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This dissertation, EXAMINING THE EFFECTS OF POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTION SUPPORTS AND SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING ON SCHOOL CULTURE, was prepared under the direction of the candidate's Dissertation Committee. It is accepted by the committee members in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in Leadership in the School of Education, Concordia University Irvine.

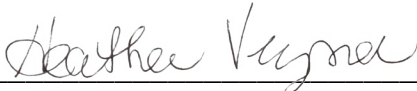Belinda Dunnick Karge, Ph.D.
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EXAMINING THE EFFECTS OF POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTION SUPPORTS
AND SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING ON SCHOOL CULTURE

by

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ABSTRACT

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is a framework used by many

schools to decrease disruptive behaviors, improve social behaviors and increase academic

progress. Social-emotional learning (SEL) is a framework that helps students develop the skills

they need to succeed in school and everyday life. The following study explores the impact PBIS

and SEL have on school culture and student performance when implemented together. PBIS is a

proactive way to teach school expectations and provides a system for improving student

behaviors. SEL helps students understand the root causes of behaviors and how to address

emotions. The results of this mixed method study will give insight into this dual implementation

and give further awareness how these two frameworks help students succeed behaviorally and

academically.

Dedication

Many thanks are needed to those who have helped me make this possible. First, and foremost I would like to thank my chair. You provided insight and guidance to help me accomplish this project. Thank you for your time you have generously given throughout every stage. The constant positive reinforcement ultimately got me through to the end.

To my cohort, committee members, staff, and district. Your support and thoughtfulness was inspiring. This journey did take some turns because of a worldwide. Please know that your kind words were heard and your support was felt through the whole process.

Thank you to my family. My sweet father who constantly was asking if I was done yet. My kind mother for offering thoughtful words of support and meals. My children for being so understanding when I had to miss out on activities because of school and a dissertation. Finally, my husband for being so supportive and taking the kids out of the house when it was most needed.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The historical circumstance around the development of PBIS is important to know so that there is some understanding as to why the framework was established. During the 1980's it was acknowledged that there was a need for effective behavioral interventions for students with behavioral disorders. The University of Oregon began a series of research studies and evaluation projects, which identified that the focus should be directed toward preventions (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012). In the 1990's the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (1997) took place. A grant to establish PBIS was legislated to distribute support to schools to improve supports for students with behavior disorders. The University of Oregon developed the PBIS Center. In the 2000's the National Technical Assistance (TA) Center on PBIS provided professional development and technical assistance to more than 16,000 schools. Because of these developmental, states and districts are building capacity for sustaining their implementation of PBIS. There have been many studies that have documented the effectiveness of PBIS.

In 1997, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was edited and PBIS was included in the law to address behaviors specifically mentioned in the law. This edit emphasized functional assessments and positive approaches to encourage good behavior.

> Congress recognized the need for schools to use evidence-based approaches to proactively address the behavioral needs of students with disabilities. Thus, in amending the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act both in 1997 and in 2004, Congress explicitly recognized the potential of PBIS to prevent exclusion and improve educational results (Positive Behavior Supports and the Law, 2017).

PBIS is the framework that districts use to promote and celebrate good behaviors at schools. Social-emotional learning (SEL) is another framework used to help students develop the fundamental skills to recognizing and managing emotions, as well as developing relationships and responsibilities. Daniel Goleman, author of Social Intelligence and Emotional Intelligence, was part of the group that founded Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). The mission was to establish SEL as an integral part of every child's education. CASEL's early years focused on conducting research that established the contribution of SEL to school success. CASEL continues to conduct scientific research, but also provides SEL practitioners and school administrators with the guidelines, tools, and resources to implement SEL in schools. CASEL is devoted to bridging theory, research, and practice to help with school improvement and student success (CASEL, 2007).

Statement of the Problem

Figures from the U.S. Department of Education (2006) show that students who struggle academically are more likely to have a disciplinary problem. Addressing negative behaviors can be challenging for teachers, schools, and districts. Having behavioral expectations, along with interventions, improve student academic and behavior outcomes. Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is a school-wide intervention strategy that is intended to reduce behavior problems and increase school climate. PBIS aims to change the school environment by implementing systems and procedures that promote a positive climate amongst students and staff. PBIS is a framework that provides "assistance to schools, districts, and states to establish a preventative, positive, multi-tiered continuum of evidence-based behavioral interventions that support the behavioral competence of students" (Sprick, et al., 2014).

SEL is another intervention that promotes positive development among children. Research shows that students in schools that include SEL curriculum have an improved attitude, are motivated to learn, have reduced problem behaviors, and have improved academic performance. SEL provides educators with common language and an inclusive approach that covers the entire spectrum of social and emotional competencies (CASEL, 2007).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this case study is to contribute to the current knowledge available about the PBIS and SEL and their impact on school culture. PBIS is defined as a framework designed to improve academic and social behavior outcomes for all students (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012). SEL teaches the skills needed to handle oneself, relationships, and work effectively and ethically (CASEL, 2007). These two frameworks integrated will be vital in improving the school culture, as well as academic and behavior outcomes. Surveys and interviews will be used to determine the impact the two programs have had on a school's culture.

Significance of the Study

PBIS and SEL serve as a support for both teachers and students in teaching the desired behaviors for student success. Years ago, discipline was focused on punitive consequences for undesired behaviors. Over the decades there has been a shift from being punitive to being proactive and supportive. Emphasizing positive social behaviors and rewarding students for following them is a more positive approach ("PBIS Frequently Asked Questions," 2017). SEL systematically addresses social and emotional variables that students at risk for school failure (CASEL, 2007) This study will examine the implementation of PBIS and SEL and how they can improve school culture.

Definition of Terms

Positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS): Is a framework designed to enhance academic and social behavior outcomes for all students. The framework is a process or an approach, not a curriculum that focuses on interventions that have to be proven to work. There is an emphasis on data for informing decisions on progress monitoring, organizing resources, and improving implementation fidelity (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012). Sugai et al., (2000) also defines PBIS as an application of a behaviorally based system that enhances the capacity of the schools, families, and communities by implementing culturally appropriate interventions based on individualized need.

School wide positive behavioral interventions and supports (SWPBIS): "School wide systems of support that include proactive strategies for defining, teaching, and supporting appropriate student behaviors to create positive school environments. Instead of using a piecemeal approach of individual behavioral management plans, a continuum of positive behavior support for all students within a school is implemented in areas including the classroom and non-classroom settings (such as hallways, buses, and restrooms)" ("PBIS Frequently Asked Questions," 2017).

Response to Intervention (RTI): Is a multi-tiered approach to help struggling students with learning and behavior needs. This three tiered approach to intervention includes a tier of universal instruction, then targeted intervention for specific groups, and then progresses to individual intervention for student with the most needs. Progress is closely monitored to assess both the learning rate and level of performance of individual students. (RTI Action Network, 2017).

School Climate: Is defined as the "norms, values, and expectations that support people feeling socially, emotionally, and physically safe" (National School Climate Council, (2007).

Multi- Tiered System of Support (MTSS): Is an integrated framework that focuses on common core state standards, core instruction, differentiated learning, student-centered learning, individualized student needs, and the alignment of systems necessary for all students' academic, behavioral, and social success (California Department of Education, (2017).

School Culture: Is reflected in the behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs of individuals and groups (Deal & Peterson, 2016).

Social and Emotional Learning: Is defined as "the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions" (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2018).

Theoretical Framework

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is a motivational theory in psychology that encompasses a five-tiered model of human needs. Maslow's hierarchy is depicted as hierarchical levels within a pyramid where the lower levels need to be met before moving up the pyramid. Mcleod (2018) shared in his publication that Maslow's original hierarchy (1943, 1954) begins with Physiological needs, which is the lowest level and includes the essential requirements like air, food, clothing, shelter. Next is safety, which is protection from elements, having security, order and law. The next level is love and belongingness needs. This level is the need for relationships, friendships, intimacy, and trust. The following level is the need for achievement, mastery, and

independence. Finally, once the other four levels are met, is self-actualization. A human realizes personal potential, self-fulfillment, and seeking personal growth.

Over the next several decades Maslow refined his theory and proposed that the order of the hierarchy needs might be flexible based on the external circumstances or individual differences (Mcleod, 2018). Maslow's five-stage model was later expanded to include cognitive, which is a humans need to learn and discover. Aesthetic need was added. Humans have search for beauty and balance. Eventually transcendence need was added, which is being motivated by values. (Mcleod, 2018).

Research Questions

This study will attempt to answer the following questions:

1) How does the implementation of PBIS & SEL impact the school culture in grades 1-5?

2) How does Maslow's framework support PBIS and SEL?

3) What is the teacher's perception of how PBIS and SEL has impacted student behaviors and academic performance?

Limitations

A possible limitation of this study is the validity of teacher and staff input. There can be a high turnover rate in staff at a school. Having a high turnover in staff means having to train and offer additional support to those who are not familiar with PBIS and SEL systems. Also, if a new staff member is not familiar with the current culture of the school, it can also impact the validity of the PBIS and SEL framework.

Another possible limitation to this study is the high transiency level in students. Again, new students who are not familiar with the culture of the school can impact the validity of the PBIS and SEL Framework.

Delimitations

Implementation of PBIS and SEL at PBIS School began the 2019-2020 school year. Second Step is the curriculum used to implement SEL skills. Professional Development and the PBIS website are being used as guides in the PBIS implementation process.

Assumptions

There are several variables in this study that can impact the dependability of the data. It is assumed that PBIS and SEL was implemented at the school with fidelity and that all staff are implementing these expectations and skills in the classroom. Finally, it is assumed that the staff will use the PBIS and SEL, versus other management systems, and will answer any and all surveys with honesty.

Organization of the Study

This research study is presented in five chapters. Chapter 1 provides an orientation of the study such as the background, statement of the problem, purpose, significance, definitions, theoretical framework, research questions, limitations, delimitations, and assumptions of the study. Chapter 2 reviews the most relevant literature regarding the impact of positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS) and Social Emotional Learning (SEL) on school culture and student behaviors. Chapter 3 describes the methodology used for the research. Chapter 4 presents the study's findings. Finally, Chapter 5 provides a summary of the entire study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews the most relevant literature regarding the impact of positive

behavior interventions and supports (PBIS) and Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) on school

climate and student behaviors. The review of literature begins by defining PBIS & SEL and

exploring their origin, which includes school climate and historical methods of classroom

management used to improve behaviors. The barriers that may inhibit the success of PBIS are

reviewed. Next, the implementation process is examined, as well as the supports needed to assist

the program in its success. The perspective of PBIS from different stakeholders in the school

community are studied. Finally, possible measurements of success of PBIS on school climate

and students' behaviors are defined.

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

Carr et al. (2002) describe PBIS as an approach that focuses on skills that ultimately

prevent the occurrence of problem behaviors by strengthening communicative competence.

Positive behavior support (PBS) is a proactive tactic that does not concentrate on traditional

approaches that are reactive and crisis-driven. Rather, PBS enhances the opportunity to make

choices, reinforces significant behaviors, and reconstructs curricula (p.9). The goal of PBIS is to

develop a positive school environment with consistent behavior expectations that supports

student success.

According to Bradshaw et al. (2011), a school's organizational health is comprised of core

features that are influenced by PBIS. First is resource influence, which is the principal's ability

to acquire resources and supports for the school and staff. An example would be a behavior

support coach on staff. Then there is staff affiliation, which refers to the positive interaction

between colleagues and their shared commitment to students. Next, is the academic emphasis,

which focuses on strong work ethic, respect for others, and academic progress. There is also collegial leadership, which is the principal's ability to lead the school in a supportive and democratic fashion. Finally, institutional integrity, which defined as school/family communication in regards a student's behavior and successes at school (p.463-464).

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports: Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP*)* Technical Assistance Center is a resource that can answer an array of questions regarding PBIS. The site describes PBIS as a tool that can decrease disruptions, increase instructional time, and improve student social behaviors and academic progress. PBIS should be integrated at the school-level and the classroom-level. Both levels should be in place to optimize the fidelity and benefits of implementing PBIS (PBIS Frequently Asked Questions, 2017).

