementation in regard to documented numbers of office discipline referrals (ODRs), comparing the school's year to year ODR data from the school's first five years of operation, as well as the level of teacher support of RTI²-B and its effect on the number of office discipline referrals reported.

The independent variable of this study is the school's implementation level of RTI²-B, while the dependent variables are the TFI and the school's number of documented ODRs.

Research Questions

The following Research Questions were examined within this field study:

1. To what percentage has Response to Instruction and Intervention for Behavior (RTP²-B) been implemented across Tiers 1 through 3?
2. Has the implementation of RTP²-B had a positive effect on student behaviors in relation to the number of office discipline referrals (ODRs) documented?
3. Does teacher buy-in and level of support of the program have an effect on the number of reported ODRs?

Null Hypotheses

1. There will be no statistically significant difference in the percentage of implementation across Tiers 1 through 3.
2. There will be no statistically significant positive effects of RTP²-B in relation to the school's documented ODRs.
3. There will be no statistically significant difference in the number of reported ODRs based on the level of teacher buy-in and support of RTP²-B.

Research Design

This field study was a quantitative study using Algozinne and colleague's Tiered Fidelity Inventory from 2014. (Appendix C). Results from this inventory will aid in determining the level of implementation across all three tiers of RTP²-B. The scores will allow the researcher to obtain a percentage to which Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 are implemented within the school according to the staff's or participants' perception based on the answers they anonymously provide.

Data derived from the documented number of office discipline referrals (ODRs)

from each of the first five academic school years; 2015-2016, 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, 2019-2020, will be utilized to measure and determine the effectiveness of the implementation of the RTI²-B program within the school, noting whether RTI²-B has an effect on student behavior.

A survey was also given to teachers within the school building asking teachers their support level of the program and how many ODRs they reported during the last full academic school year; 2019-2020. The researcher used the data from this survey to conduct a statistical analysis using Pearson's chi-square test of association to determine if there is an effect on the number of ODRs reported in association with the level of teacher support of RTI²-B.

Participants

Participants completing the TFI include the certified educators within the Title 1 elementary school for the 2020-2021 academic school year. The sample consisted of 23 voluntary participants of the 65 certified staff members.

There were also 39 participants of those same 65 certified staff members that voluntarily completed the Support/ODR Survey.

Independent Variables

The independent variables of this study include the levels of implementation of RTI²-B, teacher level of support of RTI²-B, and determined effectiveness of RTI²-B on student behavior, as well as determined effectiveness of teacher support on ODRs.

Levels of implementation of the RTI²-B program are based on the percentage of implementation for each of the three tiers of RTI²-B determined by the scale scores produced by the Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI). The TFI is a Likert-type scale, rating

implementation on a 0-2 scale; representing not implemented, partially implemented, and fully implemented produced a percentage of implementation for each tier. A score of 70% or higher indicates an acceptable level of implementation that will increase student outcomes (Algozzine et al., 2014).

In relation to the number of documented office discipline referrals, data will determine whether the implementation of RTI²-B had a positive or negative effect on student behavior. Furthermore, the researcher will determine whether teacher level of support had any effect on the number of reported ODRs, based on teacher responses on the Support/ODR Survey. This survey enabled teachers to rank their level of support, choosing from options of fully supporting the program, partially supporting the program, or not supporting the program.

Instrumentation

The Tiered Fidelity Instrumentation (TFI) is an assessment tool used to measure SWPBIS implementation fidelity across the three tiers: Tier 1: Universal SWPBIS Features, Tier 2: Targeted SWPBIS Features, and Tier 3: Intensive SWPBIS Features. Participants rate each listed practice, assessing the level of items described, rating them on a 0-2 Likert scale. Level 0 represents the category of Not Implemented, Level 1 represents the item as being Partially Implemented, and Level 2 represents the category of Fully Implemented. A scale score of 70% indicates that the assessed item has been implemented to an acceptable level and will result in positive student outcomes (Noltemeyer et al., 2019; Algozzine et al., 2019).

Assumptions

The first statistical assumption has been met due to the fact that teachers answered

every question on the TFI, indicating understanding of the Likert scale ratings. The other assumptions are difficult to determine and measure, as there was no way to determine teachers' honesty in answering the questions on the TFI or the Support/ODR Survey. However, results of levels of implementation did reflect in the outcome of determining the effectiveness of RTI²-B implementation in relation to the number of documented ODRs.

Procedure

Due to Coronavirus Disease of 2019 (COVID-19) restrictions regarding meeting in person, the TFI was distributed via email through Microsoft Forms. Participants were informed of the purpose of the study, that participation was completely voluntary, and also of the anonymity of the survey as well. The email was sent to all 65 certified staff members within the school building, of which 23 responses were obtained.

The researcher requested and obtained ODR data from the district's school board for the academic years of 2015-2016, 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 and school population numbers of each year from the school's attendance clerk.

The researcher created an additional survey, the Support/ODR Survey, asking teachers to rate their level of support and provide the number of ODRs they reported during the last full academic school year. These surveys were placed in teachers' mailboxes in the teacher work area, and instructions were emailed to teachers regarding anonymous completion of the survey and informing them of the location of which to turn in the completed surveys.

Data Analysis and Plan

The researcher obtained data from the TFI survey via Microsoft Forms.

Implementation Levels were scored for Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3, with scores of 70% or higher representing successful implementation.

In order to obtain a percentage, the researcher will multiply the number of participants times the number of possible points of each tier to determine the total number of possible points. The researcher will take the points scored for each tier and divide by the possible number of points to obtain the percentage of implementation participants believe each tier is being implemented within their school.

The number of ODR's reported for all five of the academic school years, from 2015-2020, will be examined by the researcher to determine if there was an increase, a decrease, or a significant statistical difference in the number of ODR's reported from year to year by completing an Analysis of Gain or Loss (Mills & Gay, 2019) and determine the mean difference between academic school years.

