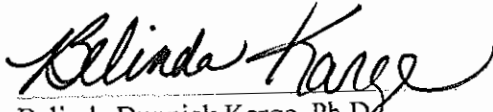
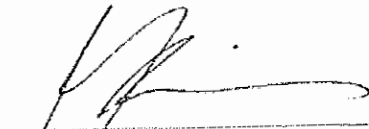
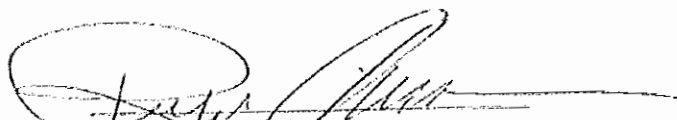


## ACCEPTANCE


This dissertation, SCHOOL-WIDE POSITIVE BEHAVIOR AND SUPPORT WITH SCHOOL-WIDE RESTORATIVE PRACTICES: A PRESCRIPTION FOR CHANGE, 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 the School of Education, Concordia University Irvine.

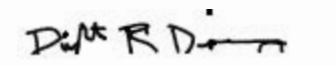
  
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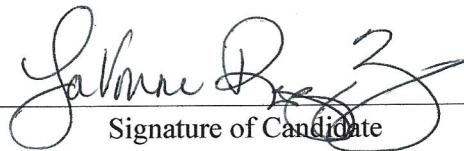
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SCHOOL-WIDE POSITIVE BEHAVIOR AND SUPPORTS WITH SCHOOL-WIDE  
RESTORATIVE PRACTICES: A PRESCRIPTION FOR CHANGE

LaVonne Riggs-Zeigen

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## ABSTRACT

Effectively interacting with students who demonstrate disruptive behaviors in the school environment, requires the use of evidenced based strategies. Throughout the nation, schools have successfully implemented positive behavior intervention and support (PBIS) strategies to improve the atmosphere on school campuses and guide student behavior (Gage, Sugai, Lunde, & DeLoreto, 2013; Sugai & Simonsen, 2012; Turnbull, Wilcox, Stowe, & Turnbull, 2001). While PBIS has been effective for most students, there is a population of students that continue to struggle with complying with the site's behavioral norms after implementation of the strategies. This study's intention was to confirm that by implementing restorative practices (RP) in combination with PBIS strategies, schools can decrease disruptive behaviors, improve campus culture, and build positive relationships. By combining these strategies, educators can develop an inclusive culture that provides opportunities for increased student engagement and a place where all students belong.

The aims of this study were to understand teacher perspectives on the value of relationships, the implementation process of PBIS and RP, and the correlation between professional learning on the two multi-tiered systems and school climate. Through researching teachers' perspectives, this study showed that the fidelity of implementation of PBIS and RP had a direct relationship to the improvement of school climate. The understanding of this relationship provides school administrators and officials with a pathway to strategically implement the two multi-tiered systems of support, promote healthy relationship building between stakeholders, and increase academic achievement for all students.

*Keywords:* Positive behavior interventions and supports, restorative practices, disruptive behavior disorders, teacher perception

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The following real-life scenario demonstrates experiences that teachers and students are experiencing in school districts throughout the United States. It was a typical morning at a high performing elementary school in California. Students stood next to their desks, reciting the pledge of allegiance, like any other day of the week. When finished, the class started their morning routine and moved to their stations. A group of second graders went to a table where a stack of paper readers was located in the center of the table. Each student took their seat and picked up a copy of the reader and awaited the instructor's directions. As the lesson began, Student B quietly reached across the table and grabbed another student's reader and begins to tear the pages. All of his peers shifted their seats slightly away from him in anticipation of what may come next. The instructor continued the lesson handing the offended student her copy of the reader, ignoring the behavior in hopes of avoiding an escalation. Not receiving the reaction that he wanted, Student B reached under the table and began pinching another student. The teacher immediately started implementing behavioral strategies that were part of Student B's Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP). The student was offered two choices, either to continue with the reading group or move to the quiet area to complete an independent activity. Using appropriate behavioral language, the teacher informed him that it was his choice, and whichever he chose was fine. However, Student B chose a third option and flipped the table over while screaming profanities. This action was the beginning of a significant behavioral disruption. Quickly using the site walkie-talkies, the teacher called the de-escalation team that consisted of the special-education teacher, school psychologist, and site administrator. Always on standby, the team dropped everything and ran to the classroom. The students, accustomed to this behavior, quietly pick up their work and quickly left the room with a paraprofessional. Working

in the third tier of the SW-PBIS model, the team calmed Student B down, documented the incident, and contacted the parents.

After school dismissal, the Special Education teacher, walking across campus, was called over to a group of colleagues discussing the incident. The teachers were curious about the event, and the discipline levied against the student. These conversations were common-place amongst the teachers in this academic environment; front line employees and teachers discuss students amongst themselves, which enhances preconceived perceptions, intolerance, student shaming, and teacher bias. However, this particular district had been in the process of implementing district-wide PBIS and had already moved away from zero-tolerance practices as a quick solution to a problem.

Sadly, the researcher has had numerous interactions with teachers that have expressed preconceived mindsets about troubled students in the presence of the students. These comments leave the student's shamed, questioning their worth, and with an overall sense of not belonging in the community. Students with disruptive behavior disorders (DBD) are made to feel inadequate by being compared to their non-disruptive peers and receive no direction from their primary teacher on how to process their outbursts. Due to lack of training and low teacher buy-in, there was little guidance to assist the student in understanding how their behavior affected their classmates, teachers, and the overall school climate. Many teachers understand the necessity of building relationships with students but have no idea where to begin when a student is disruptive.

This unfortunate scenario occurs far too often for students that experience disruptive behaviors. This study will significantly inform the education community on how to create meaningful systemic changes that benefit all stakeholders.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In 2013, the United States Department of Education (2019) reported that approximately 95% of all students with disabilities spent a part of their day in the general education environment. About 82.7% of the students labeled emotionally disturbed (ED) were placed in a typical school environment, with 45.1% of those students spending 80% or more of their time in the general education classroom (Department of Education, 2019). This process, known as inclusion, places students with emotional and behavioral disorders and social-emotional needs in classes with teachers who are not fully equipped to handle their specific needs (Kauffman & Badar, 2014). Through the inclusion process, students with extreme behavioral needs bring an increase in adverse behaviors on to school campuses and into the classroom, leaving educators with a need to implement strategies that would create effective and positive environmental changes for all students (Horner & Sugai, 2000; Lewis, Jones, Horner, & Sugai, 2010; Sugai et al., 2000).

Students that have experienced these emotional and behavioral disorders enact injustices on their peers, teachers, and other stakeholders in the school environment (Sia, 2013). Beginning in 1994, schools implemented zero-tolerance policies that required the removal of students who violated the policies from the educational environment through suspension and expulsion. Arcia (2006) informed educators that these practices did not provide students with the opportunity for learning how to correct inappropriate behaviors or engage in the learning process. This process of removing students from the educational environment ultimately reinforced the negative behaviors, decreased academic achievement, and risked students' social-emotional wellbeing (Arcia, 2006; Scott, Nelson, & Liaupsin, 2001; Skiba & Noam, 2001). These zero-tolerance policies have created a systemic problem for educators. Once an individual exhibits violent

behaviors, they are denied the opportunity to restore relationships, regain entry into the school community, and begin the process of learning how to be a productive member of society (Scott et al., 2001).

Systematically implemented, school-wide positive behavior interventions and supports (SW-PBIS) have addressed rising concerns about inappropriate behaviors on school campuses (Lewis et al., 2010). The three-tiered system aims to prevent disruptive behaviors and offers a proactive discipline solution in the classroom and on the campus (Debnam, Pas, & Bradshaw, 2012). While schools who have implemented SW-PBIS had reported a positive impact in their school cultures and a decrease in disciplinary issues there is a gap in the literature regarding the 1-5% of the population with DBD's who need more extensive, targeted interventions that are not met by the third-tier (Cowie, 2013; Salmivalli, Lagerspetz, Björkqvist, Österman, & Kaukialnen, 1996). Tier three interventions involve a process of identifying and providing highly individualized supports for youth with high-level needs (Debnam et al., 2012). These strategies include intensive, evidence-based interventions such as function-based assessments (FBA) and behavioral intervention plans (BIPs). However, even with these intensive interventions, there is little data to support what responses would be most useful when SW-PBIS is not enough for students with more extreme needs (Debnam et al., 2012).

School-wide restorative practices (SWRP) have been recommended to assist with decreasing behaviors of students who have demonstrated DBD since they actively promote a cooperative rather than a disciplinary process. The benefit of this process is the ability to provide a scope for reconciliation with some form of closure or resolution. Most importantly, restorative approaches in schools have the potential to create safe and supportive learning environments that express positive values in the school community (Cowie, 2013).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The intent of this mixed methods multisite phenomenological study was to understand the relational ecology of urban high schools that adopted SWPBIS and SWRP's and to see how the implementation process affected the academic achievement of students with disruptive behavior disorders (DBD). This study took place at two urban high schools in the Northern California area, within one of the largest school districts in California. The study sought to evaluate the research, evaluation, reports, anecdotal evidence, new federal guidelines on school discipline policies, and a district-wide interpretation of SW-PBIS and SWRP conducted by the school district.

### **Research Questions**

This research sought to review the literature on school-wide positive behavior interventions and supports, restorative practices, and zero-tolerance disciplinary programs. These disciplinary programs were compared to view the impact of the strategies on students with DBD's graduation rates, the platform's effectiveness, and the teacher's perceptions of what increased or decreased effectiveness. This research addressed the following questions:

- 1) Which has the strongest impact on increased academic achievement of high school students with disruptive behavior disorders: students receiving SW-PBIS combined with SWRP or students receiving only SW-PBIS?
- 2) What are teacher perceptions about student behaviors? How effective is SWRP combined with PBIS?
- 3) What is the correlation between teacher perceptions of professional learning and school climate?

## **Theoretical Framework**

The foundation of this research study was based on four frameworks: critical theory (Freire, 2000; Kincheloe, 2008; Vaandering, 2010); change theory (Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Easton, & Luppescu, 2010; Fullan, 2006a, 2006b, 2010; Levine & Lezotte, 1995; Morrison, 2007a); social-emotional learning (SEL) (Bandura, 1971; Collaborative for Academic Social Emotional Learning (CASEL), n.d.; Goleman, 1998), and restorative justice theory (Amstutz & Mullet, 2005; Hopkins, 2004, 2011; Morrison, 2007a; Morrison & Vaandering, 2012; Zehr, 2002). The theoretical frameworks for this study were utilized in both protocol design and data analysis, illustrated in Table 1.

### **Critical Theory**

The critical theory encompasses numerous perspectives about unique marginalized and oppressed populations. Providing a means to examine power relations according to race, class, gender, sexuality, and other differences in comparison to the White (male) dominant culture. This theory looked at the effects of power and challenged the practices of seeing how teachers, administrators, and policy-makers view their positions of power (Freire, 2000; Kincheloe, 2008; van Gorder, 2007). Freire's critical pedagogy involved teaching students to become agents of change through processes that developed critical thinking skills and cultivated intellect. Vaandering (2010) emphasized that critical theory was about more than producing further knowledge; it was a commitment to action that addressed injustices. This action, known as praxis (Freire, 2000) lies at the heart of the critical theory. Critical theory interacted intimately with change theory in this study, which sought to understand if marginalized students became more empowered in their schools, and if the schools changed in tangible and measurable ways when actively recognizing the humanity of all (Vaandering, 2010).

## **Change Theory**

Theories of change identify the strategies used successfully in education reform by outlining who was involved, the role of all stakeholders for successful implementation of change, and the means for measuring the effectiveness of the change at different levels (Fullan, 2010). Change theory relates specific assumptions and linkages connecting the strategies to the desired outcomes of any whole-school reform (Fullan, 2006b) and provides a framework for research on what effective schools do to change (Levine & Lezotte, 1995). While there are many theories of change, universal principles for effective transformations and school reform do exist; these principles discussed in Bryk and Schneider's (2002) landmark longitudinal study on the effects of relational trust in schools, guided this investigation. Relational trust facilitates school improvement and change efforts and was a motivating force for taking up the task of school reform (Bryk et al., 2010). Relational trust was the social glue that enabled people in schools to embrace a moral purpose (Fullan, 2006b) and can be the factor that reduces the risks associated with change: when people feel safe and are able to communicate honestly with each other they build capacity, they reach out, launch initiatives, and implement them to fidelity (Bryk et al., 2010; Fullan, 2006a, 2006b).

## **Social-Emotional Learning Theory**

Bandura's (1971) social learning theory "assumes that modeling influences produce learning principally through their informative functions and that observers acquire mainly symbolic representations of modeled activities" (p. 4). Building on Bandura's theory, the major premise of social-emotional learning (SEL) was that emotional skills could be taught, modeled, and practiced across all school environments. SEL focused on developing five competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-

making. SEL theorized that as these competencies modeled and strengthened, student achievement and behavior improved (CASEL, n.d.; Goleman, 1998). The understanding and analysis of social learning relied heavily upon the observation of actions and responses (Bandura, 1971).