This site also provides a series of guides for enhancing equity in school discipline. One guide is by McIntosh et al. (2014), which identifies a 5-point intervention approach that includes effective instruction, as well as insight on how to collect, use and report disaggregated data. This 5-point intervention approach also suggests a behavior framework that is preventive, multi-tiered, and culturally responsive. The example given proposes a core features, which include (a) defining and teaching a small set of positive expectations, (b) establishing how adult acknowledge and reward appropriate behavior, (c) minimize the possibility of problem behaviors being rewarded, and (d) collect and use data to guide efforts.

According to pbis.org, almost 14,000 schools across the country were implementing PBIS by 2013. The Michigan State Board of Education established a policy that all school districts in the state of Michigan implement SWPBIS, thus the development of the Implementation Guide of SWPBIS (Dunlap et al., 2010). What resonated most, when reviewing the implementation guide, was how the tiered system approach was described in a way that was direct and explicit. Each

tier promotes a positive, safe environment for everyone in all school settings, but at the same time each tier had specific strategic supports. The guide also had suggestions on how to encourage parent support of SWPBIS and the primary role of the administrator.

PBIS is an example of the Multi-Tiered Framework (MTSS) and is centered around social behaviors. Many schools apply this tiered framework as a way to align academic, behavioral, and emotional supports. There are three levels within the PBIS framework, Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (2020).

- Tier 1: Universal Prevention- Foundational skills and expectations for behavior and academics is taught to all students.

- Tier 2: Targeted Prevention- This level of support focuses on improving specific skills to a group of students. This tier helps students who are struggling with foundational skills.

- Tier 3: Intensive, Individualized Prevention - Tier 3 is for the few students who may require an intensive individualized support plan.

School Climate

Catherine Bradshaw has accomplished many case studies focused on PBIS. In her work, she has shown that the PBIS framework can change the climate by meeting a range of student social and emotional learning needs. Bradshaw revealed that using a common language, logic, and structure of PBIS resulted in sustainable changes in the school environment and student success. "PBIS can provide a school wide context in which the skills can be taught, practiced, and reinforced throughout the day. Moreover, by improving school-wide climate and behavior management practices across school settings" (Bradshaw, 2013, p. 291).

Sprague and Horner (2007), stated, "Changing school climate is an essential element. The biggest challenge schools face is enhancing their overall capacity to create and sustain positive

and behaviorally effective schools". Expectations for learning and positive behavior should be established at the beginning of a student's educational career and throughout. Research shows that when students perceive their environment to be safe, positive and predictable they are more motivated to do well. The big challenge is how to give schools the capacity to adopt and sustain effective interventions (Sprague & Horner, 2007, p.5).

School climate is often associated with academic, social, and behavioral outcomes. According to Gage et al. (2016), research suggests that students who perceive their school as having a positive climate, were less inclined to engage in deviant behavior. The researcher also agreed that the student has personal experiences working in the school climate that also affect their behavior. Gage also mentions that school climate is a target for school initiatives that aim to reduce discipline problems.

Historical Methods of Classroom Management

According to Osher et al. (2010), "schools typically respond to disruptive students with external discipline, which consists of sanctions and punishment such as office referrals, corporal punishment, suspensions, and expulsions" (p.48). Osher et al. (2004), further examines the type of discipline used in 48% of public schools in 2005-2006. Among these actions, 74% were suspensions lasting five days or more, 5% were expulsions, and 20% were transferred to specialized schools. These responses were a short-term fix, and there is little evidence that supports punitive and exclusionary approaches (p.48).

Often PBIS and Response to Intervention (RTI) are used interchangeably, so it was beneficial to review the literature to establish a stronger picture as to how RTI is defined. Basham et al. (2010) described Response to intervention (RTI) as a tiered support system that provides support to all students and allows for increasingly more intensive and individualized

instruction. The author reports that RTI is becoming more widely implemented. Over 60% of all school districts use some level of RTI. The author also describes a universal design for learning (UDL) as planning for instruction, environmental, and technology supports to all student. The author claims UDL and RTI both focus on being proactive and creating an effective system for instruction and interventions. A description of the tiers that cross both RTI & UDL are core instructional practices, supplemental interventions, and individualized interventions.

Chris Weber is an educational consultant who has written many books on RTI that emphasizes the structure of RTI and the process of closing the knowing-doing gap. Weber (2018) claims that the first step in designing a system of supports is creating a staff culture and learning environment that has the belief and the expectation that all students can learn no matter what (p.16). A collective belief amongst the staff will clearly establish: (1) What essential behaviors must be mastered in order to have the best social and academic outcomes? (2) What does it look like and sound like when these essential behaviors are mastered? (p.19). Weber believes that leadership is critical when it comes to implementing behavior expectations and processes schoolwide. The principal should give direct guidance to staff on how they can systematically help their students develop positive behavioral skills (p.130).

Along with being an educational consultant, Chris Weber has experience teaching grades K-12 and has served as site administrator for elementary and secondary schools. He has written books focused on different levels of education. When it comes to the early grades Weber (2013) highlights the importance of early prevention and intervention. Educators need to acknowledge when a student's progress and performance are not adequate. Educators must provide the level of intervention and support that students respond well to. To achieve this, educators must collaborate and they must determine the skills that are most critical for students to master. It is

necessary that they collaboratively reach a consensus on what level of student performance will represent mastery (p.3).

Roberto Marzano is a leading researcher in education, and his classroom strategies are well known. Acknowledging his work gives insight to interventions that have been used in the classroom in the past and can still be used today. PBIS is directly linked to the correlation between classroom management, interventions, and effective instruction. Marzano et al. (2001) describe nine strategies that can increase student achievement. They are all intermingled and promote student success: 1) Identifying similarities and differences needs to be guided when presented to students to help them enhance their understanding. 2) Summarizing and note taking is a skill that is learned and taught. 3) Reinforcements and recognition encourage students to build confidence themselves. Students should understand that their level of effort is directly related to the level of recognition they receive. 4) Explaining the why behind homework and more practice will give students a deeper level of understand around the significance of practicing a skill. 5) Nonlinguistic representation enhances students' ability to use mental images to represent an idea. 6) Cooperative learning encourages students to enhance their learning by interacting with other students. 7) Setting objectives and providing feedback improve student achievement. Setting goals helps students to be more invested their learning, whereas feedback from the teacher helps students know how they are doing. 8) Generating and testing hypothesis enhances a student's ability to use a broad range of knowledge. 9) Cues, questions, and organizers help students to retrieve prior knowledge.

Perceived Barriers of PBIS

There are many barriers that hinder the success of PBIS. Pas and Bradshaw (2012) analyzed diverse variables that contribute to the demographics of a school and should be

examined when completing a study related to PBIS. The first is the size of the class being observed. Looking at student teacher ratio and enrollment. Another factor is looking at student mobility. Reviewing the percent of students who entered the school, withdraw from the school. Also looking at truancy and suspensions rates.

Another barrier that researchers have found is engaging families with schools. Parents know their child best, but sometimes feel uncomfortable being the leader when it comes to their child's education. Muscott et al. 2008 lists the four barriers that may hinder families from being engaged: "(a) one-side power relationships between schools and families; (b) inadequate teacher preparation regarding establishing and sustaining relationships with parents; (c) limited time and material resources for engaging parents; and (d) pressure from under resourced national and state accountability measures" (p.7-8). There are circumstances that may prevent a family from becoming more involved. A school needs to create a partnership with families that will help them overcome those circumstances and get more involved.

Implementation of PBIS

Bradshaw, et al. (2008) examined the progression of school-wide PBIS implementation using data collected across three years from 21 schools randomly assigned to receive training in PBIS and 16 schools not trained in PBIS. It was anticipated that the impact of adequate training in PBIS would lead to change. The study confirmed that sites that received PBIS training had higher levels of implementation fidelity. The study suggested that program trainers should concentrate their initial efforts on strategies for defining and teaching expectations, less effort developing systems for responding to violations. One recommendation is to conduct a baseline SET (overall summary score computed by averaging all seven key features) to determine which

aspects of PBIS are already present in the school before formal training. Another recommendation is to conduct SET evaluations on a regular basis to monitor progress.

Counselors often have an impact on student behaviors. Cressey et al. (2015) describes the five-year process a school counselor took to implement positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) in a low-income, diverse elementary school in an urban/suburban school district in the Northeast. This initiative originated when a group of third-graders began to develop a reputation for challenging behavior. The counselor introduced PBIS that year and initiated a partnership with university-based consultants. The author shared the data used to track the changes in teacher practices and to target areas for further growth each year of the five-year implementation process of PBIS. It was concluded that with dedicated leadership, organizational change is possible.

When it comes applying the strategies and procedures of PBIS, McKevitt and Fynaardt (2014), acknowledge that all school staff needs to work together for it to be effective. When implementing school wide positive behavior inventions and supports (SWPBIS), all school personnel must work together with outside stakeholders to develop effective strategies to achieve SWPBIS. Also, adequate support must be provided, which includes proper resources and sufficient funding. Finally, consistently evaluating the effects of SWPBIS has on the student behaviors and making necessary changes to promote more positive outcomes.

There are strategic steps that can help with efficacy of implementation. Cregor, (2008) describes building blocks to implement PBIS to improve student behavior and establish common language among students and staff through the school and district. It first begins with teaching positive behavior by acknowledging and rewarding appropriate behavior. Second is using a multi-tiered approach to interventions. Third, is securing buy-in from teachers and

administration... Next, is working toward closing the racial discipline gap. Finally, evaluating alternatives to suspension (p. 32-35).

Simonsen, Sugai, and Negron (2008) describes the essential practices and systems of school-wide positive behavior supports (SWPBS), which include 1) common vision and approach to school-wide discipline, 2) school-wide expectations, 3) procedures or lesson plans for teaching behavioral expectations, 4) acknowledging students who display the expected behaviors, 5) consequences for rule violations, and 6) systems for collecting and reviewing data for decision making. The authors emphasize the importance of establishing and sustaining consistent implementation for staff and students.

There is a three-tiered approach to behavior support. The primary tier is designed to support all students and staff across all settings in the school. Approximately 89% of elementary, 74% of middle, and 71% of high school students respond to the primary tier interventions. Some students will require additional behavior support, which is backed by the second tier. This tier is designed to support a targeted group of students whose actions do not pose a serious threat to others, but they do need increased structure and more intensive social skill instruction. Finally, the tertiary tier provides individual support for students with high-risk behavior (Simonsen, Sugai, & Negron, 2008).

Study done by Madigan et al., (2016) evaluated the long-term impact of schoolwide positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) on student academic achievement. It was a quasi-experimental study done over a nine-year span that unveiled that the implementation of PBIS was associated with increased student academic achievement. *Foundations* was the adopted program used to guide the implementation of PBIS. This adopted program incorporated training and coaching to help schools design a proactive schoolwide discipline plan. Something

that resonated with me most about the Foundations program was that it emphasized common policies, expectations for common areas and it offered additional options to token economies and ODR data.

Horner et al., (2010) describes the criteria for implementing evidence based practices so that implementers know (a) what they look like, (b) where they can be used, (c) who should benefit from them, (d) how to implement them well, (e) what outcomes to expect. All students receive preventive support, universal support, Tier I. Two additional tiers are layered on to provide more intense support needed by other populations of students, Tier 2 and Tier 3 (Horner et al., 2010)

According to Fluke and Peterson (2013), PBIS has been very well researched over the last ten years. That research has revealed that most outcomes are universally positive when PBIS is implemented with fidelity. Research has also revealed common findings like reduction in problem behaviors, reduction in suspension rate, and an increase in social skills. Systems based on reinforcement lead to more behavior change.