In order to determine an effect the level of teacher support on reported ODRs, the researcher utilized the data from the Support/ODR survey to run a statistical analysis, using the Pearson chi-square test for association.

Chapter IV

Data Analysis and Results

Data Collecting and Recording

The researcher sent an email to the 65 certified staff within the school building containing the TFI survey through Microsoft Forms. Of the 65 possible participants, 23 (35%) responded, and the researcher was able to utilize this data to determine the staff's perception of the level of implementation for all three tiers.

The researcher created the Support/ODR survey, placing the survey in the certified staff's mailboxes in the teacher work area. An email was sent to those teachers with directions in completing the survey and specifying the location in which to place the completed surveys. The researcher then utilized the data from the survey to enter into the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) Software to create a data set with the variables of teacher support, number of reported ODRs, and gave the number of reported ODRs a rating scale of low (0-4 ODRs), moderate (5-10 ODRs), and high (10 or more ODRs).

The numbers of student population was provided by the attendance clerk within the school, and the number of ODRs recorded for each of the 5 years of operation was provided by the school district's central office. The table below displays the total number of ODRs reported and recorded for each school year.

Table 1

Total number of ODRs reported

Academic School Year	Number of Office Discipline Referrals
Year 1 (2015-2016)	272
Year 2 (2016-2017)	101
Year 3 (2017-2018)	106
Year 4 (2018-2019)	114
Year 5 (2019-2020)	184

Descriptive Statistics

In order to determine a mean of loss or gain in ODRs, the researcher completed an Analysis of Gain or Loss (Mills & Gay, 2019), as show in the following table:

Table 2

Analysis of gain or difference in ODRs from year to year

Years Compared	Gain or Difference
Year 2 – Year 1	-171
Year 3 – Year 2	+5
Year 4 – Year 3	+8
Year 5 – Year 4	+70
Total Loss or Gain:	-88

To determine the mean difference of the total gains or losses, the researcher took the total loss or gain and divided it by the number of comparisons (5), to determine the average loss or gain of office discipline referrals was -17.6 for each of the five academic school years researched. However, these results were skewed based on conversations that

took place between the researcher and a faculty member of whom aids in the reporting of data.

Following year one, the year with the most documented referrals, the school was informed they were reporting too many ODRs related to students of minorities. Therefore, ODRs were not reported with fidelity and many disciplinary issues were resolved without proper documentation. Though the number of ODRs reported over the first five years of operation averaged a 17.6 decrease, it does not mean RTI²-B was the contributing factor in the decreasing numbers.

Furthermore, it is important to note that Year 5, academic school year 2019-2020, only consisted of three quarters due to the school closing the last quarter of the year as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Though the school was close the last 9 weeks of the school year, there was still a large increase of 70 ODRs in comparison to the year before.

Reasons for such a large increase were questioned by the researcher. It was brought to the researcher's attention that the school began to document ODRs with fidelity when they began to feel a lack of district support in regard to students who received multiple ODRs and were in need of the most intensive interventions. The school of which the research was conducted houses the district's school-based behavioral health integration program. The program provides therapeutic services to students and their families and incorporates the idea of students, families, teachers, and staff working collaboratively to best service the program's students with their emotional and behavioral needs. Administration struggled to gain support of the district in referring students who repetitively displayed problematic and disruptive behaviors to this particular program. It was then that ODRs began being reported with fidelity, regardless of minority status, as a

means to convey the need of supportive programs and interventions for these particular students as a result of their displays of such behaviors.

During the five years of operation, student population increased year to year. The following table shows the number of students enrolled each academic school year:

Table 3

Student population by school year and population increase

Academic School Year	Student Population	Increase in Population from the Previous Year
Year 1 (2015-2016)	798	Not applicable
Year 2 (2016-2017)	803	.99%
Year 3 (2017-2018)	807	1.00%
Year 4 (2018-2019)	823	1.02%
Year 5 (2019-2020)	857	1.04%

An adequate percentage of implementation for each tier is 70%, according to the SWPBIS Tiered Fidelity Inventory Scoring Guide (Algozzine et al., 2019). By answering the 15 questions for Tier 1, 13 questions for Tier 2, and 17 questions for Tier 3, participants' answers to the Likert scale scored questions provided the researcher with information regarding their perception of the level of implementation for each tier. The researcher considered the total points possible for each tier and multiplied it by the number of participants to determine the total points possible each tier could receive. In order to obtain the percentage of implementation for each tier, the researcher added up

the points the participant scored each tier and divided it by the possible points.

The table below displays the TFI results based on the answers of the 23 participants, displaying the percentage of implementation for each of the three tiers.

Table 4

Staff perception of the level of implementation based on Tiered Fidelity Inventory results

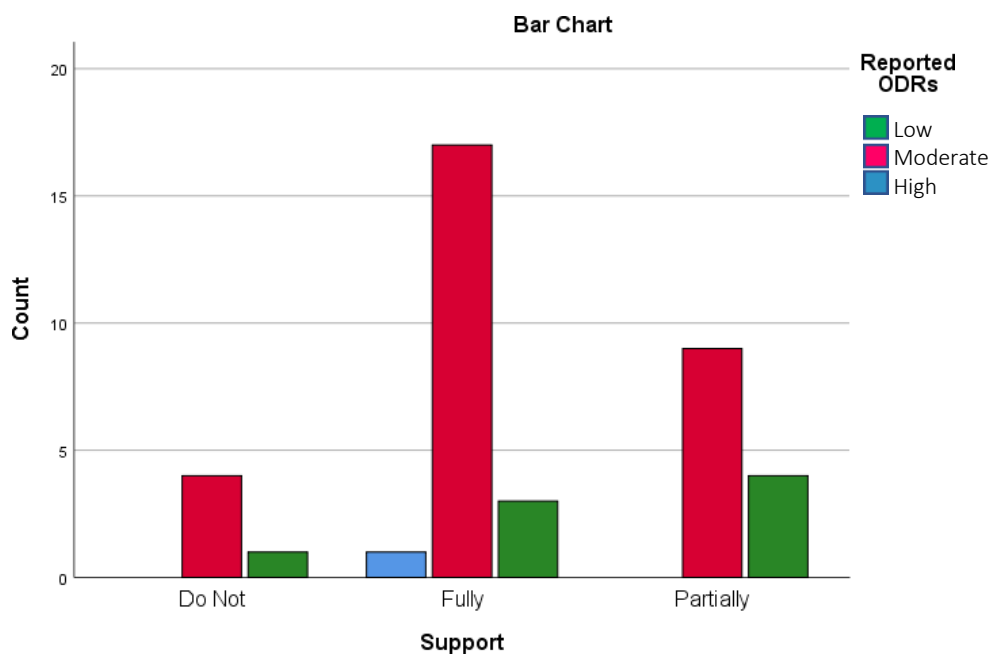
Tier	Total Points Scored	Total Possible Points	Percentage of Implementation
Tier 1	504	690	73%
Tier 2	493	598	82%
Tier 3	534	782	68%