### **Restorative Justice Theory**

Restorative justice theory was informed by multiple theories from the disciplines of sociology, psychology, and criminology (Stinchcomb, Bazemore, & Riestenberg, 2006; Morrison & Vaandering, 2012). The basic premise of restorative justice theory was that all people are connected to each other through a web of relationships (Zehr, 2002) and that restorative processes should focus on reconnecting people, highlighting inherent relational qualities, and emphasizing social engagement (Morrison & Vaandering, 2012). When applied to schools, restorative justice theory encourages the building of connections by promoting healthy child development (Hopkins, 2011) and creating space for people in schools to speak, listen, and be heard across all school environments, primarily, but not exclusively, in instances where a harm has been committed (Amstutz & Mullet, 2005; Morrison, 2007a). RJ theory was closely tied to SEL theory in this study, as restorative practices provided the processes and methods capable of building SEL competencies (Pranis & Boyes-Watson, 2015; Wheeldon, 2009) and were employed in protocol design and data analysis.



Table 1

*Theoretical Framework*

Theory	Tenets	Theorists
Critical Theory	Lens through which to view power and dominance in structures, institutions, curriculum, and pedagogy; believes education is inherently political and teaching students to become agents of social change is primary; interested in the perspectives of those on the margins of society; focused on resisting the dominant power structure.	Freire, 2008; Kincheloe, 2008; Vaandering, 2010
Change Theory	Provides a specific and measurable method for change based on strategic planning, on-going decision making, and evaluation. Requires participants to be clear on long-term goals, identify measurable indicators of success, and formulate actions to achieve the goal of improving student learning and creating effective schools.	Bryk et al., 2010; Fullan 2006a, 2006b; Jackson, 2013; Levine & Lezotte, 1995
Social Emotional Learning (SEL)	Asserts that as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making are modeled and strengthened, student achievement and behavior will improve.	Bandura, 1971
Restorative Justice Theory	Encourages building connections between all people in schools by promoting healthy child development, positive relationships, and creating space for people in schools to speak and be heard across all school environments, especially, but not exclusively, in instances where harm has been committed.	Amstutz & Mullet, 2005; Hopkins, 2004, 2011; Morrison, 2007a; Morrison & Vaandering, 2012; Zehr, 2002

**Significance of the Study**

After experiencing a variety of behavioral incidents in the classroom as an educator, the researcher sought to find a way to create a school climate that enhances social-emotional learning while helping students to engage in learning. Research supports that schools and communities should move away from relying on reactive policies and procedures for punishment, especially when dealing with students who demonstrate severe problem behaviors (Colvin & Kameenui, 1993; Lewis & Sugai, 1999). Instead, schools should focus on developing

and implementing a systematic, proactive approach to discipline that assists school climates on multiple levels (Taylor-Greene et al., 1997). Understanding the research and literature on the effectiveness of school-wide behavioral interventions and supports while utilizing school-wide restorative practices could both reduce negative behaviors and create a positive school climate at the school and in the community

With the implementation of inclusion, the general education classroom has experienced an increase in a variety of behaviors (Kauffman & Badar, 2014; McLeskey, Rosenberg, & Westling, 2010). This study aims to assist school administrators and teachers with implementing programs that would create positive, proactive interventions in the school communities, creating a reduction in zero-tolerance disciplinary actions and an increase in student graduation rates. Previous studies conducted on punishment indicate that schools should abandon adverse sanctions due to negative reinforcements not having the necessary effects to change or improve behavior (Donnellan, LaVigna, Negri-Shoultz, & Fassbender, 1988; Evans & Meyer, 1985). With the implementation of SW-PBIS in combination with SWRP's the potential to decrease the number of students removed from classrooms and school sites due to disciplinary actions was high (Mallett, 2016); therefore, allowing all students to be treated with respect and dignity by maximizing the ability to reduce harmful behaviors (Sia, 2013; Cowie, 2013).

The SWRP framework implemented in conjunction with SW-PBIS would assist with reversing inappropriate behaviors, helping students apologize and restore the community. However, limited research has been conducted on its effects on students with extreme emotional responses (Lewis et al., 2010). With an increasing amount of studies introduced regarding the successful implementation of SW-PBIS and SWRP within the school setting, there is a lack of information on the success of the implementation of the two frameworks in tandem.

Implementing SW-PBIS with SWRP should create a positive systemic culture change on school campus' giving students opportunities to successfully demonstrate culturally expected behaviors, the ability to communicate with one another, and learn from their errors (Nelson & Low, 2003).

### **Definition of Terms**

*Emotional Behavior Disorders:* Disruptive externalizing behavior (also referred to as antisocial, challenging, defiant, noncompliant, aggressive, and acting-out behavior) beyond the occasional minor incident typical of most children during the ordinary course of development (Nelson & Low, 2003, p. 147).

*Fidelity of Implementation:* The commitment to following all policies and procedures when delivering an intervention. It is a critical aspect of any program implementation and research endeavor to evaluate the effectiveness (Corcoran, 2017).

*Inclusion:* When students with disabilities receive their entire academic curriculum in the general education program (Idol, 2006, p. 78).

*Mainstreaming:* When students with disabilities spend a portion of their school day in the general education program and a part in a separate Special Education program (Idol, 1997)

*Multi-Tiered System of Support:* An integrated, comprehensive 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. (cde.ca.gov, 2019)

*Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports:* Refers to the application of positive behavioral interventions and systems to achieve socially essential behavior changes (Sugai et al., 2000, p. 133).

*Reinforcement:* Feedback for responses (Maglione, 2018, p. 547)

*Response to Intervention:* A method that focuses on individual students who are struggling academically and pulls together resources from the local education agency, school, and community to promote students' success before they fall behind. It is systematic and data-driven with tiered levels of intervention to benefit every student (cde.ca.gov., 2019).

*Restorative Approaches:* Process of redressing the harm done to the victims, holding offenders accountable for their actions, and often engaging the community in the resolution of conflict (Sia, 2013; Sellman, Cremin, & McCluskey, 2013; Thorsborne & Blood, 2013).

*Restorative Justice:* Process of redressing the harm done to the victims, holding offenders accountable for their actions, and often engaging the community in the resolution of conflict (Sia, 2013).

*Restorative Justice Education:* Process of redressing the harm done to the victims, holding offenders accountable for their actions, and often engaging the community in the resolution of conflict (Sia, 2013; Sellman et al., 2013; Thorsborne & Blood, 2013).

*Restorative Practices:* Process of redressing the harm done to the victims, holding offenders accountable for their actions, and often engaging the community in the resolution of conflict (Sia, 2013; Sellman et al., 2013; Thorsborne & Blood, 2013).

*Restorative Processes:* Process of redressing the harm done to the victims, holding offenders accountable for their actions, and often engaging the community in the resolution of conflict (Sia, 2013; Sellman et al., 2013; Thorsborne & Blood, 2013).

*School climate:* Refers to the school's effects on students, including teaching practices, diversity, and the relationships among administrators, teachers, parents, and students.

(ASCD.org)

### **Limitations**

Several limitations were found in this study, including time, access, and the design of the study. The physical distance between the researcher and the chosen school district posed financial challenges and limitations in terms of the amount of time that could be spent studying the schools. The researcher was not able to observe all possible incidents and events that might have affected the study findings during the study period, nor able to observe teachers in their classrooms. The researcher did not have access to all meetings, professional developments, conferences, classes, or other events that might have affected the research findings.

The various sample sizes in this study were a limitation, which can be common in mixed methods research (Creswell, 2015; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011a). This study was limited to a maximum of two high schools, one school district during the 2017-2018 academic year. This study was also confined to include only public high schools. Specialized schools, private schools, and alternative schools were not included in this study due to student demographics and lack of implementation of SW-PBIS and SWRP. Selection of participants was also limited to educators at School A and School B within one school district. While the survey was open for six weeks, the researcher was only able to garner 121 responses. The researcher was able to conduct seven online interviews with educators at the sites. Additional interview feedback would have provided the researcher with more details that would have aided in the overall understanding of teacher perceptions.

### **Delimitations**

Conducted at only two urban high schools in a single school district that contained a total of 54 schools, created a delimitation for this study. The research was completed across 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades and all subject areas in the selected schools to obtain a holistic picture of the school's

relational ecologies. The researcher did not study elementary, middle, charter, vocational, or credit-recovery schools, nor did the researcher study schools not practicing SWPBIS. School sites were purposively chosen in consultation with district administration.

### **Summary**

In this chapter, the reader was presented with information outlining the importance of school-wide positive behavioral interventions and supports utilizing various frameworks. The statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, research questions, theoretical framework, and significance of the study were presented. This chapter referenced research to support the impact of SW-PBIS with SWRP. Chapter 2 discusses the review of the literature which seeks to examine the research problem, prior research related to SW-PBIS, SWRP, students with disruptive behaviors, and teacher's perceptions of SW-PBIS and SWRP programs, their implementation, and the impact of implementation.

## CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter presented the rationale for researching the implementation of positive behavior intervention supports (PBIS) with restorative practices (RP) and the relationship of these interventions on students with disruptive behavior disorders (DBD) as related to student achievement and graduation rates. The research questions in this study required a broad, transdisciplinary review of the literature regarding PBIS, restorative justice in education (RJE), legal implications, inclusion practices, zero-tolerance, and specific pedagogies designed to benefit all students. Research has been conducted on PBIS and RJE separately; however, there has been limited research on the two strategies implemented in tandem when referencing students with disruptive behavior disorders. This study reviewed the similarities and differences of PBIS and RP while comparing the implementation and teacher perceptions of PBIS separately, and PBIS and RP implemented together. Both implementation practices focused on the impact of PBIS and RP with students that demonstrated disruptive behavior disorders in the school environment, the impact of these programs on the school's culture, and graduation rates.

Throughout this study, the terms restorative practices, restorative approaches, restorative justice education, and restorative processes were used interchangeably. These terms shared the understanding of creating systematic change based on the restorative justice theory while referring to the process of strengthening and repairing relationships in classrooms and school communities. This form of discipline moved educational environments away from traditional discipline techniques that removed students from schools to a culture that allowed educators to focus on facilitating students learning, building positive relationships, and preventing damage to relationships (Smith, Fisher, & Frey, 2015).

The following review of information represented the literature pertinent to the research of this study. Chapter 2 was organized into 10 sections: (a) exclusion, (b) federal involvement, (c) inclusion, (d) social emotional learning and competencies, (e) disruptive behaviors, (f) zero-tolerance, (g) multi-tiered systems of support, (h) positive behavior interventions and supports, (i) restorative practices, and (j) school climate. These sections offered an overview of the potentiality of the positive behavior intervention and supports and restorative practices programs.

### **Exclusion**

The United States public school system was created to provide all citizens with opportunities for social mobility (Ravitch, 2011), but over the past 182 years, students with disabilities have fought against being excluded from equal opportunity education due to race, visual impairment, mental disabilities, and educable ability (Chin, 2014). Initially, schools were created to produce social inequality or to be instruments of cultural repression but intended to provide citizens the opportunities to attain literacy and change their social status (Ravitch, 2011). However, to reach these changes, the educational mindset needed to be challenged and changed by the families and individuals who were directly involved in the system. The prevailing beliefs of many Americans that education was only for the white, mentally abled, and appropriately behaved students needed confrontation. Parents fought and advocated for their students to be integrated into a school system that deemed their children as different. This school system refused to provide the same opportunities to learn and succeed that was given to their white or non-disabled peers. These families and advocates pushed legal initiatives forward and advocated that all students deserved the ability to progress their intelligence and seize the opportunity to improve academically when provided with the right set of tools and the chance to succeed (Dweck, 2007).



## **Brown v. Board of Education**

During the 1950s, citizens sought to change societal inequalities through the civil rights movement. This movement addressed the lack of opportunity for minorities to contribute to their communities in the same manner as their white peers. During this rise of awareness Thurgood Marshall, the chief legal counsel for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), brought the civil rights case of *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) to trial. While desegregation was implemented for minority students, students with disabilities were still educated in separate environments from their non-disabled peers or not educated at all. Unintentionally, this case provided the legal groundwork for special education advocates to seek education equality for non-typical students. Sixteen years later, citing *Brown v. Board of Education* as their legal foundation, parent advocacy groups moved forward with the process of demanding that state policies and statutes not exclude students with disabilities from the same educational experience as their non-disabled peers (*Brown v. Board of Education*, 1954; Chinn, 2004; Yell, 2019).

## **Parent Advocacy in the Wake of Brown v. Board of Education**

Parent advocacy groups used the precedents set in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) to ask for sweeping changes to school policies and methods for students with disabilities (Yell, Rogers, & Lodge-Rogers, 1998). A central component of the *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) case was the fourteenth amendment, which gave citizens a constitutional guarantee of equal protection, instructing that the states not deny any individuals within its authority equitable protection under the law (U.S. Const. amend. XIV). A significant outcome of *Brown v. Board of Education*, (1954) case was the extension of the equal protection doctrine to a class of people, which was racial minorities (*Brown v. Board of Education*, 1954; Chin, 2014; Turnbull, 1990).