Interventions Available

There are combined efforts of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD), which helped to the develop of Culturally Responsive Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (CRPBIS). Banks and Obiakor, (2015) describes CRPBIS as a system that specifically acknowledges the presence of CLD students and the need for them to find relevant connections among themselves. The CRPBIS is a learning environment that reflects student cultural membership. The author provides a model that breaks down the focus of whole-school interventions into three categories. The tiered prevention consists of the smallest number of students who have chronic problem behaviors that are not

common. The second tier consists of students who are at-risk for problem behaviors. Then the third tier includes all students in the school. The author acknowledges that there may be gaps between school and home behavior expectations and response to behavior must consider both the student home culture and the culture of the school.

Teachers' Attitude and Perceptions of PBIS

Lindsey (2008) gives insight into the complexity of persuading others to adopt a new idea. Lindsey conducted a study using innovation diffusion, which examines how ideas are spread among people. This was used to determine whether or not PBIS is accepted and being used. Four elementary schools were identified, and within the four schools, 22 participants were interviewed. The results were summarized under each of the five characteristics of innovation diffusion. Under compatibility, all participants agreed that PBIS fit well with their educational background, teaching philosophies, and school vision. Under observe-ability, it was discovered that 95% of the participants agreed that discipline referral data was an effective way to determine the success of PBIS. The next characteristic was relative advantage, 80% of the participants viewed PBIS as an improvement over previous approaches used. Complexity followed, which determined that 80% of the participants believed that the behavior management concepts within PBIS were too complicated to implement school wide. Finally, Trial-Ability, 90% of the participants reported concern that the process required significant time and effort.

The 2014 National Center for Educational Statistics reports national indicators on school crime and safety. This report serves as a reference for policymakers and practitioners developing a program aimed at school crime prevention. Teachers' report on school conditions indicated that 38% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that student misbehavior interfered with their

instructional time (Roberts et al., 2015). Managing problem behaviors and classroom disruptions takes away from instructional time.

One study evaluated the use of classroom-level behavior management strategies that align with School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SW-PBIS) (Reinke et al., 2012). Thirty-three elementary (teachers) classrooms were observed and it was found that classroom teachers with higher rates of general praise and expectations posted were more successful with classroom management. Teachers in classrooms with higher rates of disruptive behavior reported feeling less successful. It was found that students in a classroom with poor management received less instruction and are more likely to have long-term negative academic, behavioral, and social outcomes. Furthermore, this study shared that teachers find student discipline problems to be a leading source of stress and a contributor to teacher burnout.

Parents' Attitude and Perceptions of PBIS

Many parents may have a perspective on education in general based on their own experiences. Some families are disengaged from their child's school due to their history involving a negative experience or school failure. Creating a positive partnership is key. There may be individualized PBIS interventions necessary that will change that family's perspective on getting more involved in their child's school. Making families aware of PBIS strategies is also key. Families who witness or experience success with PBIS may also implement it at home Muscott et al. (2008).

Parents can be partners when it comes to jointly preparing students for success. Weber (2018) emphasizes the importance of defining the parents' role in response to intervention. Educators need to specify, explain, and describe how parents can reinforce skills at home. It is important to empower parents and strengthen the partnership between school and home by

teaching parents on how they can support their child in developing skills that will them be successful (p.131).

There has been a significant amount of research done over the last decade on the positive impact of PBIS, but there have also been some negative connotations around the implementation of PBIS. Bruhn et al., (2014) lists some of the concerns that parents have expressed in regards to PBIS. Concerns include PBIS being demeaning, it fosters materialism, it creates a negative school environment, and PBIS promotes labeling. This article offers research-based explanations that address these concerns and validate the implementation of PBIS.

Students' Attitude and Perception of PBIS

Gage et al. (2016) conducted a study examining on student perception of school climate and Office Discipline Referrals (ODR) to identify students need of social and behavioral interventions. The study confirmed that students who perceive their school to have an adverse climate and have many ODR's, tend to have problematic behaviors and need extra support from their teacher and parents. Students at risk, measured by ODR's, perform lower across all academic content areas. Finally, the study concluded that there needs to be a variety of interventions for students with high ODR's.

Measurement of Success

Childs et al. (2009) builds on work done by Horner, Sugai, and Lewis-Palmer, who created an evaluation template that evaluates the degree to which Tier I/Universal levels of Positive Behavior Support (PBS) improve student outcomes. Childs et al. (2009) creates a model for conducting a comprehensive statewide evaluation that is driven by twelve questions that draw on four types of data (implementation, input, attrition, and satisfaction) that shape the evaluation process of Florida's PBS project. Data indicated there is an association between implementing

Tier 1/Universal Level PBS and improved student outcomes. There was a percentage decrease in Office Discipline Referrals (ODR's), In-School Suspensions (ISS), and Out-of-School Suspension (OSS) per 100 students before and after one year of Positive Behavior Support Implementation.

Another tool that can be used to measure the fidelity of PBIS is the School-Wide Evaluation Tool (SET). Muscott et al. (2004) describes SET as a research-validated process measure. The SET data are collected by an evaluator who reviews school documents, physical space, and then interviews administration, staff, and students. Evaluators are trained and follow the School-Wide Evaluation Tool. Researchers have found the SET to be valid and reliable.

Introduction of Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is how children understand and manage emotions, feel and show empathy toward others, establish and maintain relationships, make rational decisions (CASEL, n.d.). According to Jones, et al. (2017), children who master SEL skills are more successful with relationships, school and as an adult have better mental and physical health. These skills include recognizing and managing emotions, developing concern for others, developing positive relationships, making responsible decisions, and managing challenges (CASEL, 2007).

Payton, et al. (2008) summarizes a three large-scale review of research on the impact of SEL on students Kindergarten through eighth grade. Research indicated that SEL improved behavioral and emotional problems. SEL improve academic performance by 11 to 17 percentile points across the three reviews. SEL reduces problem behaviors and emotional distress. SEL can easily be incorporated into the daily routine of the school and make an impact on student outcomes.

Collaborative for Academic Social & Emotional Learning (CASEL)

Collaborative for Academic Social & Emotional Learning (CASEL) website was established by a group of educators and researchers. The founders of this organization include: Daniel Goleman, CASEL co-founder, author of Emotional Intelligence, Mark T. Greenberg, Prevention Research Center for the Promotion of Human Development, Penn State University Eileen R. Growald, Venture Philanthropist, Linda Lantieri, Director, Inner Resilience Program, Timothy P. Shriver, Chair, Special Olympics, and David J. Sluyter, Senior Advisor, Fetzer Institute (CASEL, n.d.)

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) defines Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) as the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions. Through this process they are able to set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (CASEL, n.d.).

According to CASEL (n.d.), there are five competencies that create a framework that promotes intrapersonal. These five competencies include Self- awareness, recognizing one's own emotions. Self-management, having the ability to regulate emotions. Social awareness, able to see the perspective of others and empathize. Relationship skills, establish and maintain healthy relationships. Finally, Responsible decision-making, which is the ability to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns, and social norms (CASEL, n.d.).

Figure 2. 1

The Five Competencies
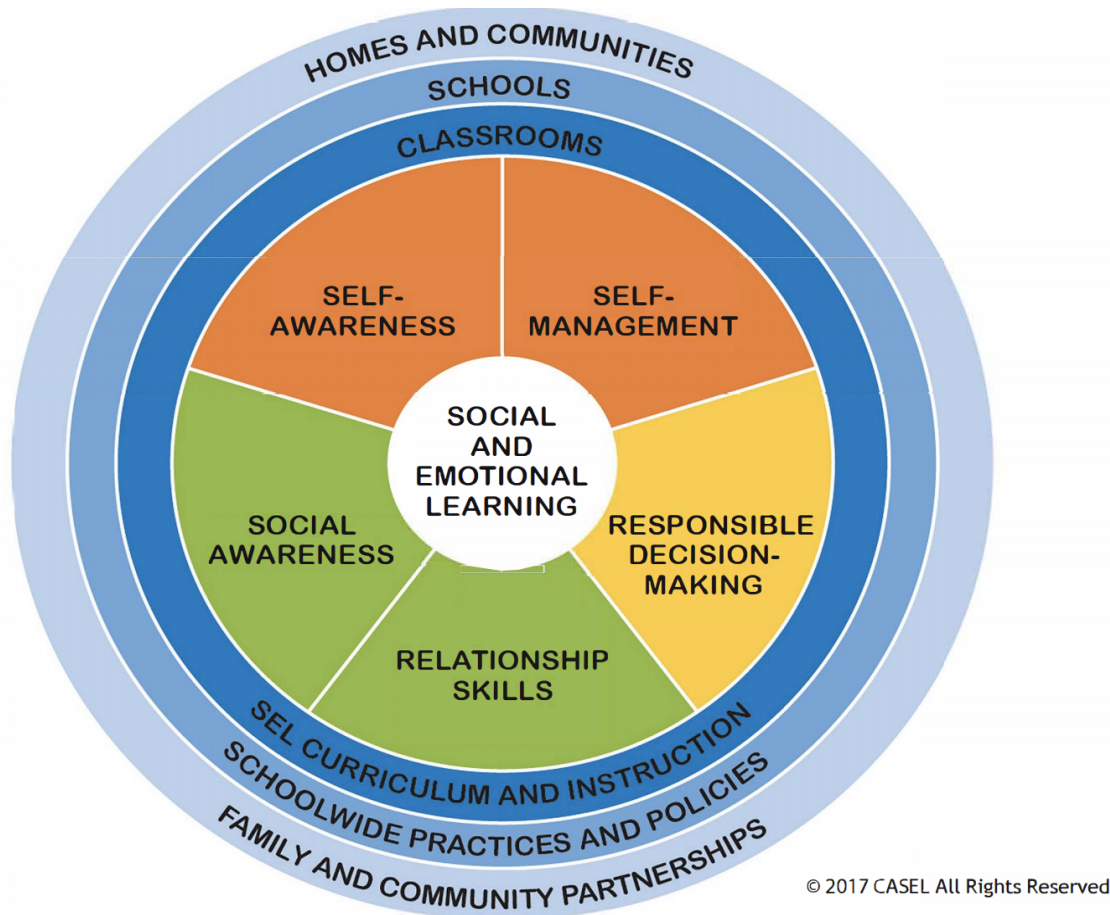
Weissberg and Cascarino (2013) believe that policy makers need to get on board with educators and researchers when it come having SEL in schools. They believe SEL creates engaging schools and prepares students for the real world. They also believe SEL programs should begin in the early years of education and continue through high school. The short-term goals of SEL are to promote the five competencies identified by CASEL and improve student perception of the world.

Program Used to Implement SEL

Second Step is a program used in schools to promote SEL and provide educators, families, and a learning community with the tools for social-emotional growth. The Second Step program is a universal curriculum that is taught to all students in order to learn foundational skills that deal with social-emotional skills and self-regulation skills. Second Step teaches students specific skills that help students manage their emotions and problem-solve (Secondstep.org, 2020).

The purpose of most SEL programs is to develop universal interventions that promote social-emotional competence. A SEL program may encompass self-awareness and self-management skills; use of social awareness and interpersonal skills; decision-making skills; and responsible behaviors in personal, school, and community situations (Raimundo et al. 2013). Researchers have found that students who participate in a school-based SEL program have better outcomes than students who did not receive have training in SEL. There is evidence to support the belief that SEL programs can produce meaningful changes in students' lives (Jones et al., 2017).

Effects of a SEL Program

Wallender et al. (2020) conducted a study that looked at the effects of a SEL program on self-regulation, self-awareness, and problem solving for elementary and middle school students in a rural midwestern school district. Second Step was the curriculum used by the school counselor, which focused on CASEL's five competencies.. The findings from this study did not answer the questions regarding the effectiveness of formal SEL curriculum being implemented school wide. The authors did point out that schools must incorporate explicit SEL innovations into daily tasks. This daily practice will lead to students who demonstrate SEL competencies inside and outside the classroom.