The Pearson's chi-square test of association was used to analyze the data from the 39 responses to the Support/ODR Survey. Of the 39 responses, 54% ($n = 21$) participants fully support RTI²-B, 33% ($n = 13$) partially support RTI²-B, and 13% ($n = 5$) participants do not support RTI²-B. The statistical analysis yielded a substantive result of no difference involving the teachers' level of support on the number of reported ODRs, $\chi^2(4, N = 39) = 2.07, p > .05$.

Table 5 displays the number of office referrals reported by each of the three support groups from an ordinal standpoint. Estimated number of ODRs provided by the Support/ODR survey and were grouped according to the following categories: Low (0-4 ODRs), Moderate (5-10 ODRs), and High (10 or more ODRs). The bars represent how many certified teachers from each level of support reported ODRs within the Low, Moderate, and High categories.

Table 5

Number of ODRs reported from each level of support during the 2019-2020 school year



When the researcher discovered that the highest number of ODRs documented derived from the teachers that fully supported the program, the researcher began looking into why those that support the program the most would have the highest number. The researcher discovered that higher numbers from that level of support were a result of students that received multiple ODRs and were in need of more intensive interventions.

Therefore, more documentation for these particular students was needed in order to obtain district support in the placement of the students as a means of meeting their emotional, behavioral, and academic needs.

Results

Discussion of Hypotheses

Based on the results of the staff TFI scores and the determination of significance in variation of the number of ODRs documented during the first five academic years, it is

possible to address the Null Hypotheses.

The results from the staff TFI survey determined that only two of the three tiers are adequately implemented. Therefore, the first null hypothesis is rejected. Similarly, according to the results yielded from the Analysis of Gain or Loss (Mills & Gay, 2019), the test yielded an average decrease of -17.6 office referrals for the first five years of operation, allowing the researcher to reject the null hypothesis. In relation to the third null hypothesis, per the statistical analysis of the Pearson chi-squared test of association, there is no statistical difference in the number of reported ODRs amongst the three levels of support.

Chapter V

Discussion

Summary of Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of RTI²-B within an inner city, Title 1 elementary school in middle Tennessee. Specifically, the researcher determined the level of implementation fidelity, and whether the level of teacher support of the RTI²-B program has an effect on the number of reported ODRs by examining the number of ODRs recorded for each of the five years the school has been in existence, along with staff perception of the level of implementation of RTI²-B to determine whether RTI²-B had any effect on the number of ODRs reported. The researcher conducted an Analysis of Gain or Loss (Mills & Gay, 2019) to determine if any significance can be revealed concerning the number of ODRs reported among the school's second through fifth academic school years.

The field study also found that only two of the three tiers were adequately implemented within the school, and there was a decrease in the number of ODRs reported in relation to the mean of ODRs for all five academic school years.

Using a Pearson chi-square test of association, the researcher also determined that there is no difference in the number of reported ODRs amongst the teacher levels of support of the RTI²-B implemented within the school.

Limitations

The researcher discovered and considered a number of limitations, with the most significant limitation being the small sample size in all areas examined. Only 23 of 65 (35%) certified employees responded to the Tiered Fidelity Inventory. Levels of

implementation could vary if more had voluntarily participated. In addition to the small sample size related to the TFI, the Support/ODR Survey had 39 of those same 65 (60%) respond, resulting in a limited sample size in this area as well. Small sample sizes lead to limitations in the interpretations of results, which pose greater limitations regarding low statistical power of a statistical analysis that a small sample size, such as this one, is able to provide in contribution to this research, as well as future research.

The second limitation relates to varieties of the level of training and professional development the staff has participated over the five years of operation. There are first year teachers, along with teachers that are new to the school from year to year that have not received the same amount of training in RTI²-B, which could have an effect on levels of implementation.

A third limitation regards the level of teacher support. Though participants' responses to the Support/ODR Survey included their rates of teacher support, it cannot be determined if participants were honest in ranking their level of support due to fear in a negative result for the school and its administration.

An additional limitation is the level of fidelity in which office disciplines are reported, alluding to situations in which referrals may not have been entered into the system the school uses to document ODRs, and the fact that some disciplinary issues are resolved with disregard to documentation.

A final limitation the researcher considered was the fact the school implements an additional program, Leader in Me, to promote positive behaviors regarding leadership, social-emotional learning, and self-awareness. This program could have also had a positive effect on the number of ODRs reported.

Assumptions

The researcher can assume that the increases in student population may be a contributing factor to the increase in office discipline referrals each year.

Based on the anonymity of the TFI survey, there is no way to determine the participant demographics or level of training or level of understanding of the participants regarding the RTI²-B program. Participants did answer all questions within the survey, but levels of honesty could not be determined.