Using this protective doctrine, advocates for students with disabilities were able to get the same rights (Yell, 2019; Yell et al., 1998).

Due to parent advocacy efforts and litigation, changes occurred in federal legislation regarding disabled students' rights for acquiring an education. Two victorious cases that have assisted parents in raising the educational expectations for students with disabilities were *Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children v. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*, 1972, and *Mills v. The Board of Education*, 1972 (Kuriloff, True, Kirp, & Buss, 1974).

### **PARC v. Board of Education**

In 1949 the state of Pennsylvania had a compulsory law that required students between the ages of eight and 17 to attend school (Kuriloff et al., 1974). However, the state had an exception clause that stated, “any child judged by a school psychologist to be unable to profit from further school attendance or deemed ineducable or untrainable was excused or, less politely, excluded from the public schools” (Kuriloff et al., 1974, p. 35). This exclusionary clause destined severely mentally handicapped individuals to be excluded from the typical education environment with limited or zero opportunity to access education (Kuriloff et al., 1974). Parents, advocating for their children, challenged the constitutionality of these exclusionary practices, citing that these students were being denied equal protection under the law by assigning students to inappropriate programs without prior notice of due process (Kirp, Kuriloff, & Buss, 1976).

In January 1971, the Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children (PARC) filed a federal class action lawsuit against the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, naming the state's secretaries of Education and Public Welfare, the state Board of Education, and thirteen school districts as defendants (*PARC*, 1972). The plaintiffs stated that these entities denied students

with intellectual disabilities from receiving publicly supported education by delaying or ignoring their constitutional obligations. The parent advocacy group also claimed that these exclusionary practices violated state statutes and the students' rights under the equal protection clause of the 14th amendment to the U. S. Constitution. Resolved by consent agreement, the court specified that children between the ages of six and 21 diagnosed with intellectual disabilities would be able to obtain a free public education from the state (Yell, Katsiyannis, Ennis, Losinski, & Christle, 2016). As part of the resolution, the courts agreed that it was appropriate to educate children with intellectual disabilities in programs similar to the programs offered to their peers without disabilities (Levine & Wexler, 1981; Yell et al., 2016; Zettel & Ballard, 1982).

### **Mills v. Board of Education**

Shortly following the PARC ruling, a class action suit was filed in Washington DC against the District of Columbia's board of education, *Mills v. Board of Education* (1972). This suit was filed for all out-of-school students with disabilities, against the District of Columbia's board of education. Brought on by the parents and guardians of seven children who presented with a variety of disabilities "including behavior problems, hyperactivity, epilepsy, intellectual disabilities, and physical impairments", the plaintiffs represented over 18,000 students who were denied or excluded from the public education system in Washington, DC (Yell, 2019, p. 56). Based on the fourteenth amendment of the constitution, this lawsuit claimed that due process and procedures were ignored, and students were improperly excluded from school (Zettel & Ballard, 1982). Based on the *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) ruling, segregation in the public school system had already been determined illegal. Citing this case, the court determined that the total exclusion of students with disabilities was also unconstitutional (Yell, 2019). *Mills v. Board of Education* (1972) resulted in a judgment against the Washington D.C. school board and

mandated that the board provide all children with disabilities a free and public education (Yell et al., 2016). Clearly outlined, due process safeguards and procedures in regards to labeling, placement, and exclusion of students were mandated by the court (Zettel & Ballard, 1982).

### **Federal Involvement**

US Federal government showed interest in the education of children with disabilities during the White House conference of 1910. This conference was the beginning of many discussions about educating students with disabilities rather than placing them in institutions (Yell, 2019). However, the first significant involvement occurred more than 40 years later, in the late 1950s and early 1960s, with the promise of providing funds to support educational programs for the disabled. Attempting to move away from the heavy influence of parental advocacy groups, the government began changing systems that would enhance the educational experience for students with disabilities through grants and pilot programs. At this time, the government promised to provide funding for teacher training on educating students with intellectual disabilities. These changes led to various laws and amendments that support students with disabilities (Yell, 2019).

### **Education of the Handicapped Act**

In 1965 the Elementary Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was signed into legislation by President Lyndon B. Johnson as a component of the war on poverty. The ESEA was enacted to provide federal money to states mandating that they improve educational opportunities and experiences for disadvantaged children, including students with disabilities who attended state schools. During this time the funding was primarily for deaf, blind, and intellectual disabled children (Yell, 2019). The Education of the Handicapped Act (EHA) replaced the ESEA in 1970 becoming the basic framework for the legislation. The EHA provided funding to states if they

would initiate, expand, or improve programs and projects for students with disabilities. This law became the first freestanding special education law that required services that were essential for the progression of students with disabilities (Turnbull et al., 2007, 2013; Yell, 2019).

### **Individuals with Disabilities Act**

In 1975, President Gerald Ford signed the Education for all Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA), also known as public law (PL) 94-142. This legislation increased the role of the federal government in special education. Combined with the educational bill of rights and the previous promised federal financial incentives, the EAHCA, contained administrative and funding provisions to the states to develop policies assuring all qualified students with disabilities received an education (Katsiyannis, Yell, & Bradley, 2001; Yell, 2019). PL 94-142 successfully solved the issues of students with disabilities being excluded from education, being segregated from their same-aged nondisabled peers, and the inappropriate placement of students. The EAHCA renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) initiated groundbreaking involvement from the federal government (Yell, 2019). The framework for the rules and regulation that define how the IDEA works fall under six major principles zero-reject, nondiscriminatory identification and evaluation, free appropriate public education, least restrictive environment, due process safeguards, and parent and student participation and shared decision making. These six principles hold public schools accountable for how they meet and address the needs of students with disabilities and have virtually remained unchanged since 1975 (Heward, 2017; Turnbull & Cilley, 1998; Turnbull & Turnbull, 2000; Yell, 2019).

**Zero reject.** The zero-reject principle of the IDEA states that students with disabilities eligible for services must be provided free and appropriate public education, from birth to age 21 (Yell, 2019). This principle is applied for students regardless of the severity of the disability,

and mandates states to ensure that all students with disabilities who need special education related services or are suspected of having disabilities and needing special education services are located, identified and evaluated (*IDEA Regulations*, 34 C.F.R. § 300.220). This principle is commonly referred to as “child find” by school personnel (Yell, 2019).

**Nondiscriminatory identification and evaluation.** The IDEA requires schools to use multiple, unbiased methods of evaluation to determine whether a child has a disability and, if so, whether special education is needed. All evaluation procedures are required to avoid discrimination by race, culture, or native language (Yell, 2019). Testing is required to be administered in the child’s native language, and identification and placement decisions cannot be made from a single test score (Heward, 2017). The protection of evaluation procedures is incorporated into the IDEA to address abuses in the assessment process (Salvia, Ysseldyke, & Bolt, 2013). There have been updates from the initial evaluation process allowing a child’s parent, the state educational agency (SEA), or local education agency (LEA) to request an initial evaluation. When a LEA decides to evaluate a child for special education services and seeks consent from the child’s parent, the determination of eligibility must be completed within 60 days (Yell, 2019).

**Free appropriate public education.** While many benefited from public education, there is a common misconception that the federal Constitution guarantees education for everyone, when in fact, the state is responsible for the schooling of citizens (Levine & Wexler, 1981; Yell et al., 1998). The laws that control public education are divided into two categories: those written exclusively for schools and those written about the general population of society. Federal statutes regarding the education of children with disabilities are an example of laws that are written for schools (civil rights act of 1964, §§ 701 et seq., as amended, 42 U.S.C.A. §§

2000e et seq). The IDEA requires that states who receive federal funding offer a free and appropriate education (FAPE) to all citizens. When Congress defined FAPE, they focused on the procedural components that were protections afforded to students and their parents (Turnbull, Stowe, & Huerta, 2007; Yell, 2019; Yell, Katsiyannis, & Hazelkorn, 2007). The substantive right to FAPE consists of

“Special education and related services which (A) have been provided at public expense, under public supervision and direction, and without charge, (B) meet standards of the state educational agency (SEA), (C) include an appropriate preschool, elementary, or secondary school education in the state involved, and (D) are provided in conformity with the Individualized Education Program” in the least restrictive environment (IDEA 20 U.S.C. § 1401[18] [C]).

**Least restrictive environment.** Least restrictive environment (LRE) is a mandate allowing students with disabilities to be educated with their non-handicapped peers in the general education classroom. Therefore, ensuring that all students have equal access to instruction and curriculum. PL 94-142 stipulates that students should only be educated in environments separated from their typical peers when the severity of the handicap is such that education in the general education environment could not be achieved (Hicks-Monroe, 2011; Idol, 2006; PL 94-142). While LRE is mandated by law, it is suggested that state policies define the regular classroom as the least restrictive placement for all students providing maximum learning opportunities (Cruickshank, 1977; Kauffman & Landrum, 2007). Defining LRE is a topic of controversy due to limited research having been conducted to demonstrate that one type of educational placement is less restrictive than others, showing that a variety of high quality placements are needed (Cruickshank, 1977). Cruickshank furthered his position when he wrote:

A child placed in a so-called least-restrictive situation who is unable to achieve, who lacks an understanding teacher, who does not have appropriate learning materials, who is faced with tasks he cannot manage, whose failure results in negative comments by his classmates, and whose parents reflect frustration to him when he is at home, is indeed being restricted on all sides (Cruickshank, 1977, p. 93).

The concept of LRE combined the educational components of location and instruction to meet the needs of students. At the same time, asking district administrators what the intentions of schools were and how schools serve their communities (Kauffman & Badar, 2014; Kauffman & Lloyd 1995). **Due process safeguards.** A central part of the IDEA is the procedural safeguards designed to protect the interests of students with disabilities (Yell, 2019). These due process safeguards are to protect the rights of children with disabilities and their parents (Heward, 2017). The IDEA uses an extensive system of procedural policies to ensure that parents are equal participants in the special education process (IDEA Regulations, 34 C.F.R. § 300.500 et seq.). These safeguards consist of four components: general safeguards, independent educational evaluation, the appointment of surrogate parents, and dispute resolution (Yell, 2019). The safeguards must be presented and explained to parents at every official meeting. **Parent and student participation and shared decision making.** Since the early days of special education litigation, the parents of students with disabilities have played an important role in helping schools to meet the educational needs of their students. Key provisions of the IDEA that required parental participation were scattered throughout the law. Parent involvement in the evaluation, IEP meetings, and placement decisions is a requirement of the law. The IDEA Amendments of 1997 also stated that schools produce progress reports to the parents of students with disabilities as frequently as they give reports to the parents of students without disabilities



(Yell, 2019). Schools were required to collaborate with parents and students with disabilities in the design and implementation of special education services while gaining parent and student input when appropriate and when establishing IEP goals and objectives, related-service needs, and placement decisions (Heward, 2017; Yell, 2019).

### **Inclusion**

Although a legal definition of inclusion has not been created, the National Center on Educational Restructuring and Inclusion (1994) consulted with educational leaders to develop the following working definition of inclusive education:

Providing to all students, including those with significant disabilities, equitable opportunities to receive effective educational services, with the needed supplementary aids and support services, in age-appropriate classrooms in their neighborhood schools, to prepare students for productive lives as full members of society.

The intent of inclusion is to allow all students to be valued members of their school community by being able to actively participate with their peers, while given the support needed to have the opportunity to succeed (McLeskey et al., 2010). With the trend in special education moving towards full inclusion of students with disabilities, school sites are faced with successfully incorporating a variety of academic, social, and behavioral interventions to ensure students are being educated in the LRE. This section describes research conducted on the historical aspects, cultural effects, and intent of inclusion under public law.

### **Historical Aspects**

By the 1990s, discussions about inclusive education increased, focusing on teaching practices that could use individual differences as resources to meeting student learning needs (Dorn, Fuchs, & Fuchs, 1996). Moving the discussion from spatial location to discussions about

instructional designs, examples of these practices are differentiated instruction (Tomlinson et al., 2003) and universal designs (Rose Meyer & Hitchcock, 2005).

During this time, educational policies shifted focus and based student educational equality on standards and accountability. These policies shifted the inclusive education agenda to focus on the academic outcomes instead of opportunities for all students. This focus on academic standards, student outcomes, and state intervention were thought of as changing the meaning of inclusive education into normalizing and assimilative discourse (Armstrong, Armstrong, & Spandagou, 2011) and for exacerbating social exclusion, instead of reducing these inequalities (Slee, 2005).

Due to the implementation of the IDEA in 1975 and its reauthorization in 2004, the US Federal government has implemented educational policy reforms that focus on the social inclusion of all students. Inclusive education combines a set of ambitious reform agendas that emerged primarily from equity critiques focusing on the diluted curriculum of classrooms segregated by ability differences, the content knowledge of special educators, and the decline of opportunities to learn from and alongside peers with a range of abilities and talents.