Bahnson et al. (2020) demonstrated, through a three day activity, that taking the time to teach SEL increases student engagement and lessens behavior problems when engaging students in a science lesson. Teaching students SEL also helped them identify social behaviors, differentiate humans from animals and distinguish how social emotional behaviors benefit human society. To accomplish this task, an inclusive classroom environment is established by emphasizing relationships between students and encouraging positive collaboration. SEL was addressed when inquiry activities about group behavior and survivors were taught and simulated. Through simulation activities and connecting these activities to real world situations, students were able to deepen their understanding of group behavior. After two days of SEL inquiry and simulation, students choose a science claim that they were interested in and they gather evidence that supports or refutes their claim. During this process they were engaged, using higher order of thinking and using their knowledge to support their claim.

Cook et al. (2015) conducted a study to examine the effects of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and Social Emotional Learning (SEL), combined and independent, on the student mental health. The study acknowledged that the combination of PBIS & SEL produced greater improvement on mental health of students and reduced behaviors. The overall implications of this study are that an integrated approach for school-based interventions was beneficial for both teacher and students and there needs to be more research on the integrated combination model.

Jones et al. (2014) deepens a reader's understanding on how SEL can be integrated into classroom management. According to Jones et al., SEL is essential to classroom management because it creates a responsive management that is thoughtful, consistent and calm versus a reactive management that is punitive, inconsistent, and escalated. Teachers who understand

social-emotional development will have a better understanding on how to establish age-appropriate expectations for classroom behavior, as well as can help teachers identify which skills and strategies are most relevant for each age group.

Creating Cohesiveness Between PBIS & SEL

Cressey's (2019) case study focused on the integration of social and emotional learning (SEL), culturally responsive practices (CRP), and positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS). This study illustrates the interdisciplinary system of targeted student support and provides a clear multi-year process to accomplish this integration. In year one the school staff developed a plan to introduce the three elements the following year. In year two there was already a foundation of universal, schoolwide PBIS practices already in place and to build on. In year two they introduced Check-In - Check-out (CICO), which a form of intervention. This was thoughtfully laid out by the team and targeted students with mild to moderate needs. They also developed a daily progress report (DPR) for students that are using CICO and explored options for universal screening. In year three, screening timelines were developed as a proactive approach preventative approach. The CICO intervention was adapted by implementing peer mentoring and emphasizing the importance of peer relationships. The study concluded that SEL must be implemented in a way that take in account culture and equity. Having a multi-tiered PBIS system in place allows for available tools for systems change, data collection, intervention and progress monitoring. This study gives an example on how PBIS, SEL, & CRP can be implemented as an integrated system.

PBIS (2018) reveals that researchers have recommended teaching social-emotional competencies along with PBIS to improve outcomes for the whole child. Social-emotional competencies are a critical part of student academic and life success (Jones & Kahn, 2017).

Using the PBIS model is a way to deliver social emotional competencies. Embedding SEL curriculum into the school wide matrix is one way to create a guide for instruction and provide data to identify replacement skills. Social emotional competencies should be embedded into the matrix, expectations, and lessons, but also in the systems for acknowledgement.

Summary

When it comes to being reactive to unwanted behaviors in the classroom, the pendulum has swung from being punitive and restrictive to being more proactive and positive. Districts and schools are now implementing preventative measures to manage student behaviors and change the culture. School should create a learning environment that is positive, welcoming and students want to come to learn.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In the follow chapter the researcher describes the manner used in this mixed methods cross sectional case study design. A survey will be distributed across the school staff and faculty to assess school culture. Data will then be collected by the case study, documenting the phenomenon of the essence of the school administration team as they guided the students, faculty and staff through the implementation of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and social-emotional learning (SEL).

According to Creswell (2013) a case study is a method of research which allows the researcher to develop an in-depth description and analysis of a case through the use of multiple sources. Through qualitative analysis the researcher will be able to contribute to the current knowledge available regarding the implementation of PBIS and SEL, as well as determine the effects PBIS and SEL have on school culture and discipline referrals in grades first through fifth at PBIS School. The research will describe the secondary achievement data that was analyzed, as well as need for this type of a case study, the instruments used in the study, the procedures for collecting the data, and review of the data.

Narrative of Researchers Past and Present PBIS Experiences

When becoming an administrator for a very large district it was the researcher's responsibility to implement a proactive approach to be successful at school socially, emotionally, and academically. At that time PBIS was the proactive approach to creating a positive and welcoming school environment. The district the researchers was working for included over 40,000 students and fifty-four K-8 Elementary Schools. The researcher was an administrator in this district for five years. During that time the researcher was at three different schools. First an

interim admin for one year, then assistant principal for three years, and then a principal for one year. Each school was at different stages of implementation of PBIS. <u>Foundation</u> was the curriculum used as a guide to roll out PBIS. The researcher's professional journey did shift during the completion of this study. Final data was collected from a different district than the one that the researcher had started this study.

Setting and Participants

The study will take place at PBIS school, which an elementary school that includes grades kindergarten through fifth grade. The school serves 490 students. The students consist of 47% Hispanic, 37% White, and 16% other student groups. All students at PBIS School receive are lower income and receive free and reduced meals. English Learners account for 22% of the students. The average class size is about 28 students. There are 27 teachers and 33 staff at the school. Additionally, there is a counselor, mental health clinician, behavior analyst, and two special education teachers

PBIS School is in a smaller district consisting of 10 elementary schools and three middle schools. This case study will center around the implementation of PBIS and SEL and the impact these two interventions have on teachers and students in grades first through fifth. The school site adopted Second Step, which is a framework used by the school to implement SEL. At the time of the study, PBIS School will be in Year 2 of implementation of both PBIS and SEL. Staff meetings take place bi-weekly. This time was used to for Professional development (PD)to train the expectations of the two programs. A review of the PBIS expectations, which were created by the Guiding Coalition (Leadership Team) PD was presented to staff by administration and members of the leadership. The adopted SEL program provided training videos and administration presented the five competencies from CASEL. Additional resources and article

links are provided in the weekly bulletin to keep them updated and informed on these two frameworks. Teacher collaboration and feedback is generated through surveys and conversation to drive the continual improvement and integration of PBIS and SEL.

Sampling Procedures

Purposive sampling is a process whereby the researcher can select participants based on personal knowledge or experience of the sampled group (Creswell, 2013). Teachers in grades first through fifth will be asked to participate in surveys on school culture. The study will also use criterion sampling. Criterion sampling assists the researcher in decisions as to what participants meet some criteria needed (i.e., knowledge they possess about school wide system of positive support) in order to participate in the interview (Creswell, 2013). The survey will be available online through the district website.

Instrumentation and Measures

Researcher will use surveys generated by administration last school year (secondary data). Additionally, the districtwide climate survey, Marzano Survey, will be analyzed. With the quantitative research, the survey collected data that will give more insight as to how teachers and students feel about the school climate at PBIS School. Data from the surveys will be used to develop questions for the focus group. Questions for Teachers:

- What are the goals and objectives of PBIS?
- What are the goals and objectives of SEL?
- What are some of the ways you have prepared and implemented weekly activities that integrate PBIS?
- What are some of the ways you have prepared and implemented weekly activities that integrate SEL?

- How do you intentionally reinforce SEL skills throughout the day?

- How do you intentionally reinforce PBIS expectations throughout the day?

- How do you address specific challenges that arise in the classroom?

- How has the implementation of PBIS and SEL impacted your School?

- What are the benefits of having these two frameworks implemented on campus?

- How are your students benefiting from PBIS and SEL?

Past research has proven that PBIS reduces behaviors and improves school culture. The researcher wants to review PBIS School to find out if PBIS is making an impact on student and teachers lives and as well as the school culture. Through this mixed method, this study will give the researcher an opportunity to gain more insight as to how students and teachers feel about their school when it comes to safety and support. This narrative case study approach will tell a story through the surveys, secondary data, focus group interviews and the researcher's personal journey and experience with moving the personnel at the school to a place where full implementation of PBIS and SEL could take place. The researcher will keep a journal of the process used to introduce, implement and evaluate the schools program. .

Plan for Data Collection

The survey data will be collected using survey Google Forms. Consent form (Appendix B) will be built into the electronic collection system. The participant clicks they agree and moves ahead with taking the survey anonymously.

Researcher plans to have two focus group interview sessions taking about 30-40 minutes. Researcher plans to conduct the interviews and they will take place on campus during non-work hours. The researcher has already established a relationship and rapport with the participants because the researcher works at the school site as the principal. The researcher is interested in

conversational interviews and will ask open-ended questions. This will also give the researcher an opportunity to collect data on the behaviors that the participants exhibit during the interview.

In the implementation process, many tools were created by the Guiding Coalition and shared with staff so that there was coherence. Fullan's (2016) fishbowl metaphor was at the forefront of the shift from current to future practice. The shift from one fish bowl (confidence) to another fish bowl (competence). Encouraging staff to make the leap from what they know, to a new way of thinking and doing. The shift in change would foster clarity of the purpose, support teachers in their attempts to implement PBIS/SEL, build capacity, and create a culture of collaboration. The purpose of the tools created were to develop a shared vision, build common language school wide, and to integrate the knowledge and expectations of PBIS and SEL.

Plan for Data Analysis

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) suggest that surveys provide descriptive research reporting measure of central tendency. Simple mean and standard deviations will be displayed in histograms to display survey results.

The information collected from the quantitative surveys will be aggregated by the researcher into small categories of information. The researcher will look for trends. Focus group questions will be created with respect to the trends found in the surveys. The interview questions will give more insight into the surveys administered. The interview questions will be transcribed and examined for commonalities. Themes will be identified with the help of Delvetool.com. Data will be examined in relation to each question. Data will give insight on teacher perceptive of school climate and office referrals. A narrative will be written regarding the focus groups responses.

It is the responsibility of the researcher, prior to the study, to gain permission from the district's superintendent, school principal, and teachers to perform the study and collect their perspective. There will be no cost to the researcher for this study. All participants have volunteered their time outside of the regular school day.

There are not potential risks for the participants in this study. The study is voluntary and participants can dismiss themselves at any point of the interview process. Risks will be minimized further for the participants by the researcher displaying empathy during the focus group interviews.

Summary

This chapter described the research design that was intended at the beginning of this study. There were some changes and pivoting because of the COVID19 pandemic. Many of these data points were still used. Upon the completion of data collection and analysis, researcher will look for commonalities from all sources. It is predicted that PBIS will affect the way teachers and students feel about their school culture. It is also predicted that the researcher will find a decrease in behaviors at the school site creating a more positive and safer environment.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH

Narrative

The researchers professional educational journey began in 2002 when the researcher began teaching as an elementary school teacher. The researcher worked in a large school district in central California. The large district consisted of 52 other elementary schools. At that time there was a wide variety of systems and practices used to address behaviors in the classroom and schoolwide. At that time every teacher had autonomy and teachers used whatever approach worked for them in the classroom. There was no school-wide program used to manage behaviors.

As a new teacher the researcher vividly recalls a mentor gifting *The First Days of School (1997)* by Harry K. Wong and Rosemary T. Wong as a stepping stone to creating a friendly class environment that had routines and procedures in place. These two theorists believed that teaching the rules of the classroom to all students is essential to having suitable behaviors and learning.

In 2015-2016 school year, the researcher became an assistant principal of a K-8 elementary school. Preceding the 2015 school year researcher was introduced to PBIS while attending district wide professional development. All principals and assistant principals were present from the 54 elementary schools in the district. The district adopted Foundations by Sprick, Booher, and Rich (2014), which is a framework used by all the schools in the district to implement PBIS. Foundations included six modules that walk you through the process of designing a proactive and positive schoolwide discipline plan. The Foundations process addresses how to establish a positive school climate and culture, school safety and academic engagement. The six modules in Foundations (3rd ed.) guide leadership teams from planning steps, through implementation:

- Module A: Foundations of Behavior Support—A Continuous Improvement Process

- Module B: Managing Behavior in Common Areas and With Schoolwide Policies

- Module C: Conscious Construction of an Inviting School Climate

- Module D: Responding to Misbehavior—An Instructional Approach

- Module E: Improving Safety, Managing Conflict, and Reducing Bullying

- Module F: Establishing and Sustaining a Continuum of Behavior Support

When the researcher started the doctoral journey, the researcher was at a K-8 school with the highest suspension rate in the district. The focus of the roll out was to establish common language amongst the staff, a common referral system amongst the staff, and common expectations that would be taught to all students on campus. The purpose of having the expectations explicit and taught to all students school wide was to increase the school culture and to create a more positive learning community. The district school climate survey, suspension rate, office referrals, and student achievement were going to be used to determine if PBIS was making an impact on school climate and student achievement.