Levels of fidelity regarding the documentation and reporting of ODRs could not be determined or assured by the researcher or the research conducted. However, it was brought to the researcher's attention that the increase in ODRs reported each year could very well be contributed to the need of more documentation to gain support from the district in regard to increased displays of students' misbehaviors in addition to a lack of support regarding the special placements and need of more intensive interventions for students as a result of such displayed behaviors.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this field study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Further research and investigation with a larger sample size may aid in detecting any effects of the program, as well as detect any differences between groups.
2. Teachers should be informed that some Tier 3 interventions are implemented within the area of special education, and the school should include this

information within their informational meetings, along with the RTI²-B committee reporting it to staff as well.

3. Due to the increase of population and students progressing on to the next grade level each year and transitioning in and out of elementary school, the researcher recommends following specific groups of students or grade levels that participate in RTI²-B over the course of the research.
4. Adequate training and professional development should be available and required for all staff expected to implement the RTI²-B program.
5. The researcher could limit the number of participants completing the TFI survey to the school's RTI²-B committee, provide the TFI multiple times over the course of a year, and allow the committee time to address needs of improvement regarding implementation of each tier.

Discussion of Recommendations

Further research and investigation with a larger sample size would provide a better and clearer contribution to research. A larger sample size could reveal more of a significant or a greater statistical difference regarding the effects of the SWPBIS or RTI²-B program. By making the surveys mandatory or by researching a number of schools with similar teacher and student demographics that share the same missions and/or core values in regard to behavior would be helpful in contributing to a larger sample size. Another option may be to research a number of schools with similar demographics and compare to other schools that do not resemble same demographics. The researcher could compare the effects of the program among differences of schools with various demographics of students and teachers. Regardless of demographics and how a researcher

goes about the study, a larger sample size would aid in providing greater amounts of information to be discovered.

The researcher found that Tier 1 was embedded into instruction and school expectations for all students, and all Tier 2 students are on the CICO system with adaptations to fit their behavioral needs, such as goal-specific, daily behavioral point cards. However, Tier 3 is not fully implemented within the school, according to staff perceptions.

The researcher found that some students in need of Tier 3 are being served under the special education umbrella, having been proven eligible for special education services under the eligibilities such as of Other Health Impairment (OHI). Examples of an OHI eligibility may be that of a student with a medical diagnosis with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Another eligibility may include that of Emotionally Disturbed (ED), as related to emotionally or behaviorally disturbed, as mentioned in Chapter 2. Most of these students have emotional, behavioral, and/or pre-vocational goals within their Individualized Education Program (IEP) and are monitored specifically on those goals as a provision of meeting their educational needs. If these students are not successful in achieving these goals, and behavior is or becomes a greater issue, with parental or guardian consent, the special education teacher and the behavioral specialist complete observations and the needed documentation of behavior in order to create a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA), in which the parents or caregivers are involved in creating, which is relative to that of a Tier 3 intervention.

The researcher can only assume that this is the reason as to why teachers perceive Tier 3 as not being implemented or not being fully implemented, resulting in an implementation score of under 70%. RTI²-B is not and will never be a special education service. However, it was brought to the researcher's attention that CICO can be a service on a child's IEP. Therefore, it is clear to see why RTI²-B and special education services seem to overlap one another.

Following a specific group of students or specific grade levels over time will provide the researcher more adequate information regarding the effectiveness of the RTI²-B program. The researcher could document the specific group's behavioral progress, annually, over the course of a desired amount of time. Research regarding this particular study's school of focus could be conducted with a beginning group of Kindergarteners and following that same group of students through their fifth grade year, as this school serves grades Kindergarten through fifth grade. Furthermore, the researcher could closely document students with documented ODRs and note amounts of increase or decline over the course of the research, following them through the tiers of intervention in which they participate, and, in turn, aid in the determination of the effectiveness of the program in multiple areas such as behavioral instruction; specific behavioral interventions, such as CICO, CICUCO, and BrB; and the number of students transitioning out of tiers 2 and 3 over the course of research.

Providing adequate training for all teachers implementing the RTI²-B program could enhance teacher understanding of the program's core values and be beneficial in increasing the level or percentage of implementation. This could involve teachers that are

new to the building and new to the program, or it could include veteran teachers needing a refresher course on the program's core principles.

Currently, most of the school's required professional development hours are focused on a program that focuses on student social-emotional development and self-awareness. Throughout conducting this study, the researcher observed that the two programs seem to compliment and overlap one another in various ways, and teachers include many of the program's core values within their daily instruction and lesson planning. It is evident that this program could have an effect on the success of RTI²-B, however, it cannot be determined whether either program lends itself to student success or the level to which they do.

Teachers within this particular school will undergo training in the middle of the summer that contributes to RTI²-B, as it is focused on restorative practices, leading to proactively improving behaviors, complimenting core values of PBIS. However, as with all scheduled trainings, teachers that are hired, new to the school or district, after the training date, are not taken into account as having been trained, and learning of such practices learned in the trainings are typically communicated through co-workers and grade level teams, which could possibly pose problems in the expectations of implementing the program and its practices, as well as the program's success and teacher buy-in and support.

If research was limited to administering the TFI to the school's RTI²-B committee, it would allow the committee to address program deficits and set committee and program goals within their school building, thus improving the program's level or percentage of implementation and success. Furthermore, in regards to this specific study,

it would be beneficial for the RTI²-B committee to administer the TFI again, as a means to assure Tier 3 is being implemented accordingly and meeting the implementation standard, of at least a 70%, the TFI suggests.

Conclusions

Programs such as SWPBIS and RTI²-B have been known to have a positive effect on student behaviors across the nation in various ways by offering intervention for students based on their behavioral needs. Successful levels of implementation across all three tiers of SWPBIS and RTI²-B have many variables, and a committee within the school should enforce implementation by successfully addressing each program deficit. One way to do this is to provide adequate training for all teachers required to implement the program, as well as to increase teacher buy-in and support by educating them on the program's core principles.

Sustained implementation of such programs has aided students in their academic and behavioral success. "Research has shown that all students, and specifically students with or at-risk of emotional and behavioral concerns benefit from learning environments that are consistent, predictable, positive, and safe, and SWPBIS has demonstrated its effectiveness for providing schools with the framework to create such environments for their students" (Nese, et al., 2016). Providing adequate training to teachers implementing such programs could increase levels of implementation and teacher buy-in, and, in turn, help students become more successful within, and possibly even outside, their school environment.