### **Cultural Effects**

There are two distinct types of students special and regular. According to Martin (1976), “One of the ways in which many of us concerned with education have been incorrect is in our conceptualization of children as dichotomized into normal and exceptional” (p. 5). All students differ along continuums of intellectual, physical, and psychological characteristics. Individual differences are universal, and thus the study of deviant people is a study of all humankind (Sawrey, 1981). To varying degrees, all students differ from one another along the same ranges of differences (Artiles, Kozleski, & Waitoller, 2011; Stainback & Stainback, 1984b). By

utilizing arbitrary cutoffs, it does not make students any more different between the special and regular groups than within these groups. Therefore the dual system of two distinctly different types of students, those who are special and those who are regular, does not exist. Rather, each student has unique traits, each with his/her own set of physical, intellectual, and psychological characteristics (Stainback & Stainback, 1984a). Special education and the dual system are largely based on the assumption that there is a special group of students who need individualized educational programs tailored to their unique needs and characteristics. Such a position is educationally discriminatory. All students are unique individuals, and their individual differences can influence their instructional needs (Blankenship & Lilly, 1981).

### **Intent**

Inclusive education creates a way for leaders to respond to accommodating differences in the school community (Kauffman & Badar, 2014; Kauffman & Lloyd, 1995). A deep and sustained commitment to inclusiveness needs to be implemented for schools to accomplish this agenda in policy and practice (Kauffman, 2005). As the push for formal education changes, inclusive education must be examined from multiple perspectives that consider tensions between local, national, and global scales. Policymakers' enthusiasm for inclusion rhetoric and the assumption that the general education classroom in the neighborhood school is, in fact, least restrictive for all students has resulted in rapid erosion of placement options for students with disabilities, especially those identified in the categories of learning disabilities, emotional and behavioral disorder, and mild intellectual disabilities. Many communities have seen the not-so-gradual disappearance of self-contained classes, and in some schools pull-out programs of any kind have virtually disappeared (Kaufman, 2005; Turnbull, 2016).

By Kaufman's (2005) definition, an inclusive school should seek to create problem-solving opportunities, emphasizing the educational strengths of all students. All employees share the responsibility of working together to create and maintain a climate conducive to learning. An effective, inclusive school acknowledges that such a commitment requires administrative leadership, on-going technical assistance, and long-term professional development.

### **Social-Emotional-Learning and Competencies**

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) "is how children and adults learn to understand and manage emotions, set goals, show empathy for others, establish positive relationships, and make responsible decisions" (CASEL, 2019, para. 1). Encompassing a wide range of competencies from emotional intelligence to social competence to self-regulation; SEL skills are necessary for students to achieve academically because it embodies skills needed for succeeding in the classroom, in the life of the school, in the family, in the community, in the workplace and, indeed, in life in general (CASEL, 2019). Dyson, Howley & Shen (2019) theorized that by addressing students' lack of social-emotional awareness, educators would be able to actively address the daily obstacles that students face due to cultural preferences, socio-economic status, life experiences, and social, emotional differences. However, SEL implies more than a set of skills; it implies a pedagogy for building those skills and an intervention structure to support the internalization and generalization of the skills over time and across contexts. Drawing from research in brain-behavior relationships, social learning theory and developmental and prevention science, these skill areas are similar to the main dimensions of emotional intelligence identified by Bar-On (2007) and Mayer, Salovey & Caruso (2008) and to those adopted by major school-based competence promotion curriculum innovators (Elias & Haynes, 2008).

## **Social Competence**

Social-Emotional Competence (SEC) is related to academic achievement (Oberle, Schonert-Reichl, Hertzman, & Zumbo, 2014) and school readiness (Bierman et al., 2008). It is a multivariate construct that includes children's ability to identify emotions in themselves and others, being able to manage their emotions appropriately, having positive interactions with teachers and peers (Raver & Knitzer, 2002), and solving problems effectively (Zins & Elias, 2006). Five core teachable SEC's essential to SEL are self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making (Humphries, Williams, & May, 2018). A lack of SEC abilities was related to less academic engagement and lower academic achievement (Elias & Haynes, 2008).

## **Self-Regulation**

Self-regulation can be defined as “the ability to flexibly activate, monitor, inhibit, persevere and/or adapt one’s behavior, attention, emotions and cognitive strategies in response to direction from internal cues, environmental stimuli and feedback from others, in an attempt to attain personally-relevant goals” (Moilanen, 2007, p. 835). Self-regulation is a multidimensional construct including behavioral and cognitive processes that enable an individual to manage attention, behavior, cognition, and arousal optimally to guide his or her goal-directed activities (Baumeister & Vohs, 2016; Blair & Diamond, 2008). This multidimensional nature has given rise to different approaches in examination of self-regulation, such as a behavioral-based and temperament-based approach and a cognitive–neural systems approach. Its critical importance in different contexts (e.g., social behaviors and school success) in early development has been well accepted; however, there is still considerable debate about its definition as well as its measurement. Researchers who adopt the temperament-based approach to study self-regulation

focus on effortful control, whereas those who adopt the neural systems approach focus on executive functions (Liew, 2012; McClelland & Cameron, 2011; Zhou, Chen, & Main, 2012).

### **Emotional Intelligence**

The ability to identify and manage emotions has been termed emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence consists of “specific skills, behaviors, and attitudes that can be learned, applied, and modeled by students to improve personal satisfaction, achievement, and career effectiveness.” (Nelson & Low, 2003, p. xiii). Daniel Goleman (2010) added that assisting children to increase their self-awareness and confidence has been scientifically proven to increase student’s abilities to manage disturbing emotions and impulses. Increasing these social-emotional competencies will increase student empathy and have a measurable impact on academic achievement.

Students with DBD can be faced with a variety of issues that impact appropriate development socially and emotionally. Studies show teachers have little to no training both at the pre- and in-service levels, in SEC, SEL, or behavior disorders (Humphries et al., 2018; Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Kubina, Kostewicz, Brennan, & King, 2017). Research showed that when teachers lack the knowledge and understanding to facilitate social-emotional learning, students perform at lower levels in on-task behaviors and classroom behaviors (Humphries et al., 2018).

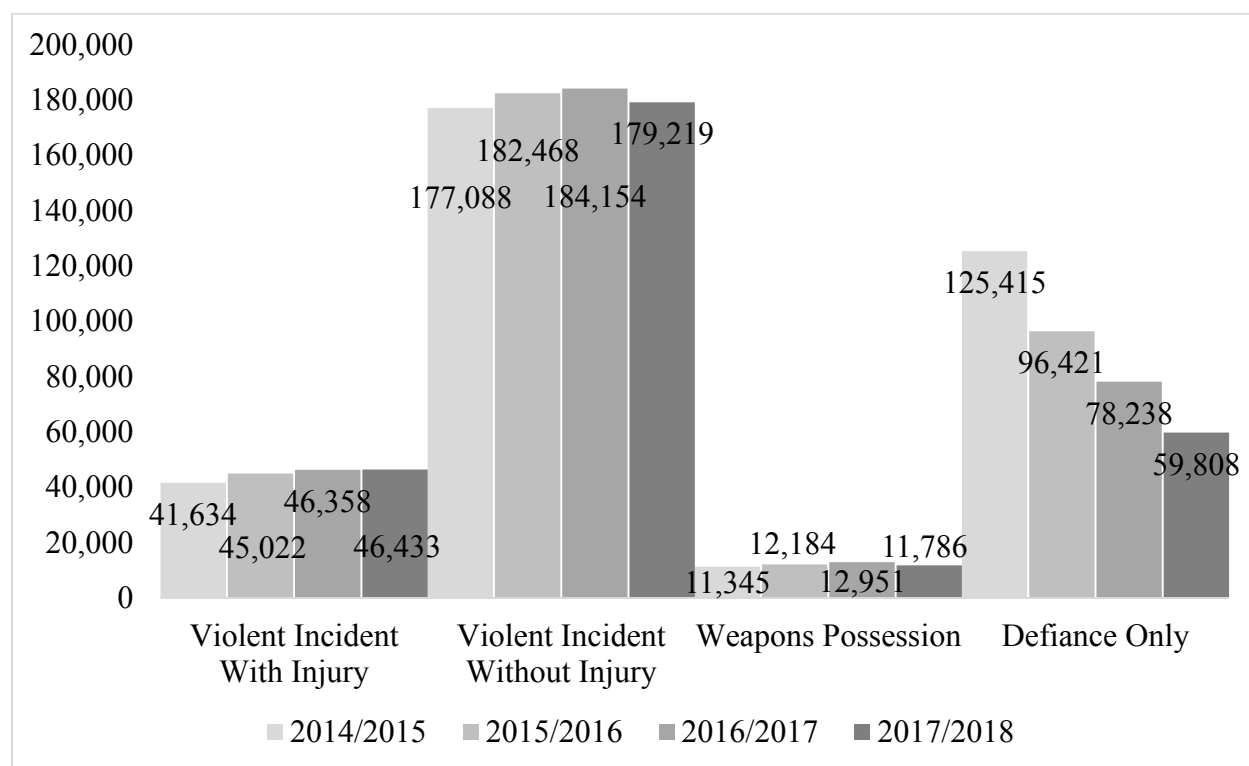
Among the empirical pillars of Goleman’s (2010) work on emotional intelligence were data from several school-based interventions designed to improve SEL that, in so doing, also generated improvements in positive behaviors, learning-to-learn behaviors, self-efficacy and academic performance, as well as, declines in problem behaviors such as aggression, withdrawal, anxiety and substance abuse.

### **Disruptive Behaviors**

Disruptive or externalizing behavior not only confronts schools and society with a serious challenge, but it also has an adverse impact on individuals (Nelson, 1996). The disruptive behaviors may interfere with academic and vocational success as well as instability and unhappiness (Kazdin, 1987; Wagner et al., 2006). Without the correct support, students may increase the frequency of disruptions by becoming more antisocial, challenging, defiant, noncompliant, and aggressive, becoming the most pressing issues in schools (Bullock, Reilly, & Donahue, 1983; Evans & Meyer, 1985; Hranitz & Eddowes, 1990). The U.S. Department of education data and statistics site showed that 2,635,743 students were suspended or expelled from public schools in the 2013-2014 school year, and 220,300 teachers reported being physically attacked by students in the academic school year 2015-2016 (U.S Department of Education, 2019). There is little question that educators across the country must address violent and disruptive behavior (Nelson, 1996). Although addressing the growing level of violent and disruptive behavior in schools may be a subordinate objective of the broader academic goals of schools, doing so may be a necessary condition for achieving academic excellence (Nelson, 1996). In the state of California, reports of violent incidents have been stagnant, with reports of defiance-only suspensions declining (California Department of Education, 2019).

Students who engaged in disruptive behaviors struggle with maintaining compliance in the educational community, especially when they demonstrate one or more mental health issues. Combining school violations with aggressive behaviors can create a label being assigned to the student as having DBDs (Bernes, Bernes, & Bardick, 2011; Grothaus, 2013). The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders V (DSM-5) (2013) stated that children, who do not have adequate control over their thoughts, feelings, or behaviors combined with low executive

brain functions, demonstrate specific behavioral issues and poor social skills in the home and school environments. This behavior is demonstrated in students whose inability to achieve adequate academic progress, and satisfactory interpersonal relationships cannot be attributed primarily to physical, sensory, or intellectual deficits (Algozzine, Wang, & Violette, 2011).



*Figure 1.* California declining suspension data

### **Defining the Behaviors**

A student who has received supportive educational assistance and counseling services available to all students yet still exhibits persistent and consistent severe to very severe behavioral disabilities which interfere with productive learning processes can be described as disruptive (Algozzine, 2017).

Students who have been diagnosed with a DBD often face their greatest challenges in school environments. Studies have shown that students with high externalizing behavior



disorders have a greater likelihood of having co-occurring mental health concerns (Angold, Costello, & Erkanli, 1999; Grothaus, 2013; Maughan, Rowe, Messer, Goodman & Meltzer, 2004;). Co-occurring mental health concerns were defined as comorbidity. Grothaus (2013) explained that students who demonstrate DBD have high co-morbidity rates with other mental health concerns such as anxiety, mood disorders, impulse control, learning communication, substance use disorders, and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

This study focused on students who demonstrated DBD during their academic day and not the actual diagnosis. There was a range of two to five types of conditions that fall under the DBD umbrella, depending on the literature (Grothaus, 2013). This study discussed four of the major classifications that occurred on academic campuses daily. In the DBD family staff will encounter attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, oppositional defiance disorder, conduct disorder, and intermittent explosive disorder.

Table 2

*Disruptive Behavior Disorders*

Diagnosis	Definition	Demonstrated Behaviors
Attention Deficit Disorder	“A persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that interferes with functioning or development” (APA, 2013, p.59)	Low frustration tolerance, irritability, executive function or memory problems, academic or work performance is often impaired, inattentive, or excessive motor activity (APA, 2013).
Oppositional Defiance Disorder	"A pattern of angry/irritable mood, argumentative/defiant behavior, or vindictiveness lasting at least 6 months" (APA, 2013, p. 462).	Not uncommon to only show symptoms at home, easily irritable, often argues with authority figures, deliberately annoys others, blames others for mistakes or misbehaviors (APA, 2013).
Conduct Disorder	The essential feature of conduct disorder is “a repetitive and persistent pattern of behavior in which the basic rights of others or major age-appropriate societal norms or rules are violated” (APA, 2013, p. 469).	Misperceive the intentions of others as hostile or threatening, aggressive, poor self-control, easily frustrated, irritable, temper outbursts, suspicious, insensitive to punishment, thrill seeking (APA, 2013).
Intermittent Explosive Disorder	“Recurrent behavioral outbursts representing a failure to control aggressive impulses” (APA, 2013, p.466).	Rapid aggressive impulsive outbursts that last less than thirty minutes, high level of comorbidity (APA, 2013).