Over the next three years, the process of developing a PBIS School (2015-2018) focused around Module A and B of the Foundations Framework. This included developing common language amongst staff. Surveying students and staff to identify common areas on campus that needed more structure. Staff would work collaboratively to develop policies and expectations for these common areas. The policies and expectations for the common areas where shared with the entire staff. This was an ongoing process in order to strengthen common language and expectations of the school. While continuing to strength common language school wide the next step was creating a rubric that would guide staff on how to respond to behaviors.

In the 2018-2019 school year, the researcher was promoted to principal at a new school. The new site was in the same district and was in the beginning stages of the implementation process. After collaborating with the staff and discussing where they were in the PBIS process, it was decided to focus on common areas that needed more structure and add signage school wide of the school expectations so that students and visitors had a visual of the expectations of the school.

In the 2019-2020 school year, the researcher decided to take a different direction and moved to a small district. The new district consisted of ten K-5 elementary schools and had about 8,000 students. The researcher became a principal of a K-5 school that had 12 days of out of school suspension the year before. This was a drastic change from past experience. The school had a positive culture, but was still needing common language school wide. The Assistant Principal had been working with the Guiding Coalition (GC) team to develop expectations. The Guiding Coalition included a teacher from each grade level K-5, plus Principal and Assistant Principal. This group builds shared knowledge amongst the staff. Before rolling it out to the staff it was important to get feedback from the (GC) so that they could help implement this new initiative.

PBIS was not the only initiative being implemented the 19/20 school year. The school had just adopted Second Step, which the curriculum used to teach SEL. The intent of the program is to that helps students and adults acquire the skills necessary to understand and manage emotions. The GC felt that these two initiatives could easily be implemented together and flow directly with the RTI program that was currently on campus. The RTI/PBIS/Second Step Alignment Chart from Second Step Curriculum gave insight as to what that continuum would look like.

Figure 4. 1

RTI/PBIS/Second Step Alignment Chart
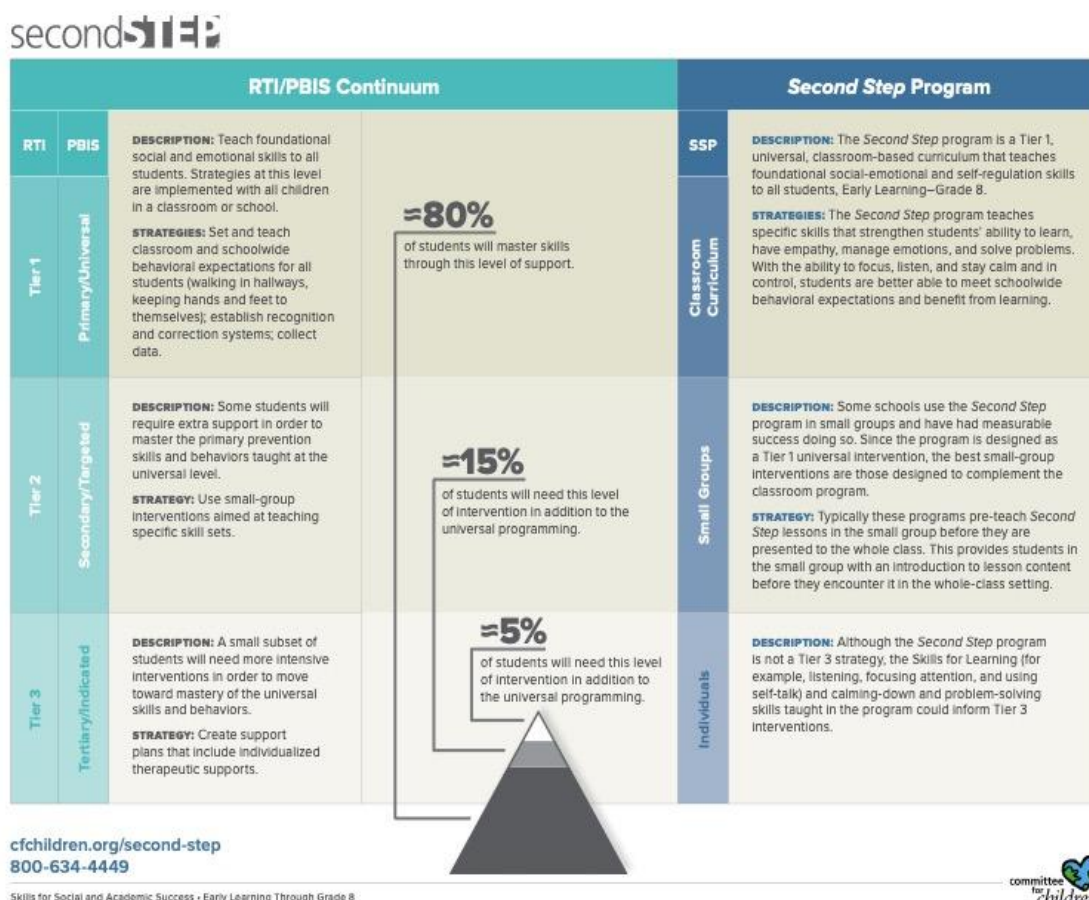
The present reality of the new school was year one of implementing PBIS & SEL. The commonalities between the two districts that the researcher worked in was that they both were located in the central valley. They were both integrating PBIS in order to develop a positive school climate, common language amongst the learning community, and universal expectations. SEL was still in the beginning stages.

The 2019-2020 school year, all staff had access to the PBIS and SEL curriculum being used. Professional development was provided at the beginning of the school year and throughout the year to support the new learning. The principal gave additional support during monthly staff meeting to help strengthen the two programs and give teachers time to collaborate on their findings of the new programs. In January 2020 the researcher conducted a staff survey to gather data regarding the new SEL program. Research was wanting feedback as to how the implementation process for SEL was going. Get more insight as to where teachers needed the most support and if they felt the new program was making an impact.

In March 2020, which the first year of implementation of PBIS and SEL, COVID19 Pandemic began. The Coronavirus outbreak brought life around the world to a standstill. March 16th, 2020 the district the researcher worked in closed. After several weeks of school closures students were transitioned to virtual learning for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year. According to Hoffman et al., 2020, prolonged school closures and the forced transition for children, families, and educators to distance learn had a physical and emotional toll. Hoffman et al., also disclosed that during the pandemic and school closures, children and adults in the U.S. experienced prolonged and collective stress related to extreme societal changes and family events. Being exposed to stressors like death, isolation, illness, economic decline, increases students' health and mental health needs.

As students and staff transition to virtual learning, PBIS and SEL took a shift. Student engagement online was a huge focus since students K-5th grade were all learning virtually. SEL was a catalyst to nurturing that engagement. PBIS expectations remained the same for the school, but now expectations were related to distance learning and setting expectation for the virtual word.

The 2020-2021 school year was the continuation of state-wide mandates in schools due to the pandemic. In California, mandates where set in place and included students and staff wearing masks to school, shields were placed on desk, social distancing of 6 ft or more, and distance learning was an option. The beginning of the 2021 school began with all students and staff learning through distance learning. There was a slow gradual return. In November 2020 grades kindergarten through first returned to in-person learning. Some families in those grade level continued to be virtual because of personal circumstance, which was allowed. By December, second and third grade returned as well. During the return there were state mandates related to exposure and students and staff had to be quarantined if exposed. This did change over time. At first, if there was an exposure in the classroom, which means there was a positive COVID-19 case in the classroom, the entire class would be closed and sent home to quarantine for 10 days. This slowly transitioned to sending only the students that were within 6 ft of the positive person. At this time many families were choosing to have their families continue with distance learning because the up and down surge of COVID-19.

With the 2020-2021 school starting off with distance learning, there was a demand for SEL as we continued to support students during this unprecedent time. It was decided by the district that SEL would be taught the first 30 minutes of each school day district wide. This would be year two of implementation for PBIS School and the second year that teachers would be using the Second Step program. During this unpresented time this program was needed more than ever to nurture student social skills, daily engagement at school, and foundational learning skills. According to Hoffman et al., (2020),

> The children most vulnerable to school closures include children who rely on school-
>
> based health and mental health care, children from households that are food insecure and

children who are obese, children who are at risk of abuse and neglect at home, and children who are homeless.

During this it seemed that SEL was the forefront for all teachers and staff.

Once again, this research journey pivoted. Originally, this study started with intent of collecting data from both students and staff. Now the researcher had less access to students because of school closures. The feedback from teachers was now the focus of the study because they could still meet virtually. Teachers were now in year two of implementation of PBIS and SEL and were having to implement these programs virtually. The mandate for social distancing continued during this school year. All meeting was done virtually, which meant all the communication that took place during this study now shifted from in-person to Google Meets and Google Forms.

January 2021 the researcher moved forward with the study to get teacher perspective on SEL, PBIS and their perception on these two elements related to Maslow's Theory. Researcher also used data from the Marzano Survey given by the district to give insight into the climate of the school pre pandemic. This survey gave insight into how students and staff perceive their school. Finally, the researcher also interviewed a focus group to get more insight in the implementation of PBIS and SEL and the impact these two programs were making on students' behaviors and academic achievement.

Marzano High Reliability School Survey

The Marzano High Reliability School Survey is based on Marzano's framework that defines the five progressive levels of performance that schools must master to become a high reliability school. (Marzano, 2023) The five levels of performance include:

1 - Safe and Collaborative Culture

2 - Effective Teaching in Every Classroom

3 - Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum

4 - Standards-Referenced Reporting

5 - Competency-Based Education

The district that the researcher works in gives the survey twice a year to students, parents, and staff to help guide the decisions in the district. The results of the survey are used by the schools to celebrate those areas they are achieving successes, as well as select areas they would like to see improvement.

The survey is emailed to students, families and staff and is taken online. The survey is based on a Likert scale. One being strongly disagree, two disagree, three neither agree or disagree, four agree, and five strongly agree. Researcher focused on two indicators from the survey that centered around school climate. The researcher used the survey from the 2018-2019 school year as the baseline. Indicator 1.1 stated "The faculty and staff perceive the school environment as safe and orderly." Indicator 1.2 stated "Students, parents and the community perceive the school environment as safe and orderly." The graph below shows where these indicators scored. Students scored higher on the Likert scale on both indicators. Students strongly agreed that the school environment was safe and orderly. Families and staff scored lower on the Likert scale, but still agreed that the school environment was safe and orderly.