This study did not contribute to what research has proven in relation to successful outcomes with SWPBIS and its effect on documented ODRs. Research from this study

determined that the school is only implementing Tiers 1 and 2 sufficiently, while Tier 3 is not being implemented at a level in which the program suggests. Furthermore, RTI²-B has not had a significantly positive effect on the number of ODRs reported in the first five years of operation, and, in addition to the effectiveness of the RTI²-B program, this study's research yielded no substantive difference in the amount of teacher support of the program in relation to the number of documented ODRs.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Approval Letter from the Robertson County Board of Education Granting Permission to
Conduct the Study

County Schools

February 9, 2021

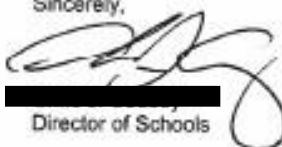
Bethany Jones
[REDACTED]

Dear Ms. Jones,

Your research proposal, *The Effect of the Level of Implementation of School-Wide Positive Behavioral Intervention Support on the Number of Reported Office Discipline Referrals*, was approved at the [REDACTED] County School Board meeting on Monday, February 8, 2021.

We look forward to working with you as you conduct your research study.

Sincerely,


[REDACTED]
Director of Schools

C: [REDACTED]

CJC/bbc

SCHOOL BOARD
[REDACTED]

APPENDIX B

Approval Letter from the Austin Peay State University (APSU) Institutional Review
Board (IRB) Granting Permission to Conduct the Study

AP Austin Peay
State University
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Date: 1/26/2021

Re 21-007: The Effect of the Level of Implementation of School-Wide Positive Behavioral Intervention Support on the Number of Reported Office Discipline Referrals

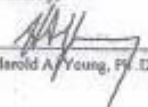
Dear Dr. Stuart and Ms. Jones,

We appreciate your cooperation with the human research review process. This letter is to inform you that study 20-007 has been reviewed on an expedited level. It is my pleasure to tell you that your revised application is approved.

This approval is subject to APSU Policies and Procedures governing human subject research. The IRB reserves the right to withdraw approval if unresolved issues are raised during the review period. Any changes or deviations from the approved protocol must be submitted in writing to the IRB for further review and approval before continuing.

This approval is for one calendar year and a closed study report or request for continuing review is required on or before the expiration date, 1/25/2022. If you have any questions or require further information, you can contact me by phone (931-221-7059) or email (youngha@apsu.edu).

Sincerely,


Harold A. Young, Ph.D. Chair, APIRB

APPENDIX C

SWPBIS Tiered Fidelity Inventory

Version 2.1

Tiered Fidelity Inventory

Please complete the following survey regarding Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports within your school. Anonymity will be maintained, as names and emails will not be linked to survey responses.

1. 1.1 Team Composition: Tier 1 team includes a Tier 1 systems coordinator, a school administrator, a family member, and individuals able to provide (a) applied behavioral expertise, (b) coaching expertise, (c) knowledge of student academic and behavior patterns, (d) knowledge about the operations of the school across grade levels and programs, and for high schools, (e) student representation.

0: Tier 1 team does not exist or does not include a coordinator, school administrator, or individuals with applied behavioral expertise.

1: Tier 1 team exists, but does not include all identified roles or attendance of these members is below 80%.

2: Tier 1 team exists with all identified roles, AND attendance of all roles is at or above 80%.

2.1.2 Team Operating Procedures: Tier 1 team meets at least monthly and has (a) regular meeting format/agenda, (b) minutes, (c) defined meeting roles, and (d) a current action plan.

0: Tier 1 team does not use regular meeting format/agenda, minutes, defined roles, or a current action plan.

1: Tier 1 team has at least 2, but not all 4 features.

2: Tier 1 team meets at least monthly and uses regular meeting format/agenda, minutes, defined roles, AND have a current action plan.

3.1.3 Behavioral Expectations: School has five or fewer positively stated behavioral expectations and examples by setting/location for student and staff behaviors.

0: Behavioral expectations have not been identified, are not all positive, or are more than 5 in number.

1: Behavioral expectations identified but may not include a matrix or be posted.

2: Five or fewer behavioral expectations exist that are positive, posted, and identified for specific settings.

4.1.4 Teaching Expectations: Expected academic and social behaviors are taught directly to all students in classrooms and across other campus settings/locations.

- 0: Expected behaviors are not taught.
- 1: Expected behaviors are taught informally or inconsistently.
- 2: Formal system with written schedules is used to teach expected behaviors directly to students across classroom and campus settings AND at least 70% of students can list at least 67% of the expectations.

5.1.5 Problem Behavior Definitions: School has clear definitions for behaviors that interfere with academic and social success and a clear policy/procedure (e.g., flowchart) for addressing office-managed versus staff-managed problems

- 0: No clear definitions exist, and procedures to manage problems are not clearly documented.
- 1: Definitions and procedures exist but are not clear and/or not organized by staff - versus office-managed problems.
- 2: Definitions and procedures for managing problems are clearly defined, documented, trained, and shared with families.

6.1.6 Discipline Policies: School policies and procedures describe and emphasize proactive, instructive, and/or restorative approaches to student behavior that are implemented consistently.

- 0: Documents contain only reactive and punitive consequences.
- 1: Documentation includes and emphasizes proactive approaches.
- 2: Documentation includes and emphasizes proactive approaches AND administrator reports consistent use.

7.1.7 Professional Development: A written process is used for orienting all faculty/staff on 4 core Tier 1 SWPBIS practices: (a) teaching school-wide expectations, (b) acknowledging appropriate behavior, (c) correcting errors, and (d) requesting assistance.

0: No process for teaching staff is in place.

1: Process is informal/unwritten, not part of professional development calendar, and/or does not include all staff or all 4 core Tier 1 practices.