*Note.* American Psychiatric Association, & American Psychiatric Association (Eds.) (2013).

There are a host of challenges that they must overcome on a daily basis to be successful at school. Schools' expectations of immediate compliance and respect combined with aggressive disciplinary actions created environments where students that have been diagnosed with a DBD are challenged to thrive.

## **Teacher Perspectives**

Studies have suggested that teachers perceive and evaluate student behavior unequally (Humphries et al., 2018). Past research indicated that teachers view black students' behaviors more negatively than white and Asian students (Downey & Pribesh, 2004; Irizarry, 2015; McGrady & Reynolds, 2013). This research supported the argument that racial biases influenced teachers' perceptions of children's behavior (Downey & Pribesh, 2004; Marcelo & Yates, 2014; McGrady & Reynolds, 2013). These biases impact student-teacher relationships and the development of the student's social and behavioral skills (Zimmermann, 2018).

Studies showed that school counselors, teachers, and administrators tend to have negative biases toward students based upon race/ethnicity, family socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, gender, discriminatory beliefs, and practices appear to play a role in determining who is seen as having behavioral problems (Auwarter & Aruguete, 2008; Grothaus, 2013; Sue, 2010). These constructs have been used to determine the expectations and outcomes of students. These cultural frames of reference inform the shrewdness of those who judge students' behaviors and decide about discipline policies and practices (Nguyen, Huang, Arganza, & Liao, 2007).

Teacher expectations have an impact on student academic performance; however, teacher expectations can be biased towards specific subgroups of students (Timmermans, de Boer, & van der Werf, 2016). Teachers' expectations based on students' perceived assertiveness, independence, and self-confidence. These studies show that teachers tend to have higher expectations of a student if they see the student as independent and more confident. Teachers' expectations were also found to be associated with their perceptions of the student's social behavior in the classroom. The quality of the student-teacher relationship, as perceived by the

teacher, is more closely related to teachers' expectations than the children's measured performance and background (Hughes, Gleason, & Zhang, 2005; Martínez, 2016).

### **Teacher Training**

On many occasions, both general education and special-education teachers struggled with fully understanding how to support the development of desirable social skills in students who demonstrate DBD's. Teachers struggled to find the correct approach to use with students who were disrupting the classroom during class (Duong et al., 2019). While teachers recognized the need to teach social skills to students who struggled with day-to-day interactions finding the time to integrate the training into their daily routines was challenging (Garbacz, Zychinski, Feuer, Carter, & Budd, 2014). Teachers recognize the importance of social skills development, but the best manner in which to include it within the school environment seems to be selected by the individual teachers' taste, particularly within the general education environment. Best-practices in teaching social skills continued to be needed in the schools so that teachers could offer students with behavioral issues the education they deserved.

Growing in numbers, students in American public schools bring a variety of cultural aspects to the classroom. Many students speak English as a second language; have limited family supports; significant learning or behavioral problems; families who face financial barriers; and a great need for mental health, social welfare, medical, and vocational assistance (Dyson et al., 2019). All of these factors must be addressed in the educational environment although most attention is applied to teaching social-emotional and behavioral skills with the majority of time focused on students with externalizing problem behavior (e.g., aggressive, antisocial, or destructive conduct), and students with internalizing problem behavior (e.g., social withdrawal, depression) (Dyson et al., 2019).

### **Zero-Tolerance**

Congress passed the Gun-Free Schools Act in 1995 (GFSA, 2004) to decrease school violence. This law required schools to implement zero-tolerance gun policies for students. These disciplinary procedures, when administered, require a one-year expulsion from school without the provision to be provided alternative schooling (Martinez, 2009). In the 1990s, zero-tolerance policies gained popularity due to rising concerns about school violence. By the 1996-1997 school years, schools expanded the scope of zero-tolerance to cover behaviors included swearing, truancy, insubordination, disrespect, and dress-code violations (Hoffman, 2014; Skiba & Sprague, 2008).

Congress's zero-tolerance policies provided a way for school districts to react to specified offenses with severe punishments of suspension and expulsion from the school community. The increased focus on reacting to student misbehaviors with harsh punishments undermined society's responsibility of equipping children with the necessary tools and knowledge to become productive citizens (Ruiz, 2016; Teske, 2011). One of the primary purposes of the IDEA is to ensure equal access to public education for students with disabilities. However, many schools used punitive discipline practices for behavior infractions. Students with disabilities and behavior disorders were punished by removal from the educational environment through suspensions and expulsions, creating disciplinary exclusion (Skiba, Arredondo, & Williams, 2014). These punitive policies, typically implemented without consideration for the circumstances surrounding an incident created an avenue for school administrators to misuse and abuse their power by relinquishing their responsibility for student behavioral problems for events that were not meant to be classified under the zero-tolerance policy (Curran, 2019; Hoffman, 2014; Monterastelli, 2017).

Schools have a responsibility to provide safe, orderly, and drug-free environments that enable students to focus on the academic and social tasks that will foster their development into healthy, productive adults. Zero-tolerance policies were implemented to ensure that schools were able to act on that responsibility by removing disruptive students from campus the school culture would improve and (Skiba, Shure, & Williams, 2011; Stucki, 2014), a message would be sent to other potential violators that certain behaviors would not be tolerated and severe punishment would be administered for all offenses no matter the situation (Lorenz, 2010; Skiba & Sprague, 2008). While some districts adhere to a zero-tolerance policy that equally punishes both major and minor disruptions, others had begun to define zero tolerance as a system that graduates the severity of the consequence in proportion to the seriousness of the offense (Skiba, 2014).

Skiba (2014) found that the strategies associated with zero tolerance provided minimal evidence of improving overall student behavior and school safety. However, not only was the research not supporting its effectiveness, but the collected data on suspensions and expulsion rates showed that zero-tolerance policies were implemented unequally and limited educational interventions (Skiba, 2014). Students were missing opportunities for learning and were not provided with opportunities to change their offending behaviors. The rise of punishment- and exclusion-based philosophy of school discipline has created natural consequences for students. Educators given the responsibility to keep students safe view more extreme approaches to school discipline as justified if those approaches could be shown to lead reliably to safer or more orderly school climates (Skiba et al., 2014).

### **Multi-Tiered System of Support**

The multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) reform efforts was multifaceted and predicated upon theoretical, empirical, and practical considerations. This comprehensive system of differentiated supports included evidence-based instruction, universal screening, progress monitoring, formative assessments, and research-based interventions matched to student's needs. Designed to respond to the needs of all students within a system, the MTSS framework integrated tiered behavior supports (e.g. Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports) and academic supports (e.g. Response to Intervention - RTI) which created environments where students had the opportunities to be educated in spaces that were physically and emotionally safe (Fuchs, Fuchs, & Vaughn, 2014; Morrison, 2015).

In an attempt to meet the academic and behavioral needs of all students, the MTSS framework was designed to use a continuum of instructional supports and targeted interventions of increasing intensity matched to student need (Morrison, 2014). Representing a fundamental shift in how educators gather, monitor, and respond to data (Daly, Martens, Barnett, Witt, & Olson, 2007). Implementation of MTSS required change on many levels, with the most significant changes focused on the professional practice of educators, administrators, and school-based related services professionals (Kratochwill, Volpiansky, Clements, & Ball, 2007).

In part, due to the implementation of MTSS, there has been an increased emphasis on collecting and using data in schools (Morrison, 2014). These initiatives had a common purpose that promoted a proactive screening approach to the identification and early intervention for student difficulties, these initiations referred to as a response to intervention in the academic domain and school-wide positive behaviors interventions and support in the behavioral domain (McIntosh, Bohanon, & Goodman, 2010). Multi-tiered systems emphasized the routine

collection of reliable and valid data to measure student progress allowing for timely review to aid in decision making that surrounded supporting students. The implementation process of MTSS requires the selection and use of assessments provided information to identify and monitor the progress of intervention of students (Sugai & Horner, 2009). These assessments formed the foundation for MTSS and were an essential component of MTSS. Multi-tiered systems can enhance or limit the quality of data collected as part of the process. That is, these systems can function well only if the data used in decision making are reliable and valid indicators of student performance (Morrison, 2014; Sugai & Horner, 2009). Implementing proactive strategies for defining, teaching, and supporting appropriate student behavior, school districts created and enhanced positive school environments (Morrison, 2015; US Department of Education, 2018).





*Figure 2.* MTSS framework addressing academic, behavior, and social-emotional needs of students (CDE, 2019)

### **Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support**

Schools are essential environments in which children, families, educators, and community members have opportunities to learn, teach, and grow. Creating spaces that provide students with learning environments that are reliable, positive, and predictable are essential to establishing a positive school culture. The positive school culture creates the potential to provide positive adult and peer role models, opportunities to experience academic and social success, and social exchanges that foster enduring relationships. These constructs can all be achieved with the implementation of the PBIS framework.

The conceptual framework for RTI and PBIS mirror one another, with both models emphasizing prevention, data-based decision-making, problem-solving, evidence-based interventions, and implementation fidelity (Sugai & Horner, 2009). Completed empirical research found that integrated approaches of RTI and PBIS were associated with greater improvements in both academic and behavioral outcomes (Benner, Kutash, Nelson, & Fisher 2013; Lane & Menzies, 2003; McIntosh, Chard, Boland, & Horner, 2006). Within this framework, implementation was conducted in multiple stages over two to four years. This process included (a) exploration, (b) installation, (c) initial implementation, (d) full implementation, (e) innovation, and (f) sustainability (McIntosh, Chard, Boland, & Horner, 2006; Sugai & Horner, 2009).

**Definition**

Focused on P.L. 105-15, the National Technical Assistance (TA) Center on PBIS moved to the school-wide behavior model that added emphasis on implementation practices and systems (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012). Due to this shift, PBIS was defined as a framework for enhancing the implementation of continuous evidence-based interventions that achieve academically and behaviorally important outcomes for all students (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012). However, the multiple tiers of integrated practices and systems used to define SWPBIS make it complex to fully define (Horner et al., 2010). School-wide positive behavior interventions and supports (SWPBIS), a broad range of systematic and individual strategies, was used to assist educators in developing supports and interventions to meet academic, behavior, and socio-emotional needs of all students in a school setting (Horner, Sugai, & Anderson, 2010; Sugai & Simonsen, 2012). With the emphasis on prevention, educators were encouraged to investment in teaching

behavioral expectations to all students while creating socially appropriate behavior (Sugai et al., 2000; Turnbull, Wilcox, Stowe, & Turnbull, 2001).

## **Framework**

The defining characteristics of the PBIS framework are that student outcomes are the primary foundation for practice selection, data collection, and intervention evaluations. These outcomes are intended for academic and social environments, to be administered to individuals and small groups, and are determined based on their educational and social value of importance. PBIS does not focus on specific packaged or manualized interventions; the PBIS framework highlights specification and adopts evidence and research-based practices that characterize packaged programs. These practices are organized to support students across school-wide (e.g., teaching a small amount of positively stated behavioral expectations, clear definitions for rule violations, and data-decision rules), non-classroom (e.g., active supervision, supervision, high praise rates), and individual student (e.g. function-based behavior intervention supports, explicit social skills instruction, wraparound processes) routines (Bohanon, Fenning, Borgmeier, Flannery, & Malloy, 2009). Consisting of a response-to-intervention approach, PBIS represents the establishment of a sequence of behavior support practices and systems. Unified with procedures these practices for universal screening create the ability to monitor progress on a continual basis, implement team-based decision-making rules and procedures, explicit monitoring of implementation fidelity, and local content expertise and influence. Also, the PBIS framework stresses the importance of embedded and continuous professional development, monitoring based on phases of implementation, and systems-based competence and supports (e.g., policy, leadership, funding). Finally, the ability to effectively and efficiently use data to guide decision-making links the characteristics together to create change. The collection of data

and analysis are considered essential for a number of PBIS purposes: (a) need clarification and priority, (b) matching the need of intervention or practice, (c) evaluation of research-based for practice selection, (d) student responsiveness and outcome impact, (e) intervention or practice fidelity, (f) social and ecological validity, and (g) implementation adjust for efficiency, effectiveness, and relevance. The conceptual foundation for SWPBIS lies in applied behavior analysis, organizational behavior management, and community health. PBS and implementation science (Horner et al., 2010).