Figure 4. 2

Marzano 2018-2019 Survey
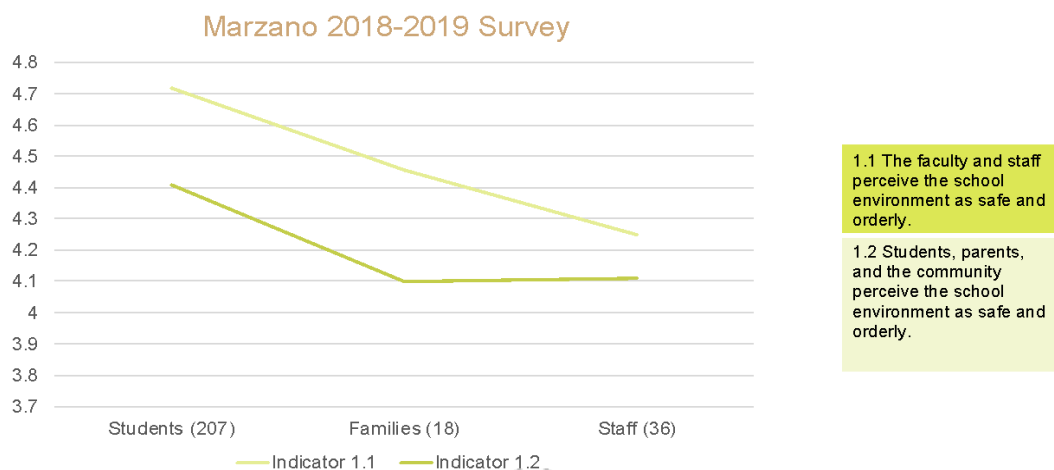
When looking at the longitudinal data below, the researcher found that staff scored lower on the Likert scale when it came to perceiving the school site as safe and orderly during spring of 2018. This was a significant decline for the school. Moving forward, there was an incline fall of 2018 and spring of 2019. This is data was collected prior to the researcher starting at the school site. This gave the researcher insight as to how the learning community perceived the school environment and areas to focus on. The Marzano Survey was not given in the 2019-2020 because of extenuating circumstances.

Figure 4. 3

Marzano Staff Survey Longitudinal Data
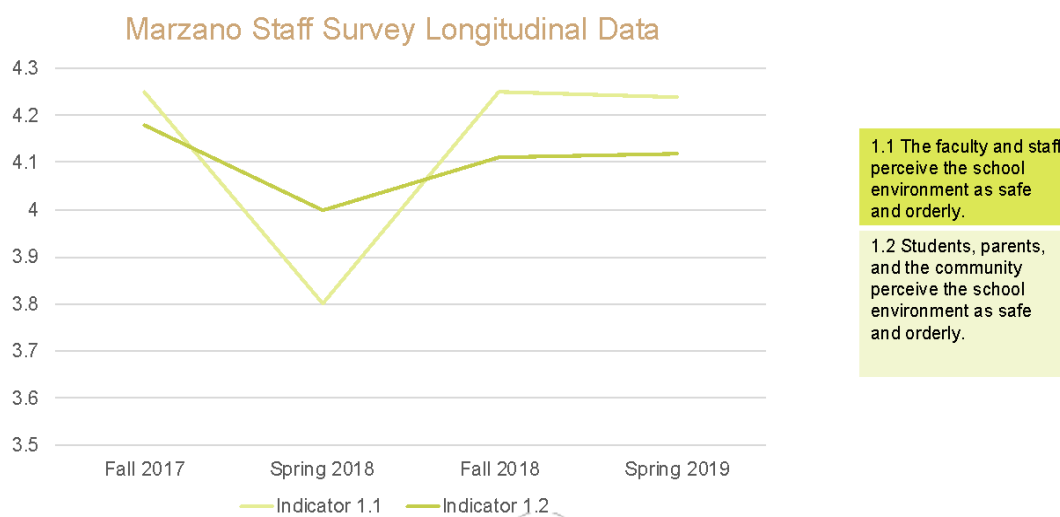
Mid-Year Survey on Implementation of SEL

In an effort to support the implementation of the Second Step Program, the principal of the school, who is also the researcher of this study, asked teachers to fill out an anonymous survey. Teachers were asked to be as true as possible in order to help administration and the Guiding Coalition to best plan for support and continued implementation for the 2019-2020 school year. The survey was based on the same Likert scale. One being strongly disagree and five being strongly agree. From the questions below, Majority of the teachers understood the goals and objectives of the program. Majority of the teachers intentionally reinforced the SEL skills throughout the day. Thirty-three and a third percent of the teachers were using the program on a daily basis.

Figure 4. 4

I Understand the Goals and Objectives of the Second Step SEL Program

I understand the goals and objectives of the Second Step SEL Program.
21 responses
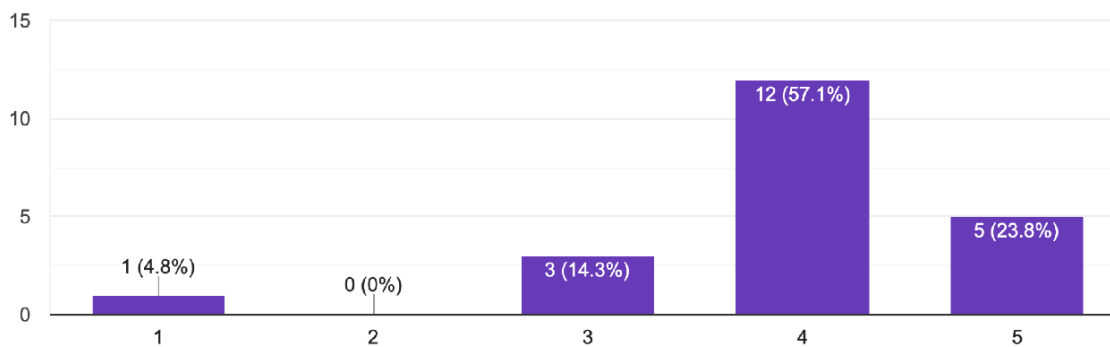
Figure 4. 5

I Intentionally Reinforce the Second Steps Skills Throughout the Day

Researcher Survey January 2020

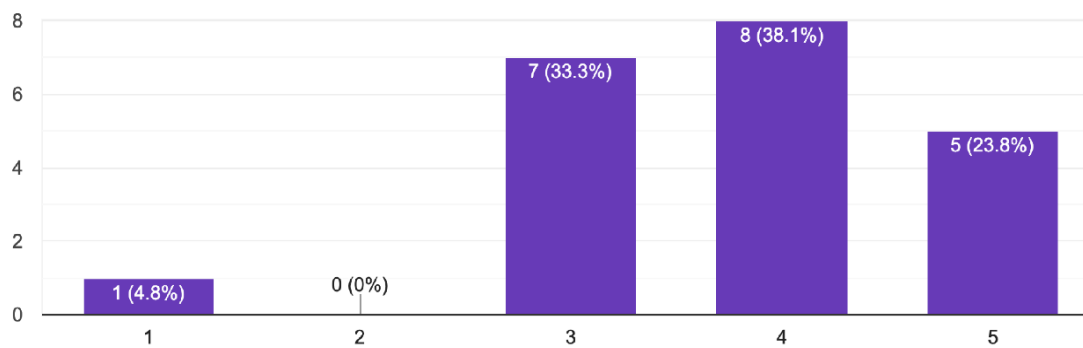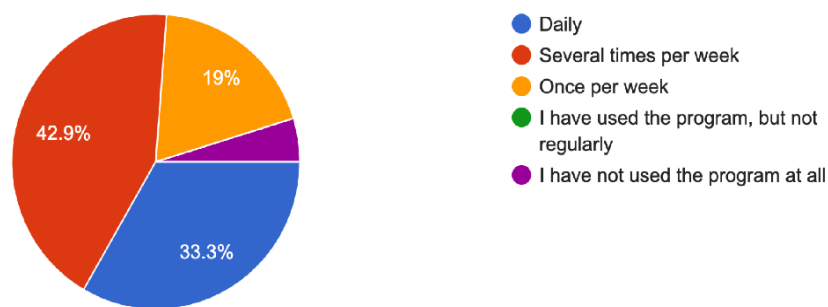I intentionally reinforce the Second Steps skills throughout the day.
21 responses

Figure 4. 6

How Often Do You Use the Second Step Program?

Researcher Survey January 2020

How often do you use the Second Step program?
21 responses

Focus Group

As part of the mixed methodology, the research interviewed several teachers to get their perspective on PBIS and SEL and the impact these two initiatives have made on students since the start of implementation. Researcher interviewed two focus groups via Google Meet. One group consisted of teachers grades kindergarten through second grade. The second group consisted of teachers in grades third through fifth. Teachers were put in groups in order to keep the groups small and quant. This gave the researcher a chance to hear more voices since the interview was taking place via Google Meet. All teachers belonged to the school mentioned in the study and have been present at the school since the start of implementation.

The questions were generated by the researcher to get the perspective of teachers and used for both groups. All the teachers involved have had to pivot from in-person learning to distance learning and back because of the pandemic. Considering the extenuating circumstances,

teachers were asked to keep Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs in the forefront as they reflected and respond to the following questions:

- What are the goals and objectives of PBIS?

- And SEL?

- How do you intentionally reinforce PBIS expectations through the Day/ Week?

- How do you intentionally reinforce SEL skills throughout the day/Week?

- How are your students benefiting from PBIS and SEL?

- How has the implementation of PBIS and SEL impacted your school?

- What do you recall from the implementation process of PBIS and SEL?

- Are there any ways the implementation process could have been different to create fidelity across our school?

- Give feedback regarding the SEL block that takes place each day vs last year when you had the autonomy to integrate SEL anywhere in day?

For this study, the researcher highlighted and included the answers that reflected the overall perspective of the teachers. The same questions were asked to both groups. During the interview, teachers randomly voiced their perspective during the focus group. The diagrams below highlight four questions. Each question below includes four random responses from the teachers involved in the focus groups. Each answer is identified by Teacher one (T1) Teacher Two (T2) and so forth.

The first questioned asked in the graphic below, "What are the goals and objectives of PBIS and SEL?". Teacher one responded by saying, "It's more of a prevention versus punishment approach." Teachers two responded by saying, "I think of SEL and PBIS really as one program together because they teach the same kind of skills, just a little different.". Teacher

three felt that PBIS and SEL promoted a social culture on campus. The fourth teacher agreed that the two initiatives are positive instead of punitive.

Figure 4. 7

What Are the Goals and Objectives of PBIS? SEL?
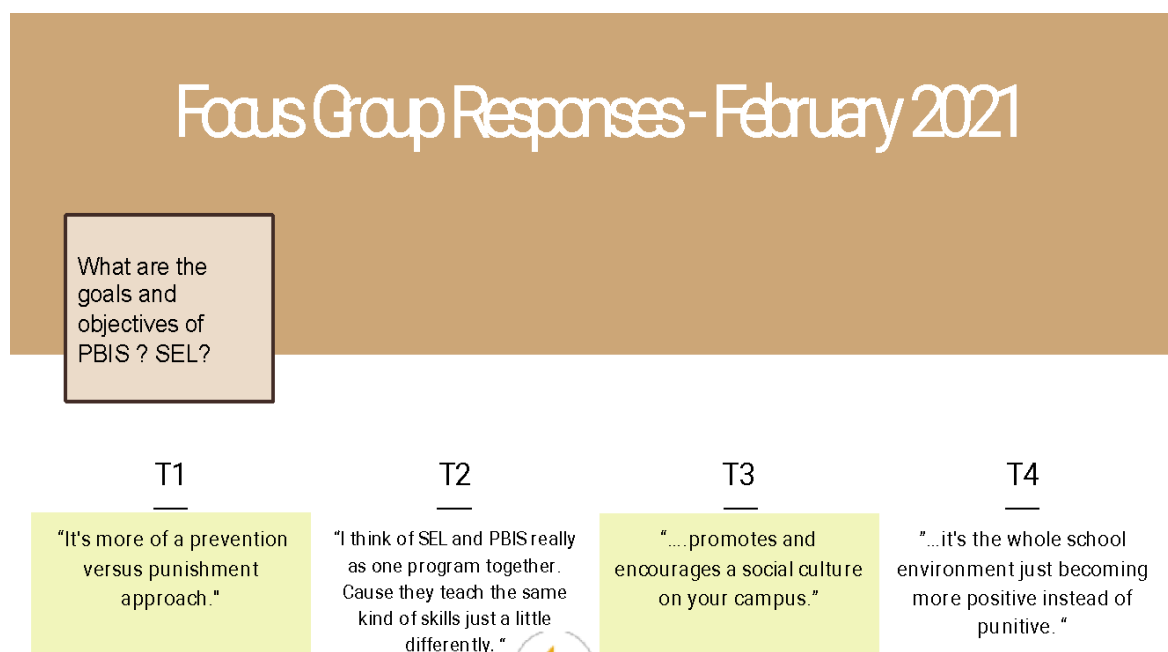
The next focus group question below asked, "How do you intentionally reinforce PBIS and SEL expectations through the day and/or week?" Teacher one and two both repeat and/or model expectations throughout the school day. Teacher three stated that, "We've been using the strategies a lot after recess. We've had issues on the playground with being kind to one another." The fourth teacher shared she gives positive notes to students on their desk.