2: Formal process for teaching all staff all aspects of Tier 1 system, including all 4 core Tier 1 practices.

8.1.8 Classroom Procedures: Tier 1 features (schoolwide expectations, outlines, acknowledgements, in-class continuum of consequences) are implemented within classrooms and consistent with school-wide systems.

0: Classrooms are not implementing Tier 1

1: Classrooms are informally implementing Tier 1 but no formal system exists.

2: Classrooms are formally implementing all core Tier 1 features, consistent with school-wide expectations.

9.1.9 Feedback and Acknowledgement: A formal system (i.e., written set of procedures for specific behavior feedback that is [a] linked to school-wide expectations and [b] used across settings and within classrooms) is in place and used by at least 90% of a sample of staff and received by at least 50% of a sample of students.

0: No formal system for acknowledging students

1: Formal system is in place and is used by at least 90% of staff OR received by at least 50% of students.

2: Formal system for acknowledging student behavior is used by at least 90% of staff AND received by at least 50% of students.

10.1.10 Faculty Involvement: Faculty are shown school-wide data regularly and provide input on universal foundations (e.g., expectations, acknowledgements, definitions, consequences) at least every 12 months.

0: Faculty are not shown data at least yearly and do not provide input.

1: Faculty have been shown data more than yearly OR have provided feedback on Tier 1 foundations within the past 12 months but not both.

2: Faculty are shown data at least 4 times per year AND have provided feedback on Tier 1 practices within the past 12 months

11.1.11 Student/Family/Community Involvement: Stakeholders (students, families, and community members) provide input on universal foundations (e.g., expectations, consequences, acknowledgements) at least every 12 months

0: No documentation (or no opportunities) for stakeholder feedback on Tier 1 foundations

1: Documentation of input on Tier 1 foundations, but not within the past 12 months or input but not from all types of stakeholders

2: Documentation exists that students, families, and community members have provided feedback on Tier 1 practices within the past 12 months

12.1.12 Discipline Data: Tier 1 team has instantaneous access to graphed reports summarizing discipline data organized by the frequency of problem behavior events by behavior, location, time of day, and by individual student.

0: No centralized data system with ongoing decision making exists.

1: Data systems exist but does not allow instantaneous access to full set of graphed reports.

2: Discipline data system exists that allows instantaneous access to graphs of frequency of problem behavior events by behavior, location, time of day, and student

13.1.13 Data-based Decision Making: Tier 1 team reviews and uses discipline data at least monthly for decision-making.

- 0: No process/protocol exists, or data are reviewed by not used.
- 1: Data reviewed and used for decision-making, but less than monthly
- 2: Team reviews discipline data and uses data for decision-making at least monthly. If data indicates a problem, an action plan is developed to enhance or modify Tier 1 supports.

14.1.14 Fidelity Data: Tier 1 team reviews and uses SWPBIS fidelity (e.g., SET, BoQ, TIC, SAS, and Tiered Fidelity Inventory) data at least annually.

- 0: No Tier 1 SWPBIS fidelity data collected.
- 1: Tier 1 fidelity collected informally and/or less often than annually.
- 2: Tier 1 fidelity data collected and used for decision making annually.

15.1.15 Annual Evaluation: Tier 1 team documents fidelity and effectiveness of Tier 1 practices at least annually (including year by-year comparisons) that are shared with stakeholders (staff, families, community, district) in a usable format.

- 0: No evaluation takes place, or evaluation occurs without data
- 1: Evaluation conducted, but not annually, or outcomes are not used to shape the Tier 1 process and/or not shared with stakeholders
- 2: Evaluation conducted at least annually, and outcomes shared with stakeholders, with clear alterations in process based on evaluation.

16.2.1 Team Composition: Tier 2 (or combined Tier 2 & 3) team includes a Tier 2 systems coordinator and individuals able to provide (a) applied behavioral expertise, (b) administrative authority, (c) knowledge of students, and (d) knowledge about operation of school across grade levels and programs.

- 0: Tier 2 team does not include coordinator or all 4 core areas of Tier 2 team.
- 1: Tier 2 team does not include coordinator and all 4 core areas of Tier 2 team expertise OR attendance of these members is below 80%.
- 2: Tier 2 team is composed of coordinator and individuals with all 4 areas of expertise, AND attendance of these members is at or above 80%.

17.2.2 Team Operating Procedures: Tier 2 team meets at least monthly and has (a) regular meeting format/agenda, (b) minutes, (c) defined meeting roles, and (d) a current action plan.

0: Tier 2 team does not use regular meeting format/agenda, minutes, defined roles, or a current action plan.

1: Tier 2 team has at least 2 but not all 4 features

2: Tier 2 team meets at least monthly and uses regular meeting format/agenda, minutes, defined roles, AND has a current action plan.

18.2.3 Screening: Tier 2 uses decision rules and multiple sources of data (e.g., office discipline referrals, academic progress, screening tools, attendance) to identify students who require Tier 2 supports.

0: No specific rules for identifying students who qualify for Tier 2 supports.

1: Data decision rules established but not consistently followed or used with only one data source.

2: Written policy exists that (a) uses multiple data sources for identifying students, and (b) ensures that families are notified promptly when students enter Tier 2 supports.

19.2.4 Request for Assistance: Tier 2 planning team uses written request for assistance form and process that are timely and available to all staff, families, and students.

0: No formal process

1: Informal process in place for staff and families to request assistance

2: Written request for assistance form and process are in place and team responds to request within 3 days

20.2.5 Options for Tier 2 Interventions: Tier 2 team has multiple ongoing behavior support interventions with documented evidence of effectiveness matched to student need.

0: No Tier 2 interventions with documented evidence of effectiveness are in use

1: Only 1 Tier 2 intervention with documented evidence of effectiveness is in use

2: Multiple Tier 2 interventions with documented evidence of effectiveness matched to student need

21.2.6 Tier 2 Critical Features: Tier 2 behavior support interventions provide (a) additional instruction/time for student skill development, (b) additional structure/predictability, and/or (c) increased opportunity for feedback (e.g., daily progress report).