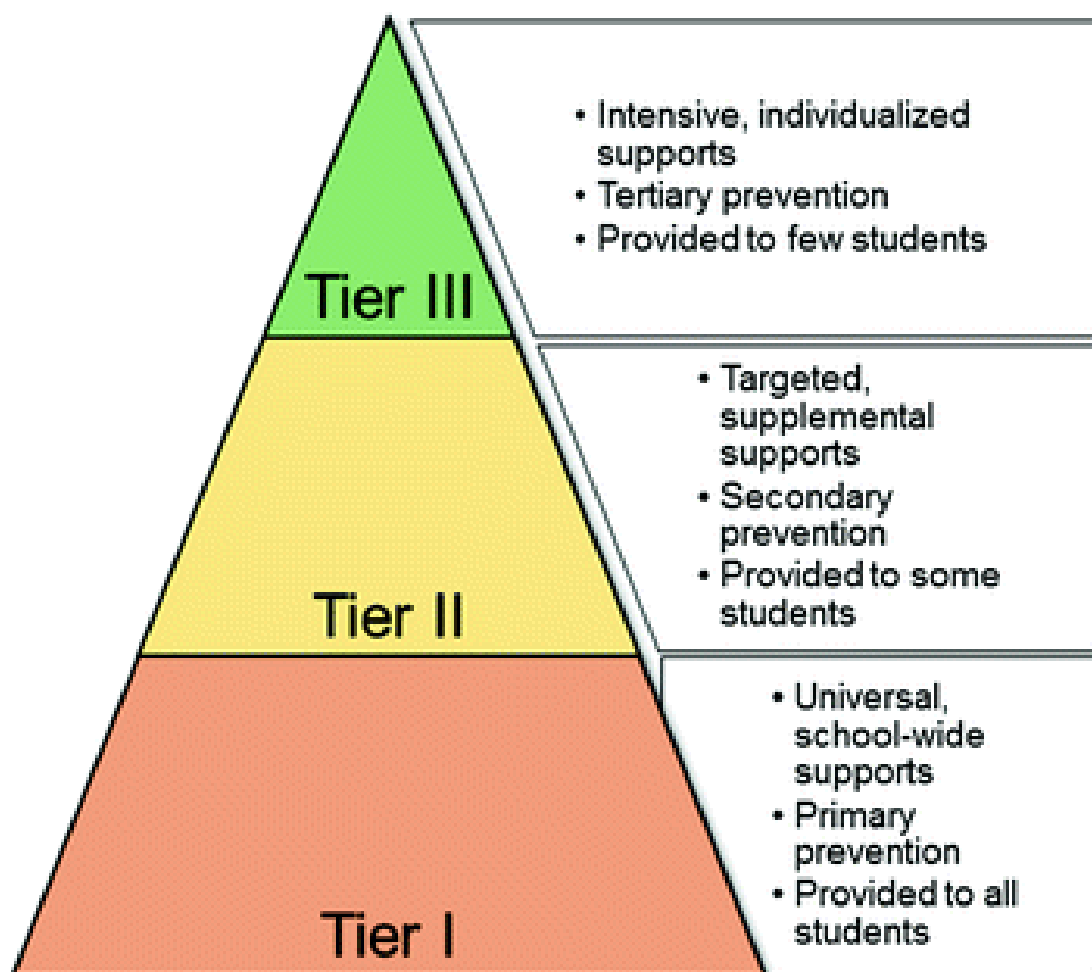


Figure 3. PBIS Pyramid (CDE, 2109)

## History

Positive behavioral interventions and support originated from numerous educators and researchers concerned about the whole child and provided strong recommendations for a more preventive and positive approach when addressing problematic behaviors in the educational environment (Elliott, Hamburg, & Williams, 1998; Epstein, Kutash, & Duchnowski, 1998; Gottfredson, Gottfredson, & Hybl, 1993; Gottfredson, Gottfredson, & Skroban, 1996; Skiba & Deno, 1991; Sugai et al., 2000). The 1997 updated Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) statute directly addressed the requests for a proactive approach to discipline by referring to positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) and functional behavioral assessment (FBA) processes as a necessary strategy for students who were at risk, of developing or displaying disruptive behaviors. These behaviors had been documented as impeding the student's ability to achieve while also decreasing the success rate of those around them (Sugai et al., 2000). Policymakers identified positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) as a strategy to be used for all students, but specifically with children who were disruptive (Sugai & Horner, 2009; Horner, Sugai, & Fixsen, 2017). Originated as an amendment to the IDEA, positive behavior support (PBS) became public law P.L. 105-17 on June 4, 1997 (Sugai et al., 2000). The implementation of P.L. 105-17 providing educators with the ability to write positive behavior strategies as interventions on individual education plans (IEP's) of students with behavior disorders (Sugai et al., 2000). This values-driven approach, PBIS, was useful in allowing supports to be introduced that provided alternatives for students who utilized challenging behaviors as a way for the individual to communicate to those around them (Shannon et al., 2001). Grounded in a person-centered, values system this approach promoted respect for individuals' preferences and goals (Shannon et al., 2001).

## **Impact and Evidence Base for PBIS**

PBIS was established to disseminate evidence-based behavior interventions for students with behavior disorders (Gage, Sugai, Lunde, & DeLoreto, 2013; Sugai & Simonsen, 2012; Turnbull, Wilcox, Stowe, & Turnbull, 2001). The defining characteristics of the PBIS framework are that student outcomes are the primary foundation for practice selection, data collection, and intervention evaluations. These outcomes are intended for academic and social environments, to be administered to individuals and small groups, and are determined based on their educational and social value of importance. PBIS does not focus on specific packaged or manualized interventions; the PBIS framework highlights specification and adopts evidence and research-based practices that characterize packaged programs. These practices are organized to supports students across school-wide (e.g., teaching a small amount of positively stated behavioral expectations, clear definitions for rule violations, and data-decision rules), non-classroom (e.g., active supervision, supervision, high praise rates), and individual student (e.g. function-based behavior intervention supports, explicit social skills instruction, wraparound processes) routines. Consisting of a response-to-intervention approach, PBIS represents the establishment of a sequence of behavior support practices and systems. Unified with procedures these practices for universal screening create the ability to monitor progress on a continual basis, implement team-based decision-making rules and procedures, explicit monitoring of implementation fidelity, and local content expertise and influence. Also, the PBIS framework stresses the importance of embedded and continuous professional development, monitoring based on phases of implementation, and systems-based competence and supports (e.g., policy, leadership, funding). Finally, the ability to effectively and efficiently use data to guide decision-making links the characteristics together to create change. The collection of data and analysis

are considered essential for a number of PBIS purposes: (a) need clarification and priority, (b) matching the need of intervention or practice, (c) evaluation of research-based for practice selection, (d) student responsiveness and outcome impact, (e) intervention or practice fidelity, (f) social and ecological validity, and (g) implementation adjust for efficiency, effectiveness, and relevance (Gage et al., 2013).

Included in the 16,000 school teams that have been trained on the PBIS implementation framework, are three states with more than 60% of schools involved in PBIS implementation, nine states with more than 40%, and sixteen states with more than 30% (Sugai & Horner, 2009). Building capacity, the state, and district leadership teams move towards sustaining and scaling up their implementation of PBIS. Effective school implementations have more than 80% of their students and staff who can indicate the desired positive behavioral expectations for a given school setting. These schools show high rates of positive acknowledgments for contributing to a positive and safe school climate and have more than 70-80% of their students never experience an office discipline referral. The data gives researchers a good idea about which students require more intensive behavior supports, and which systems need to be regularly reviewed of their school-wide behavior data to guide their PBIS action planning and implementation decision making. Experimental studies have been documented, as early as the 1980s, on the effectiveness of a school-wide PBIS framework and its ability to support improvements in disciplinary behavior issues, school and community climate, organizational health, student bullying behavior, peer victimization, and academic achievement.

PBIS schools implement PBIS with fidelity to the National Model are measured regularly for the fidelity of implementation and student outcomes. Below is a summary of schools

implementing PBIS who use PBIS Assessment tools to guide and measure implementation and various measures for student outcome data.

### **High School Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports**

According to the National Technical Assistance Center for Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS TA Center), SWPBIS has been implemented nationally in more than 20,011 schools across all 50 states and Washington D.C. However, within this network, only 2,606 high schools (or 13% of schools in the database) are implementing SWPBIS. Researchers suggest the unique contextual features in high schools make the adoption of SWPBIS more complicated than at lower grade levels (Flannery, Frank, Kato, Doren, & Fenning, 2013). As a result, the adoption and initial implementation process at the high school level may take longer and require adaptations in the typical framework to meet the needs of high schools (Flannery et al., 2013). For example, the larger size of most high schools can make the coordination and implementation of school-wide initiatives, data collection, and monitoring procedures more cumbersome (Bohanon, Flannery, Malloy, & Fenning, 2009). Developmentally, students are likely to be more motivated by peer acceptance than adult influence, increasing the need for student voice and input into schoolwide procedures and initiatives (Murphy, Beck, Crawford, Hodges, & McGaughy, 2001). Student independence creates additional challenges concerning open campuses and a need for adequate supervision both in school and at extracurricular activities. Also, high school faculty may be primarily focused on their assigned content area, making it more difficult to carve out time for social skill instruction or intervention (Bohanon et al., 2009). Finally, high schools may rely more heavily on zero-tolerance discipline policies (Skiba & Rausch, 2006) making it more challenging to build faculty and staff support for SWPBIS (Flannery et al., 2013)



Studies that assess the effects of SWPBIS on outcomes at the high school level have been limited in scope and rigor. SWPBIS has been associated with positive results in the areas of attendance, behavior, and in some cases, academics; however, much of this research has been conducted at the elementary and middle school levels (Flannery et al., 2013). The implementation of SWPBIS at the high school level has been shown to take more time and may require some specific modifications of the SWPBIS framework to fit the unique high school context (Flannery et al., 2013). An understanding of the relationship between SWPBIS implantation and school-level outcome measures across a large sample of high schools is critical for informing and guiding implementers, policymakers, and researchers. Resulting in a general overview of the relationship between SWPBIS, academic attendance, and behavior outcomes in a large sample of schools. Evidence suggests that positive relationships between SWPBIS implementation and outcomes in behavior and attendance that some of the challenges of the implementation at the high school level, positive results can be expected for schools that implement with fidelity.

### **Restorative Practices**

Introduced in the judicial system, restorative justice engages a variety of practices that shift proactive discipline from a behaviorist approach to social-emotional learning. Since the inception of the contemporary RJ movement in the 1970s, more societies, regions, and countries around the world have adopted various restorative practices into their criminal justice, juvenile justice, and educational systems (Pranis, 2005). In shifting the focus, the cultural context of discipline changed, and the process of creating environments where individuals were recognized as being a part of the community and the action of building, maintaining, and repairing relationships was allowed. Through restorative justice, restorative practices were born. Utilizing

the framework of restorative justice, organizations began using a different lens to view how they perceived justice, human nature, social engagement, and social responsibility (Morrison & Vaandering, 2012). Resulting in the creation of environments that developed social responsibility, feelings of belonging, and nurtured relational ecologies.

### **Definition**

Creating a great relationship based on a culture of equity and inclusion restorative practices transform the process of building relationships while teaching respect to all stakeholders in the community. However, no single, standardized definition of restorative justice exists, which makes advocacy and expansion challenges, creating a problematic aspect for the restorative justice movement. Zehr (2002), offered a working definition of restorative justice as "a process to involve, to the extent possible, those who have a stake in a specific offense, and to collectively identify and address harms, needs, and obligations, in order to heal and put things as right as possible" (p. 37). Morrison (2007a), also provides a definition that RJ is "both a process and a set of values" (p. 75) that is about "addressing basic social and emotional needs of individuals and communities, particularly in the context of responding to harmful behavior to oneself and others" (p. 73). Regardless of the defining or conceptualizing of RJ, experts viewed the practice as a more humanistic and humane alternative to traditional criminal justice, which removes the victim from the process, views crime as an offense against the state, and frequently seeks punishment over reparation (Morrison, 2007a; Zehr, 2002). Restorative practices view misconduct not as a violation of the institution but as a violation against people and relationships. With its foundation in the theoretical framework of restorative justice, restorative practices differ from the restorative justice stance by including the whole school community and professionals that only work with youth.

## **Restorative Values**

Restorative practices embody a set of values that drive the movement's inclusive practices that seek to restore communities and minimize the shame that stigmatizes youth (Ahmed & Braithwaite, 2006; Braithwaite, 1989), and reintegrate student offenders back into the school community (Braithwaite, 2009). These values have been linked to beliefs, practices, and rituals of indigenous populations worldwide (Louw, 2008; Skelton, 2007; Wang, Di, & Wan, 2007; Zion & Yazzie, 2008) and were solidified in the culture of community living (Maxwell & Hayes, 2007). The value system of indigenous peoples created the groundwork for contemporary restorative practices. Restorative values are "about healing rather than hurting, moral learning, community participation, and community caring, respectful dialogue, forgiveness, responsibility, apology, and making amends" (Morrison, 2007a, p. 75). Zehr (2002) explained that the foundational strength of restorative practices was the concept of building relationships: "We are all connected to each other and the larger world through a web of relationships. When the web is disrupted, we are all affected" (p. 35). The restorative paradigm calls for a redefinition of accountability, whereby the person who committed the harm, rather than facing a punitive sanction, is held directly accountable for repairing the harm as much as possible and for restoring broken relationships in ways which allow those affected to heal and move forward (Hopkins, 2011; Zehr, 2002). Building a more restorative culture in the school community enables stakeholders to adjust traditional boundaries and implement transformative initiatives that focused the communities work on acts of inclusivity.