Figure 4. 8

How Do You Intentionally Reinforce PBIS/SEL Expectations Through the Day/Week?
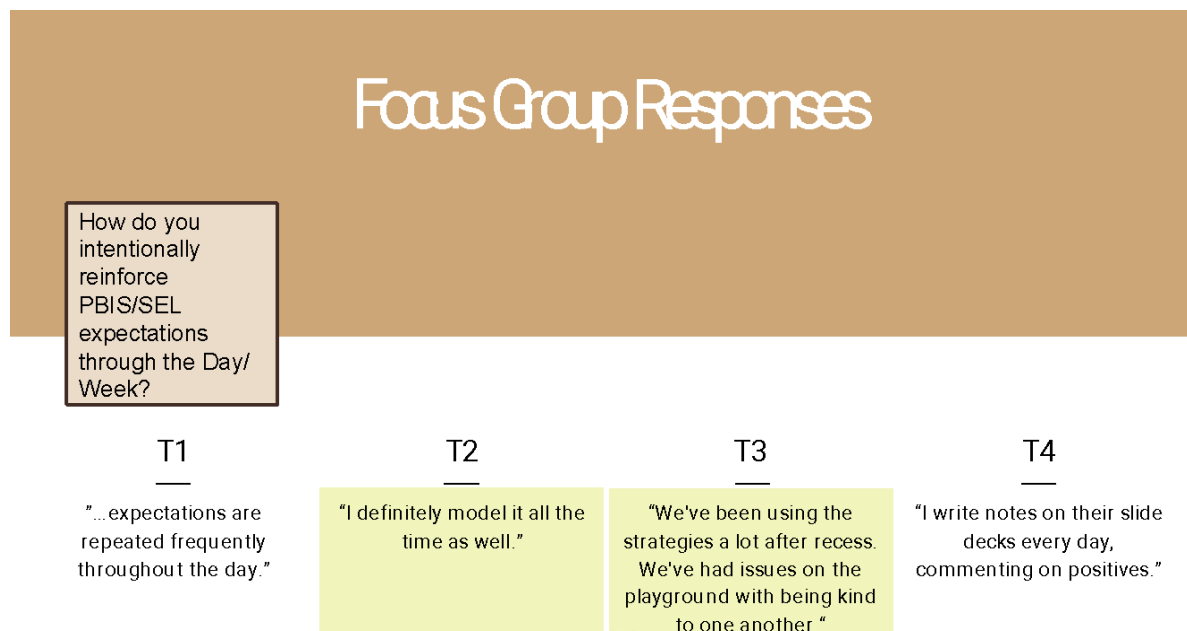
The next focus group question below asks, "How are your students benefiting from PBIS and SEL?" Teacher one shared that these two initiatives have helped students to have better skills and a positive outlook. The second teacher felt that her students were more empathic. The fourth-grade teacher shared that a common language was developing across the school.
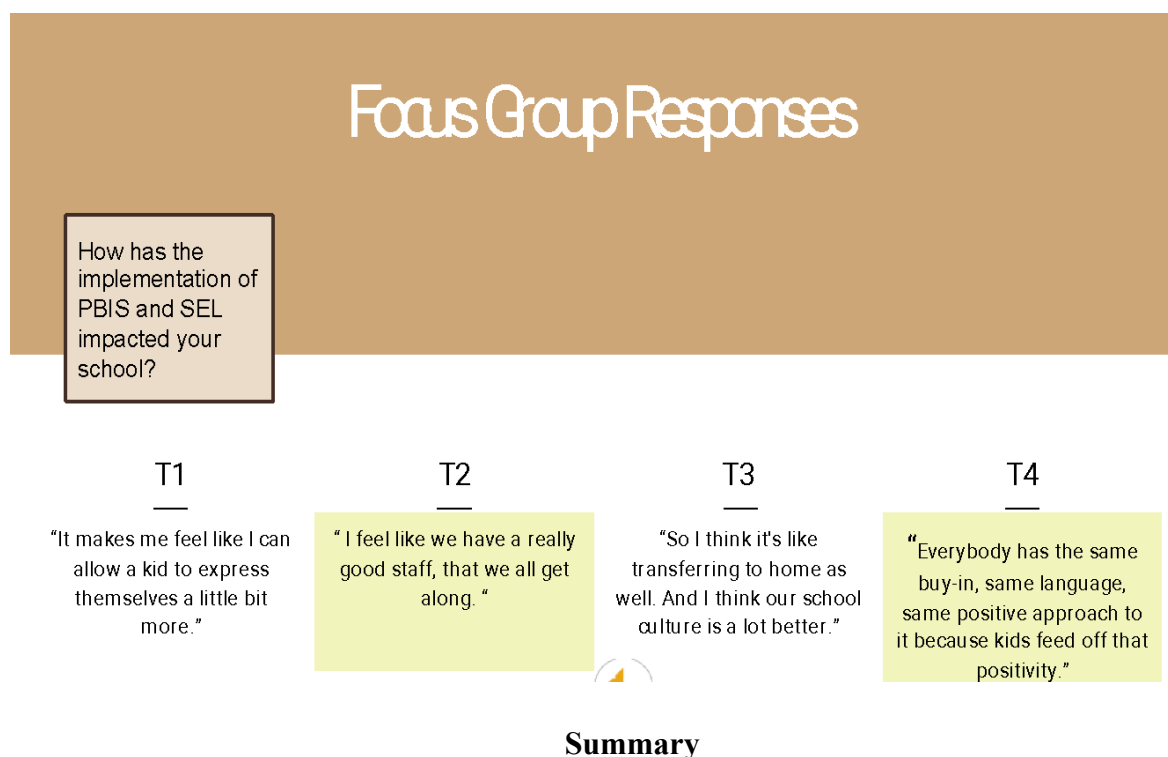
Figure 4. 9

How Are Your Students Benefiting FROM PBIS/SEL?

The final questions shared below asked, "How has the implementation of PBIS and SEL impacted your school?" Teacher one felt that students could express themselves more. Teacher three felt that the skills learned through PBIS and SEL are transferring to home as well. Teacher three also thought that the implementation of PBIS and SEL has create a better school culture. Teacher four shared that the positive approach has created common language. Teacher four felt that student feed off the positivity.

Figure 4. 10

How Has the Implementation of PBIS and SEL Impacted Your School?

Focus Group Responses

How has the implementation of PBIS and SEL impacted your school?

T1

"It makes me feel like I can allow a kid to express themselves a little bit more."

T2

" I feel like we have a really good staff, that we all get along. "

T3

"So I think it's like transferring to home as well. And I think our school culture is a lot better."

T4

"Everybody has the same buy-in, same language, same positive approach to it because kids feed off that positivity."

Summary

This chapter represented the data from this mixed method cross sectional study. The researcher pivoted many times during this study because of change in employment and a world-wide pandemic, resulting in a cross section of data. The beginning of this chapter is a narrative sharing the researcher's story in the development of this study. Next, this chapter takes a look at the Marzano Survey given to staff, parents and students was used as a baseline as to what the climate was prior to starting the implementation of PBIS and SEL at this PBIS school. The Mid-year school SEL survey given to staff amidst the implementation of year one of SEL gave insight into what additional support was need to further the implementation of SEL using Second Step curriculum. Finally, the focus groups gave awareness to how staff perceive PBIS and SEL as an intervention and impact on school culture.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

When this study was initiated, PBIS was the focus. The researcher was an administrator at an elementary school with a high rate of out of school suspensions days. The climate and culture of the school was not in a safe place and something needed to be done that supported students and taught positive behavioral skills. The researcher's focus never pivoted, but the way in which the study took place did. The World-Wide pandemic did impact the data collected for this study because of school closures. The researcher did not have access to students, parents, and staff in the midst of this study like at the beginning of the study. The researcher had to change what data be collected in order to move forward with the study. Through this journey the research also transitioned into different roles and different elementary schools. The bottom line through all of the transitioning and pivots is that through this study PBIS and SEL has been a focal point at all the elementary schools the researcher attended.

Findings from the Narrative

The researcher experienced the culture of several schools over the last couple of years with very diverse school cultures and climates. Encountering different school communities gave the researcher insight into the importance of a positive school culture and the impact it makes on student outcomes. Regardless of if you at a school with more than three hundred days of out of school suspensions or at a school with four days of out of school suspensions, there needs to be a system in place that supports students with academic, behavioral, social, and emotional skills. All three elementary schools had PBIS at the forefront when it came to implementing practices that really made a change to the school culture and helped students thrive.

PBIS is an evidence-based, tiered framework that improves school climate. The Center on PBIS (2020), shows that PBIS continues to grow across the country, with more than 250,000

schools implementing PBIS to improve behavioral and academic outcomes. PBIS improves student behaviors along side SEL and academics. This tiered framework provides a continuum that meets the needs of all students.

According to the Bradshaw et al., (2010), longitudinal study of Schoolwide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) being implemented as the universal prevention system, proved that the schools that implemented PBIS had a reduction in suspensions and office referrals. When this journey started for the researcher, reducing the suspension rate and office referral was the sole purpose of implementing PBIS. Having a school wide intervention system in place that taught expectations of the school and taught students the skills to be successful. Through this journey the research found that PBIS is so much more than reducing suspensions. It's really about school wide common language that promotes high expectations for the entire learning community. Teaching students expected behaviors is a proactive way to teach students how to respond to different situations.

Findings from the Marzano Survey

The Marzano High Reliability Survey is given by the district several times a year and provides annual data, as well longitudinal data, on how students, families, and staff perceive the environment of their learning community. There are five definite areas of practice in the survey that indicate how the school or district is doing using the current initiatives that are currently implemented at the school site. The researcher focused on two specific indicators that would give insight into how the learning community perceived the school environment and climate. These two indicators were also the two that would most likely be impact by PBIS and SEL, which were. Indicator 1.1, "The faculty and staff perceive the school environment as safe and orderly."

and Indicator 1.2, "Students, parents and the community perceive the school environment as safe and orderly."

These two indicators also support Maslow's Hierarchy of Need. Safety is one of Maslow's lower levels of need, as well order and law. People have to feel safe and feel that there is order before they can more up the hierarchy to relationships, self-fulfillment, and personal growth. Taking care of lower-level needs of our students, families, and staff will set them up for success academic and professionally.

The data collected from the Marzano Survey was prior to the researcher working at the school site and prior to the implementation of PBIS and SEL at the school site. Overall, the indicators did suggest that student, families, and staff agree that the school environment was safe and orderly. This data served as a baseline for the researcher and will be used for comparison for following Marzano surveys. This survey would indicate if the learning community continued to perceive the school environment to be safe and orderly and/or if the implementation of PBIS and SEL impacts that perception to a higher level where the learning community strongly agrees that the environment is safe and orderly.

Findings from the Mid-Year Implementation Survey

The implementation of PBIS and SEL came during a school year that was interrupted by unpresented times that impacted the entire world, a pandemic. The mid-year survey on implementation of SEL was administered mid-January of 2020. The purpose of the survey was to gain insight into how the implementation of SEL was going. School closures took place March 16, 2020. The time between the survey and school closure was not much time to provide additional professional development. This survey did indicate that the implementation was on the

right road. Teachers understood the goals and objectives of SEL and were implementing SEL into their regular school day.

The implementation of PBIS and SEL could not have come at a better time, even with the pandemic interrupting the learning community. It was beneficial because staff were aware of the importance of these two initiatives and knew that PBIS and SEL worked in continuum with each other and out multi-tiered system of support. With the pandemic developed virtual learning for our learning community. The intervention and support that these two initiatives provided during the virtual world were needed more now than any other time in the history of our teachers and our schools.