0: Tier 2 interventions do not promote additional instruction/time, improved structure, or increased feedback

1: All Tier 2 interventions provide some but not all 3 core Tier 2 features

2: All Tier 2 interventions include all 3 core Tier 2 features

22.2.7 Practices Matched to Student Need: A formal process is in place to select Tier 2 interventions that are (a) matched to student need (e.g., behavioral function), and (b) adapted to improve contextual fit (e.g., culture, developmental level).

0: No process in place

1: Process for selecting Tier 2 interventions does not include documentation that interventions are matched to student need.

2: Formal process in place to select practices that match student need and have contextual fit (e.g., developmentally and culturally appropriate)

23.2.8 Access to Tier 1 Supports: Tier 2 supports are explicitly linked to Tier 1 supports, and students receiving Tier 2 supports have access to, and are included in, Tier 1 supports.

0: No evidence that students receiving Tier 2 interventions have access to Tier 1 supports.

1: Tier 2 supports are not explicitly linked to Tier 1 supports and/or students receiving Tier 2 interventions have some, but not full access to Tier 1 supports.

2: Tier 2 supports are explicitly linked to Tier 1 supports, and students receiving Tier 2 interventions have full access to all Tier 1 supports.

24.2.9 Professional Development: A written process is followed for teaching all relevant staff how to refer students and implement each Tier 2 intervention that is in place.

- 0: No process for teaching staff in place.
- 1: Professional development and orientation process is informal.
- 2: Written process used to teach and coach all relevant staff in all aspects of intervention delivery, including request for assistance process, using progress report as an instructional prompt, delivering feedback, and monitoring student progress.

25.2.10 Level of Use: Team follows written process to track proportion of students participating in Tier 2 supports, and access is proportionate.

- 0: Team does not track number of students responding to Tier 2 interventions.
- 1: Team defines criteria for responding to each Tier 2 intervention and tracks students, but fewer than 5% of students are enrolled.
- 2: Team defines criteria and tracks proportion, with at least 5% of students receiving Tier 2 supports.

26.2.11 Student Performance Data: Tier 2 team tracks proportion of students experiencing success (% of participating students being successful) and uses Tier 2 intervention outcomes data and decision rules for progress monitoring and modification.

- 0: Student data not monitored
- 1: Student data monitored but no data decision rules established to alter support
- 2: Student data (% of students being successful) monitored and used at least monthly, with data decision rules established to alter support, and shared with stakeholders.

27.2.12 Fidelity Data: Tier 2 team has a protocol for ongoing review of fidelity for each Tier 2 practice.

- 0: Fidelity data are not collected for any practice
- 1: Fidelity data collected for some but not all Tier 2 interventions
- 2: Periodic, direct assessments of fidelity collected by Tier 2 team for all Tier 2 interventions

28.2.13 Annual Evaluation: At least annually, Tier 2 team assesses overall effectiveness and efficiency of strategies, including data-decision rules to identify students, range of interventions available, fidelity of implementation, and ongoing support to implementers; and evaluations are shared with staff and district leadership.

- 0: No data-based evaluation takes place
- 1: Evaluation conducted, but outcomes not used to shape the Tier 2 process
- 2: Evaluation conducted at least annually, and outcomes shared with staff and district leadership, plus clear alterations in process proposed based on evaluation.

29.3.1 Team Composition: Tier 3 systems planning team (or combined Tier 2 & 3 team) includes a Tier 3 systems coordinator and individuals who can provide (a) applied behavioral expertise, (b) administrative authority, (c) multi-agency supports (e.g., person centered planning, wraparound, RENEW) expertise, (d) knowledge of students, and (e) knowledge about the operations of the school across grade levels and programs.

- 0: Tier 3 team does not include a trained systems coordinator or all 5 identified functions.
- 1: Tier 3 team members have some but not all 5 functions, and/or some but not all members have relevant training or attend at least 80% of meetings.
- 2: Tier 3 team has a coordinator and all 5 functions, AND attendance of these members is at or above 80%.

30.3.2 Team Operating Procedures: Tier 3 team meets at least monthly and has (a) regular meeting format/agenda, (b) minutes, (c) defined meeting roles, and (d) a current action plan.

- 0: Tier 3 team does not use regular meeting format/agenda, minutes, defined roles, or a current action plan
- 1: Tier 3 team has at least 2 but not all 4 features
- 2: Tier 3 team meets at least monthly and uses regular meeting format/agenda, minutes, defined roles, AND has a current action plan.

31.3.3 Screening: Tier 3 team uses decision rules and data (e.g., ODRs, Tier2 performance, academic progress, absences, teacher/family/student nominations) to identify students who require Tier 3 supports.

- 0: No decision rules for identifying students who should receive Tier 3 supports.1:
- 0: Informal process or one data source for identifying students who qualify for Tier 3 supports.
- 2: Written data decision rules used with multiple data sources for Tier 3 supports, and evidence the policy the rubric includes options for teacher/family/student nominations.

32.3.4 Student Support Team: For each individual student support plan, a uniquely constructed team exists (with input/approval from student/family about who is on the team) to design, implement, monitor, and adapt the student-specific support plan.

- 0: Individual student support teams do not exist for all students who need them.
- 1: Individual student support teams exist, but are not uniquely designed with input from student/family and/or team membership has partial connection to strengths and needs
- 2: Individual student support teams exist, are uniquely designed with active input/approval from student/family (with clear link of team membership to student strengths and needs), and meet regularly to review progress data

33.3.5 Staffing: An administrative plan is used to ensure adequate staff is assigned to facilitate individualized plans for the students enrolled in Tier 3 supports.

- 0: Personnel are not assigned to facilitate individual student support teams.
- 1: Personnel are assigned to facilitate some individual support teams, but not at least 1% of enrollment.
- 2: Personnel are assigned to facilitate individualized plans for all students enrolled in Tier 3 supports.