Working with indigenous peoples worldwide, restorative processes had the capacity to restore people to their conventional ways of being. Because of this restoration, RP was deemed appropriate for use across cultures and ethnicities (Crowe, 2018; Riestenberg, 2012; Pranis,

2005; Zehr, 2002). Taking this belief into the educational system, educators implemented restorative practices into the school district's micro-communities. This initiative required a paradigm shift in a way that stakeholders viewed the daily responses of student and staff interactions. Focusing on relationship justice instead of retributive justice, stakeholders approached problem-solving by working with those that harmed others and helping them take responsibility for their actions.

### **Restorative Practices**

Restorative justice in schools manifested to restorative practices or restorative approaches with an adaptation of the restorative justice principles and the conferencing process (Drewery, 2016). The method of rethinking conflict in schools required educators to initiate a whole-school transformation that included the voice of the victims, offenders, and community. Included in the transformation was incorporating facilitated conversations within a framework of respect. Therefore, creating a restorative culture that encourages all parties to have the right to speak and be heard. Restorative practices included the entire school community, inclusive of all staff members, pupils, and parents, when appropriate (Hopkins, 2004).

This process leads to the transformation of people, relationships, and communities that created relational school cultures, through the understanding of behavior within its appropriate social context. Restorative strategies, implemented when an offense has been committed, may assist in the development process of a proper intervention system (Sellman, 2009). Recognized in its capacity to repair systematic harm, particularly in inequitable societies, and cultural norms, RJ focused on fixing the injustice caused by criminal behavior through cooperative processes that include all stakeholders (Sellman, 2009; Morrison & Vaandering, 2012). By promoting a social web of relationships, the priority of building, maintaining, and repairing relationships

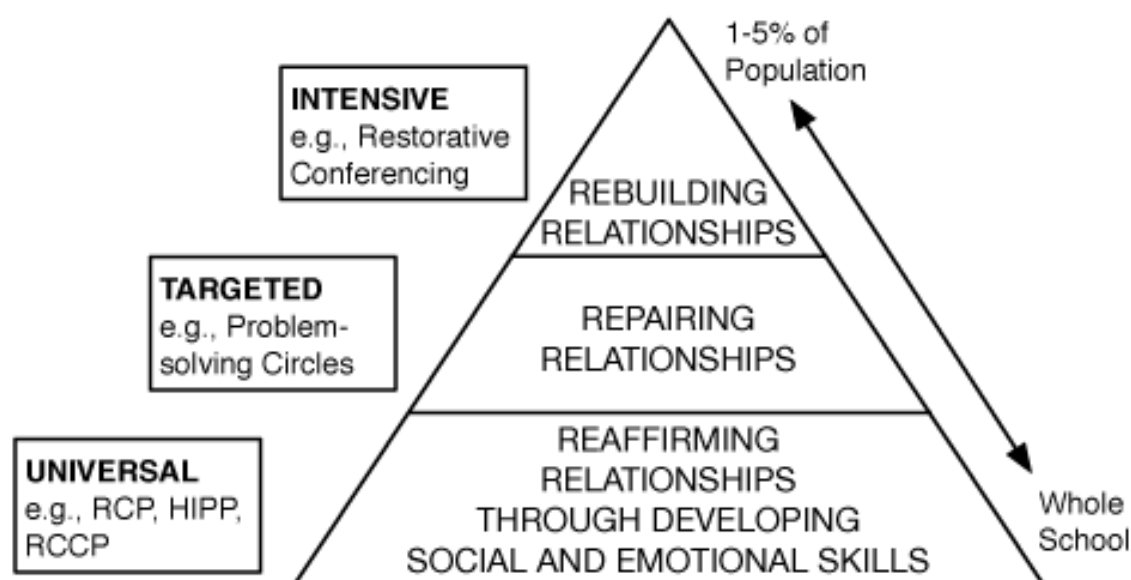
becomes the standard expectation, where students are recognized as being a vital part of the community (Manassah, Roderick, & Gregory, 2018; Zehr, 2002). This concept is a direct move away from typical institutional responses that rely on sanctions to leverage compliance (Morrison & Vaandering, 2012). Restorative Justice is a way to think about conflict, and how the dispute is dealt with, where the offender has an opportunity to assist in the creation of the process to restore the relationship of those offended.

### **Restorative Justice Education**

Restorative Justice Education (RJE) encourages the application of restorative values and practices in the form of relational pedagogy and speaking restoratively across the entire school environment (Hopkins, 2011; Riestenberg, 2012). Developed in the educational setting, the concepts for restorative justice education were often grounded in the circle encounter. Understanding the consequences of their actions, assisted students in acknowledging that their negative behaviors affected others in the community. The formal restorative conference involved a student who might otherwise be expelled from school together with other students to talk about conflict and its effects (Hendry, 2010; Morrison, 2007b; Zehr, 2015). This type of mediation is a useful way to encourage social and moral awareness. Restorative justice education practices provided the antecedents to behaviorists in schools, which removed the risk of reproducing the retributive function of the zero-tolerance disciplinary system. In the early years of RJE implementation, restorative practices were used only after harm had been committed and in response to some offense, event, or rule violation, which continues in many schools today (Hopkins, 2011).

The four cornerstones of school-wide restorative practices (SWRP's) were inclusion, encountering, making amends, and reintegration. These strategies linked thinking to the

student's ability of self-efficacy and positive self-awareness (McClusky et al., 2008; Fabelo, Thompson, & Plotkin, 2011). These cornerstones were the foundation for a three-tiered system (Figure 4) focused on schoolwide universal activities, targeting interventions that support relationship repair, and intensive interventions for the 1-5% of the population that needed to rebuild relationships.



*Figure 4: Hierarchy of Restorative Responses, Morrison (2006).*

The first level of the tier is a preventative, proactive layer. This level is implemented to all stakeholders, with its success the responsibility of all the adults in the school community. This tier provides programs and curriculum to all learners to develop their social and emotional competence, personal and interpersonal effectiveness, increase a sense of belonging, safety, and wellbeing in the school community so that learning is maximized (Thorsborne & Blood, 2013). These programs included SWRP's, Social Emotional Learning (SEL), and positive behavior interventions and support (PBIS). The pyramid assumed that 80% of all students needed and could benefit from Tier 1 interventions. The middle tier, or Tier 2, represented targeted group interventions for approximately 15% of the students considered to be at-risk; these interventions

were of moderate-intensity and were short term. Implementation of tier 2 required that the whole school community be trained to manage the day to day difficulties of student behaviors. Stakeholders needed the tools and strategies that allowed them to respond to the typical disruptions and difficulties that emerge when adults and children are required to work, learn, and play in proximity with one another. The top tier, or Tier 3, represents intensive, individual interventions of high intensity and longer duration that addressed the 5% of students seen as having severe problems (Manassah et al., 2018; Fabelo et al., 2011). The third tier can be witnessed when stakeholders see and hear the language and processes occurring without prompting in the hallways, classrooms, and playgrounds.

In educational environments where all tiers of restorative justice education have been implemented, the staff was committed to attending training to use restorative language and viewed building relationships with students and with each other a priority. These efforts worked together to create environments of trust and community that discouraged misbehavior and violence (Hopkins, 2004, 2011; Morrison, 2006, 2007a; Morrison & Vaandering, 2012; Riestenberg, 2012). The person who committed the harm was then reintegrated into his/her school or classroom community while in the process of or after meeting the agreed-upon obligations for reparation (Zehr, 2002).

According to Braithwaite's (1989) theory of reintegrative shaming, restorative processes in schools make it clear to the person who committed the harm that the behavior was not condoned, while at the same time offering support and respect to that person. Unlike exclusionary discipline policies that carry stigmatizing shame, which produces additional unwanted behavior and isolation, restorative practices allowed the person who committed harm to learn resiliency and to become a responsible member of the school community (Ahmed &

Braithwaite, 2006; Morrison, 2006). Providing access to healthy and productive processes that help solve problems and resolve the conflict creates a space where broken relationships could be repaired. Teachers, administrators, counselors, RJ Coordinators, and community members trained in restorative practices generally matched the restorative process to the intensity or degree of the harm. The circle, on the other hand, is considered a universal intervention that is both preventative and reparative (Zehr, 2002). School-wide restorative practices strengthened the social ties of youth to the school community (Hopkins, 2004; Karp & Breslin, 2001; Morrison, 2007a, 2007b; Morrison & Vaandering, 2012). As Morrison and Vaandering (2012) noted, "The deeper social and emotional foundation of relational ecologies moves the application of RJ away from a disciplinary measure of control to pedagogy and praxis of engagement, development, and integrity at both individual and institutional levels" (p. 141).

### **School Climate**

School climate reform is a data-driven improvement strategy that promotes engaged learning, healthy relationships, and safety in the educational environment (Thapa, Cohen, Higgens-D'Allessandro, & Guffey, 2012). Defined by the National School Climate Council (2012) "School climate is based on patterns of people's experiences of school life and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures" (p. 2). Studies have shown that increasing the school climate creates a positive impact on student outcomes (Lane-Garon, Yergat, & Kralowec, 2012). Focusing on school safety, relationships, teaching and learning, environment, and school climate can create a positive and sustained school culture. Studies have shown that a positive school climate impacts students' mental and physical health in positive ways (Hoge, Smit & Hanson, 1990; Ma, Phelps, Lerner, & Lerner, 2009; Way, Reddy, & Rhodes, 2007).



## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

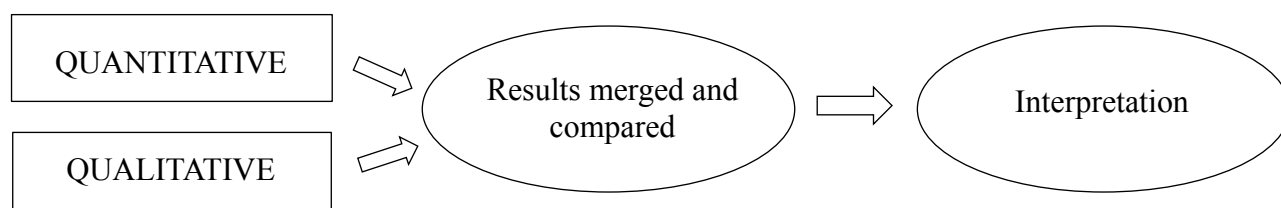
The primary purpose of this phenomenological, mixed-methods study is to view the impact of the implementation of positive behavior interventions and supports in conjunction with restorative practices. This study analyzed the effect of SW-PBIS combined with SWRP on student achievement, school culture, social-emotional competence (SEC), social-emotional learning (SEL), teacher perspectives of disciplinary programs, and systemic change of school climate in a Northern California school district. This study attempts to articulate the comparative effects of school disciplinary practices and suggests a necessary paradigm shift for educational leaders to move away from the traditional punitive disciplinary actions when dealing with student transgressions. Ultimately, this shift should move educators towards a system that helps students solve problems, express themselves appropriately during a conflict, and create spaces for restoration of relationships between the offender and the victim (Freire, 2008; Thorsborne & Blood, 2013). This study addressed the following research questions:

1. Which has the strongest impact on increased academic achievement of high school students with disruptive behavior disorders: students receiving SW-PBIS combined with RP or students receiving SW-PBIS?
2. What are teacher perceptions about student behaviors? How effective is RP combined with PBIS for behavior management, according to teachers?
3. What is the correlation between teacher perceptions of professional learning and school climate?

The researcher used quantitative and qualitative methods to address the questions of the study. This study addresses a gap in the research areas of discipline procedures and social-emotional competencies for high school students with disruptive behaviors.

## Method

This research used a mixed-methods study with a convergent design that utilized a social justice framework with the lens of disability. Collecting both qualitative and quantitative data at the same time, the researcher merged the results during analysis for interpretation (Creswell, 2015) through a researcher constructed online survey, as well as recorded interviews with currently employed staff members in a Northern California school district (see Figure 5).



*Figure 5.* Convergent flow chart demonstrating the data analysis process.

## Sampling Procedures

This research used convenience sampling and cluster sampling as a method of data collection. Convenience sampling was used to identify the sample population for this study due to the accessibility to the district involved in data collection. While convenience sampling was conventional, the sample population not being selected by specific criteria and ethical concerns of power was a limitation (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017). Cluster sampling was the process of selecting groups and not individuals to collect data. Cluster sampling was the most appropriate for this study due to the utilization of two schools from one district. Although cluster sampling was not random, the schools chosen represented a diverse population.

Schools were picked based on their implementations of SW-PBIS and SW-PBIS with SWRP. The sample teacher size ( $N = 121$ ) represented individuals that could potentially interact with student discipline issues and included the following positions: general education teacher,

special-education teacher, administrators, counselors, social workers, para-professionals, restorative justice team members, school psychologists, speech and language professionals, mental health team, and nurses. The level of sampling error was controlled by attempting to get a complete consensus of the population. Generalizing the results of this study to school populations that are not similar in size and demographic population should be done with caution.