Findings from the Focus Group

The overall finding from the focus groups was that teachers were still on board with the implementation of the two initiatives and they were implementing these skills daily in their classroom whether it was in person or virtually. PBIS expectations and SEL skills continued to strength with the input from students and staff. Teachers found these two initiatives to be a positive approach that was not punitive for students. Student were learning to use proper social skills and be more empathic toward their peers.

This study was in progress during the time that the research transitioned to a new district and new school site. This study was also in progress during the first two years of implementation of PBIS and SEL at this site and a pandemic developed. Through it all, PBIS and SEL continued to be at the forefront of conversations regarding intervention and our RTI model. These two elements have proved to be a proactive approach that provided a positive school culture and support for our students and staff.

Review Reach Questions

The intent of this case study is to contribute knowledge available about PBIS and SEL and their impact on school culture. When exploring the three main research questions from this study, which are:

1) How does the implementation of PBIS & SEL impact the school culture in grades K-5?

2) How does Maslow's framework support PBIS and SEL?

3) What is the teacher's perception of how PBIS and SEL has impacted student behaviors and academic performance?

PBIS and SEL are both frameworks that support the needs of students and staff. They can be taught simultaneously and they both positively impact student outcomes. These two initiatives also support Maslow's framework in that they improve school culture. A positive culture infers to a safe and orderly environment. Students and staff move up the hierarchy when they feel there is safety and order to an environment. With these supports in place, academic progress and attendance improve, while behaviors decline.

Recommendations

There are a couple recommendations for future researchers that are interested in studying the impact of PBIS and SEL on school culture. Looking at these two initiatives as a continuum of a multi-tiered system and determining if these two frameworks should be implemented simultaneously. Gain more knowledge on how teachers perceive the impact of dual implementation. Also, this study only looked at one school site. A larger sample size would give a more diverse representation.

Another recommendation would be longitudinal case study conducted to understand if these two frameworks together impact student behaviors and academic performance. This study did not look at suspension rates, office referrals and academic achievement. Analyzing data over time to measure the impact of both PBIS and SEL on behaviors and academic performance would again contribute more knowledge on how these two frameworks impact schools.

Final recommendation, future research should study how PBIS and SEL strengthen teacher social-emotional skills. The pandemic has had a lasting impact on some. During the pandemic teachers had to learn to deal with their own feelings of anxiety and stress while supporting their students with the same feelings. Several factors can affect the mental state of teachers. Collecting and analyzing data on the extended impact of having PBIS and SEL have on the mental health of teachers would also contribute more knowledge about PBIS and SEL.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: PBIS School Coffee Office Discipline Referral Form

Name (First and Last) _____ Date_____ Time_____ Grade: TK K 1 2 3 4 5 Referring Staff_____ _____ Classroom Teacher_____ _____	**Location** ☐ Bathroom ☐ Cafeteria ☐ Classroom ☐ Hallway ☐ Library ☐ MPR ☐ Playground ☐ Quad ☐ Special Event/Assembly/Field Trip	**Others Involved** ☐ None ☐ Teacher ☐ Noon Duty ☐ Substitute ☐ Unknown ☐ Peers ☐ Staff
Minor Problem Behavior (Handled by referring staff member) (Referring staff member gives ODR to classroom teacher)	**Major Problem Behavior (Handled by office)**	**Possible Motivation (If Applicable)** **(Use notes to add any necessary details)**
☐ Defiance/Insubordination/Non Compliance ☐ Physical Contact/Physical Aggression ☐ Disruption ☐ Disrespect ☐ Inappropriate language/Profanity/Abusive language ☐ Technology/Electronic Violation ☐ Property Misuse Notes: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	☐ Defiance/Insubordination/Non Compliance ☐ Physical Aggression ☐ Disruption ☐ Disrespect ☐ Inappropriate language /Profanity /Abusive language ☐ Technology/Electronic Violation ☐ Harassment ☐ Bullying ☐ Fighting ☐ Forgery/Theft/Plagiarism ☐ Property Damage/Vandalism ☐ Lying/Cheating ☐ Inappropriate Display of Affection . ☐ Repeat _____ ☐ _____ ___	**Obtain:** ☐ Peer Attention ☐ Adult Attention ☐ Items/Activities **Avoid:** ☐ Peers ☐ Adults ☐ Tasks/Activities ☐ Unknown Notes:_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
Action Taken by Referring Staff	**Action taken by Office**	
☐ Parent Contact	☐ Parent Contact ☐ Detention	

☐Time Out (Break card, Buddy class, etc.) ☐Detention ☐Counseled/Conference with Student ☐Loss of Privilege ☐Restitution/Community Service ☐Calming Corner	☐Loss of Privilege ☐Counseled/Conference with Student ☐Time out in Office ☐In-School Suspension (_____ days) ☐Out-of-School Suspension (_____ days) ☐Restitution/Community Service

Date _____

Parent/Guardian's Name_____Parent/Guardian's Signature_____

Student's Name _____ Student's Signature _____

Area/Setting	**PBIS School Coffee Elementary Rules/Behavior Expectations**			
	SAFE	**T**HOUGHTFUL	**A**CTS RESPONSIBLY	**R**ESPECT YOURSELF AND OTHERS
Everywhere, All the time	● Hands to self ● Walking feet ● Observe safety procedures	● Help others in need ● Use kind words and actions ● Be patient ● Take turns ● Greet others with good manners ● Be honest	● Be where you are supposed to be ● Respond to directives with a yes or okay ● Use technology appropriately ● Report any misbehavior witnessed ● Take care of personal needs at appropriate times	● Respectful voice ● Use kind words ● Pick up after yourself ● Respect personal space
Classroom (Music, Art, Library, Office)	● Use tools/materials appropriately	● Listen attentively ● Follow directions ● Keep area clean	● Participate in learning (4 L's, etc.) ● Be prepared ● Be on time	● Speak at appropriate times ● Positive attitude ● Growth mindset
MPR/Lunch	● Stay in line ● No sharing food/drink	● Stay in personal area ● Pick trash up in and around your area	● Whisper voice with neighbors ● Use hand signals	● Use good manners

Restroom	● Feet on floor	● Keep restroom clean, ● Use water wisely	● Eyes to self ● Voices off ● Flush	● Maintain privacy
Playground	● Use equip. appro-priately ● Hands off policy, no matter what	● Invite others to join the game ● Let younger kids go first	● Freeze, get low, voice off, listen to adult	● Problem solve appropriately (rock, paper, scissors, etc.)
Hallways	● Walk in line	● Listen to teacher ● Lead by example	● Touch only your own belongings ● Walk directly and quietly	● Respect personal space
Special Events	● Stay with our class ● Stay seated ● Sit criss cross	● Show appreciation ● Respond appropriately	● Be aware of our surroundings ● We sit quietly	● Use good manners
Technology	● You are not clicking or going places without permission ● Talking to people online you may not know ● Do not give out your personal information	● Use kind words ● Treat others the way you want to be treated	● Being kind to the technology ● Using only the sites directed by your teacher	● Posting only appropriate things
Bus	● Follow the directions of the driver ● Stay seated, facing forward, wear seatbelt ● Keep hands, feet and head inside the bus	● We take turns boarding the bus	● Arrive on time	● Keep hands and feet to self ● Use kind words ● Touch only what belongs to you ● Use good manners

Appendix B: ADULT INFORMED CONSENT FORM

The study in which you are being asked to participate is designed to investigate the impact of PBIS and SEL on school culture and academic progress. This study is being conducted by Nicol Alvarado, under the supervision of Dr. Belinda Karge, Professor of Doctor of Education Program, Concordia University, Irvine.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this study is to contribute to the current knowledge available about PBIS and SEL. It will also explore how these two frameworks, integrated, improve the school culture, as well as academic and behavior outcomes.

DESCRIPTION: You are being asked to participate in a focus group interview discussion by engaging in this research review. The interview discussion will take about 30-40 minutes to complete and will be recorded via Google Meet. Interviews will take place during non-work hours.

PARTICIPATION: You understand that you may refuse to participate or withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequence. Also, researcher may stop the study at any time. Your participation is completely voluntary and you may discontinue participation at any time.

CONFIDENTIALITY OR ANONYMITY: Your identity will remain completely anonymous, and neither the school's name nor the district's name will be reported. The findings, reported in this doctoral dissertation, will simply say that data was collected from a district within central California. All data, recordings, and findings will be stored on a secure Google Drive that is protected by security software and passwords. All records will be destroyed by May 31, 2021.

DURATION: Your participation in the interview will last 30-40 minutes.

RISKS: It is not expected that the survey or interviews will cause distress or discomfort; however, if at any time you feel uncomfortable, please let the researcher know and discontinue participation if appropriate.

BENEFITS: The benefits will be for your voice to be heard and to inform the researcher, policymakers, and educators about the support systems for student achievement and what is working and what is not working to strengthen the implementation of PBIS and SEL. Your input will also give insight into future implementations.

VIDEO/AUDIO/PHOTOGRAPH: Consent form will be given to participants.

CONTACT: For questions about the research and research participants' rights, or in the event of a research-related injury, please contact Dr. Belinda Karge, dissertation committee chair: (619) 368-9651, belinda.karge@cui.edu, or Nicol G. Alvarado (209) 5050-7728, nicol.alvarado@eagles.cui.edu. ,

RESULTS: The results of this study will be published in the researcher's doctoral dissertation at Concordia University Irvine. Cui.edu.org

CONFIRMATION STATEMENT:

I agree to participate in the research study described.

SIGNATURE:

_____Print
Name   **Signature**   **Date**
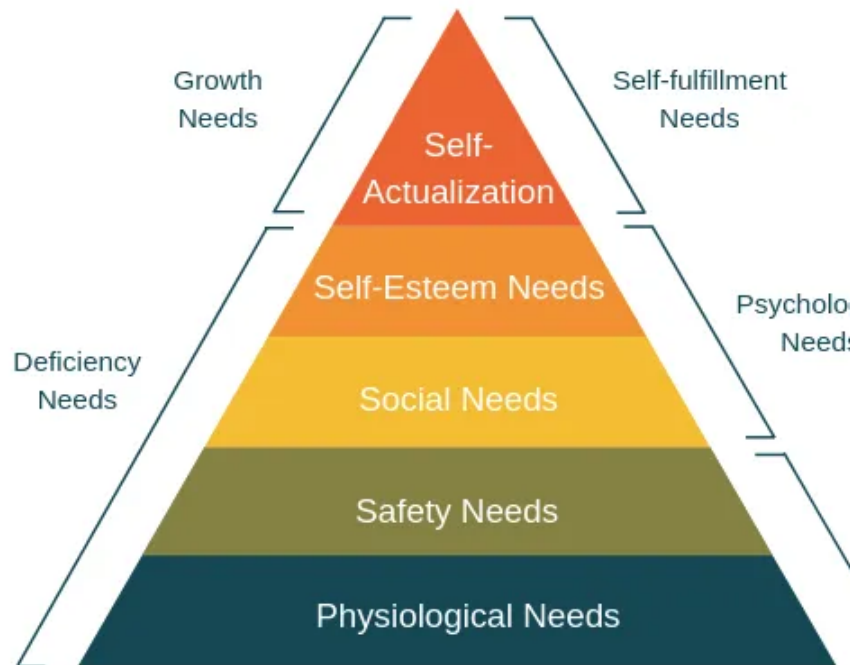

       _____ Yes, I am willing to participate in an interview focus group

       _____ No, I would rather not be involved.

Appendix C: Focus Group Questions

Focus Group Questions

Keeping Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs in the forefront as you reflect and respond to the following questions:

- **What are the goals and objectives of PBIS ?**
- **And SEL?**
- **How do you intentionally reinforce PBIS expectations through the Day/ Week?**
- **How do you intentionally reinforce SEL skills throughout the day/Week?**
- **How are your students benefiting from PBIS and SEL?**
- **How has the implementation of PBIS and SEL impacted your school?**