34.3.6 Student/Family/Community Involvement: Tier 3 team has district contact person(s) with access to external support agencies and resources for planning and implementing non-school-based interventions (e.g., intensive mental health) as needed.

- 0: District contact person not established
- 1: District contact person established with external agencies, OR resources are available and documented in support plans.
- 2: District contact person established with external agencies, AND resources are available and documented in support plans.

35.3.7 Professional Development: A written process is followed for teaching all relevant staff about basic behavioral theory, function of behavior, and function-based intervention.

- 0: No process for teaching staff in place.
- 1: Professional development and orientation process is informal
- 2: Written process used to teach and coach all relevant staff in basic behavioral theory, function of behavior, and function-based intervention

36.3.8 Quality of Life Indicators: Assessment includes student strengths and identification of student/family preferences for individualized support options to meet their stated needs across life domains (e.g., academics, health, career, social).

- 0: Quality of life needs/goals and strengths not defined, or there are no Tier 3 support plans.
- 1: Strengths and larger quality of life needs and related goals defined, but not by student/family or not reflected in the plan.
- 2: All plans of document strengths and quality of life needs and related goals defined by student/family

37.3.9 Academic, Social, and Physical Indicators: Assessment data are available for academic (e.g., reading, math, writing), behavioral (e.g., attendance, functional behavioral assessment, suspension/expulsion), medical, and mental health strengths and needs, across life domains where relevant.

0: Student assessment is subjective or done without formal data sources, or there are not Tier 3 support plans

1: Plans include some but not all relevant life-domain information (e.g., medical, mental, health, behavioral, academic)

2: All plans include medical, mental health information, and complete academic data where appropriate

38.3.10 Hypothesis Statement: Behavior support plans include a hypothesis statement, including (a) operational description of problem behavior, (b) identification of context where problem behavior is most likely, and (c) maintaining reinforcers (e.g., behavioral function) in this context.

0: No plans include a hypothesis statement with all 3 components, or there are no Tier 3 support plans.

1: 1 or 2 plans include a hypothesis statement with all 3 components. 2:

All plans include a hypothesis statement with all 3 components.

39.3.11 Comprehensive Support: Behavior support plans include or consider (a) prevention strategies, (b) teaching strategies, (c) strategies for removing rewards for problem behavior, (d) specific rewards for desired behavior, (e) safety elements where needed, (f) a systematic process for assessing fidelity and impact, and (g) the action plan for putting the support plan in place.

0: No plans include all 7 core support plan features, or there are no Tier 3 support plans.

1: 1 or 2 plans include all 7 core support plan features 2:

All plans include all 7 core support plan features

40.3.12 Formal and Natural Supports: Behavior support plan(s) requiring extensive and coordinated support (e.g., person centered planning, wraparound, RENEW) documents quality of life strengths and needs to be completed by formal (e.g., school/district personnel) and natural (e.g., family, friends) supporters.

0: Plan does not include specific actions, or there are no plans with extensive support.

1: Plan includes specific actions, but they are not related to the quality of life needs and/or do not include natural supports.

2: Plan includes specific actions, linked logically to the quality of life needs, and they include natural supports.

41.3.13 Access to Tier 1 and Tier 2 Supports: Students receiving Tier 3 supports have access to, and are included in, available Tier 1 and Tier 2 supports.

0: Individual student support plans do not mention Tier 1 and/or Tier 2 supports, or there are no Tier 3 support plans.

1: Individual supports include some access to Tier 1 and/or Tier 2

2: Tier 3 supports include full access to any appropriate Tier 1 and Tier 2 supports and document how access will occur.

42.3.14 Data System: Aggregated (i.e., overall school-level) Tier 3 data are summarized and reported to staff at least monthly on (a) fidelity of support plan implementation, and (b) impact on student outcomes.

0: No quantifiable data

1: Data are collected on outcomes and/or fidelity but not reported monthly

2: Data are collected on student outcomes AND fidelity and are reported to staff at least monthly for all plans.

43.3.15 Data-based Decision Making: Each student's individual support team meets at least monthly (or more frequently if needed) and uses data to modify the support plan to improve fidelity of plan implementation and impact on quality of life, academic, and behavior outcomes.

- ☐ 0: Student individual support teams do not review plans or use data
- ☐ 1: Each student's individual support team reviews plans, but fidelity and outcome data are not both used for decision making or not all teams review plans
- ☐ 2: Each student's individual support team continuously monitors data and reviews plan at least monthly, using both fidelity and outcomes data for decision making

44.3.16 Level of Use: Team follows written process to track proportion of students participating in Tier 3 supports, and access is proportionate.

- ☐ 0: School does not track proportion or no students have Tier 3 plans
- ☐ 1: Fewer than 1% of students have Tier 3 plans
- ☐ 2: All students requiring Tier 3 supports (and at least 1% of students) have plans

45.3.17 Annual Evaluation: At least annually, the Tier 3 systems team assesses the extent to which Tier 3 supports are meeting the needs of students, families, and school personnel; and evaluations are used to guide action planning.

- ☐ 0: No annual review
- ☐ 1: Review is conducted but less than annually, or done without impact on action planning
- ☐ 2: Written documentation of an annual review of Tier 3 supports, with specific decisions related to action planning

APPENDIX D
Support/ODR Survey

Support/ODR Survey

1. Please circle your grade level or teaching area.

Kindergarten 1st 2nd 3rd 4th 5th Related Arts SPED Other

2. At what level do you support the School-Wide Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support Program/RTI2B within our school? (*Please circle one.*)

- a. I fully support SWPBIS/RTI2B
- b. I partially support SWPBIS/RTI2B
- c. I do not support SWPBIS/RTI2B

3. Approximately how many office discipline referrals did you make/report last school year, 2019-2020?

_____ Was a majority of these made for the same student? Yes No

4. Approximately how many office discipline referrals have you made/reported this school year, 2020-2021?

_____ Was a majority of these made for the same student? Yes No