### Demographics

Staff members from the two schools were asked to identify their gender on the researcher-created survey. Respondents were given three choices to respond, *male*, *female*, and *non-identified*. Of the total number of participants ( $N = 116$ ) that responded to the question 46.28% ( $n = 56$ ) were male, 50% ( $n = 58$ ) were female, and 1.7% ( $n = 2$ ) of the respondents were non-identified, as shown in Figure 6.

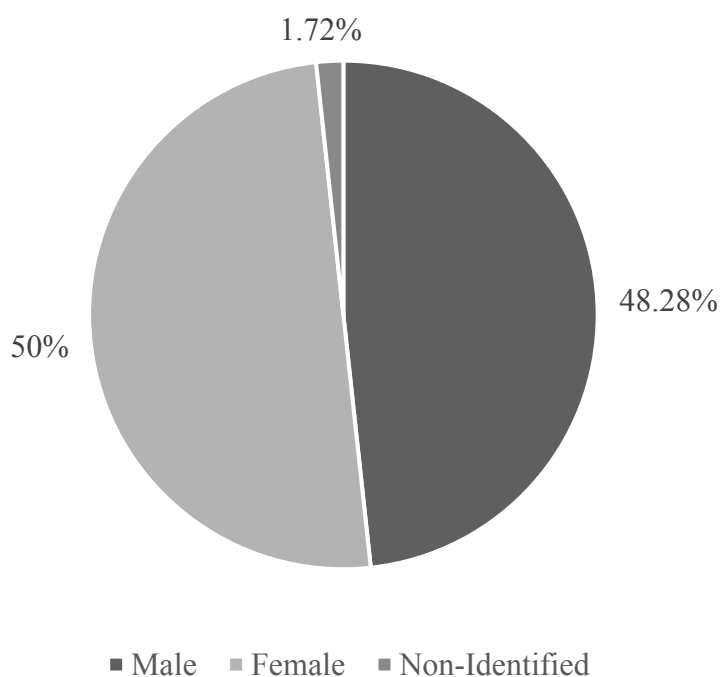


Figure 6. Demographic data of male, female, and non-identified participants of this study.

During the survey, participants were requested to identify their level of academic achievement, certification level, and age bracket, as shown in Table 3. Of the total respondents ( $N = 121$ ) 33.88% ( $n = 41$ ) of the survey participants had obtained a bachelor's degree, 57.85% ( $n = 70$ ) held a master's degree, 6.61% ( $n = 8$ ) had a doctoral degree and .83% ( $n = 1$ ) had achieved an associate's degree of study. Participant's job classification results showed that 95.04% ( $n = 115$ ) of the staff were certificated employees, 1.65% ( $n = 3$ ) of the respondents were administrators, and .83% ( $n = 1$ ) were classified staff members. A variety of age groups were represented by the school staff members. Participant ( $N = 120$ ) responses indicated that 17.00% ( $n = 17$ ) of participants were in the age range of 18-29, 26.00% ( $n = 26$ ) participants were in the age range of 30-39, 34.00% ( $n = 34$ ) of participants were in the age range of 40-49, 35.00% ( $n = 35$ ) of participants were in the age range of 50-59, and 8.00% ( $n = 8$ ) of participants were in the age range of 60 and above.

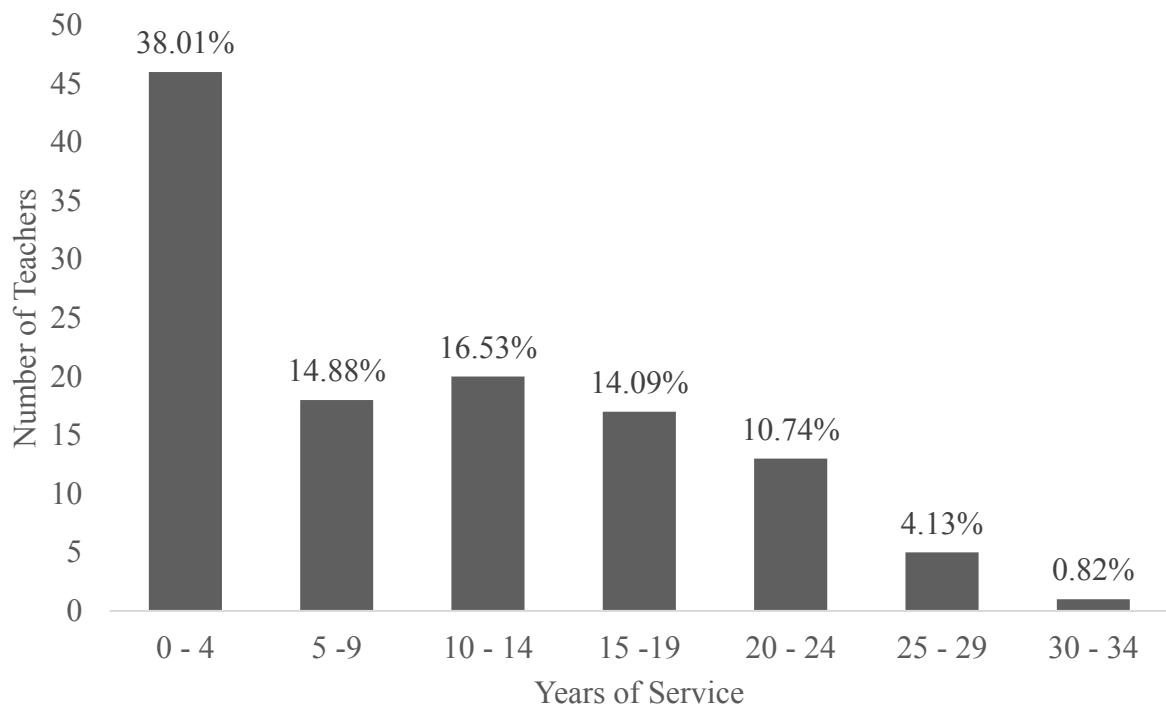
Table 3

*Participant Demographic Data*

Variable		Schools					
		All		School A		School B	
		Counts	%	Counts	%	Counts	%
Degree							
	Bachelors	41	33.88	22	32.65	19	35.85
	Masters	70	57.85	41	60.29	29	54.72
	Doctorate	8	6.61	4	5.88	4	7.55
	Other	1	.83	1	1.47	0	0
Certification							
	Certificated	115	95.83	67	98.53	48	92.31
	Classified	2	1.66	1	1.47	1	1.92
	Administration	3	2.50	0	0	3	5.77
	Other	0	0	0	0	0	0
Age							
	18-29	17	17.00	8	11.763	9	17.31
	30-39	26	26.00	17	25.00	9	17.31
	40-49	34	34.00	15	22.06	19	36.54
	50-59	35	35.00	22	32.35	13	25.00
	60 & Above	8	8.00	6	8.82	2	3.85

*Notes.* California Department of Education, Data Statistics (2019)

Responding to the survey question asking, “*How many years they had been in their current position at the school site?*” participants ( $N = 120$ ) years of service ranged between less than a year to 34 years (see Figure 7). Participants in their position for 0 – 4 years represented 38.01% ( $n = 46$ ) of the respondents, 14.88% ( $n = 18$ ) of the teachers had been in their position for 5 - 9 years, 16.53% ( $n = 20$ ) of teachers had been in their position for 10 – 14 years, 14.09% ( $n = 17$ ) of the teachers in their position for 15 -19 years, 10.74% ( $n = 13$ ) of the teachers in their position for 20 - 24 years, 4.13% ( $n = 5$ ) of the teachers in their position for 25 – 29 years, and .82% ( $n = 1$ ) of the teachers in their current position for 30 - 34 years.



*Figure 7.* Participants' years of service in their current positions.

Secondary data, from the California Department of Education, was collected on the student demographics for the 2018 – 2019 school year (see Figure 8). The ethnic breakdown of the student population for School A are as follows: 2.11% ( $n = 44$ ) African American, 2.11% ( $n = 44$ ) American Indian, 4.75% ( $n = 99$ ) Asian, 1.10% ( $n = 23$ ) Filipino, 80.23% ( $n = 1672$ ) Hispanic, .28% ( $n = 6$ ) Pacific Islander, 5.27% ( $n = 110$ ) White, .95% ( $n = 20$ ) two or more races. The ethnic breakdown of the student population for School B are as follows: 1.74% ( $n = 37$ ) African American, 1.74% ( $n = 37$ ) American Indian, 18.71% ( $n = 396$ ) Asian, 6.71% ( $n = 142$ ) Filipino, 49.76% ( $n = 1053$ ) Hispanic, 1.27% ( $n = 27$ ) Pacific Islander, 5.05% ( $n = 107$ ) White, 1.41% ( $n = 30$ ) 2 or more races.

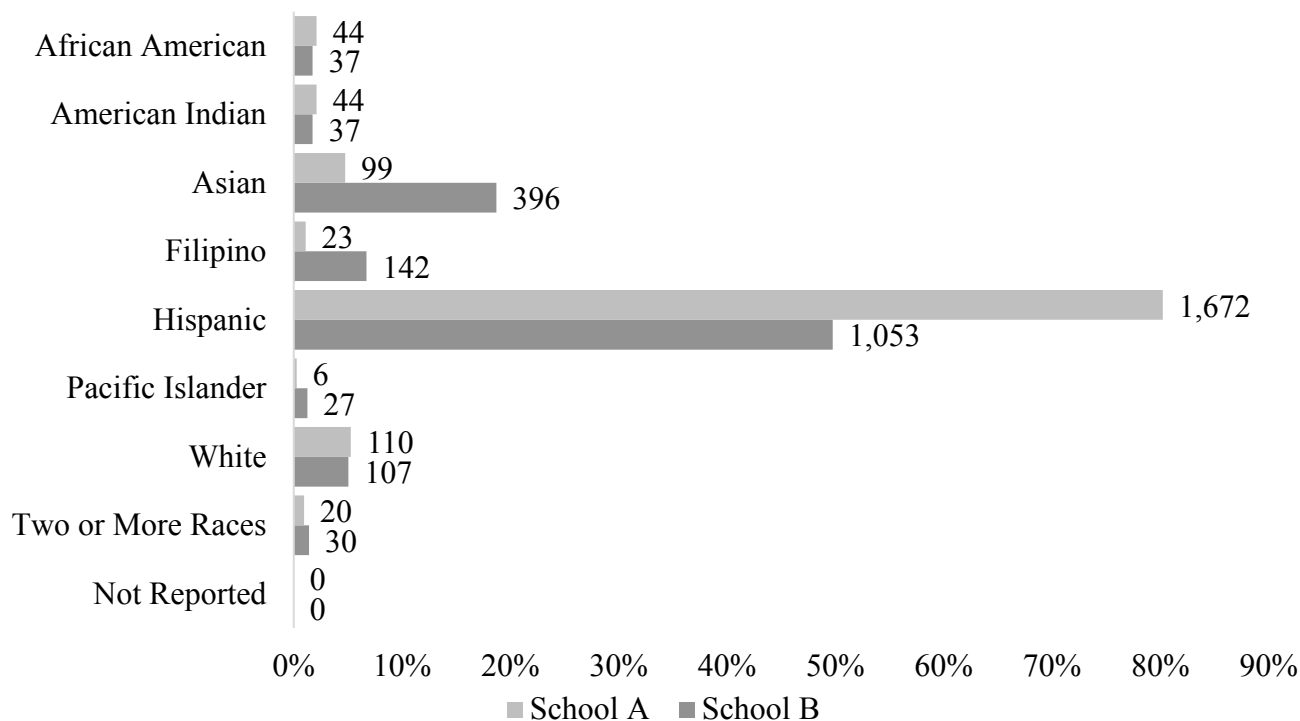


Figure 8. Student demographic data (CDE, 2018).

### Setting and Participants

This research study took place in California at two large urban high schools in a Northern California school district, School A and School B. School A utilized SW-PBIS and SWRP strategies to deal with student discipline issues while School B implemented an SW-PBIS program. At the time of the study the district enrolled 35,240 students ranging from kindergarten to 12th grade in the 2017 – 2018 school year with 10,759 of those students enrolled in high school (California Department of Education [CDE], 2018). The participants in the research study were educators employed at the two high schools in the Northern California school district ( $N = 121$ ). A variety of teachers and staff members had opportunities to implement SW-PBIS and SWRP strategies with students at the two sites used for this study (see Table 4). For this research, study participants were referred to as *teachers, educators, respondents, and participants*. Participants were defined as individuals that interacted with students for any

reason, which could include but was not limited to administration, certificated teachers, paraprofessionals, school supervisors, counselors, and psychologists.

Table 4

*Number of High-School Staff by Position*

	<b>School A (PBIS/RP)</b>	<b>School B (PBIS)</b>
General Education Certificated	85	87
Special Education Certificated	16	12
Academic Counselors	7	7
Administrators	5	6
Mental Health/Nurse	1	1/1
Social Worker	1	1
Speech/Language	1	1
Para-professional	24	14
Psychologist	1.5	2
Classified	68	70
Office Staff	7	6
PBIS Specialist	0	1
Restorative Justice Specialist	0	1

*Note:* (CDE, 2018).

### **School Climate**

This study utilized secondary data collected from the California Department of Education website, on school climate for both School A and B. School climate, described as the experiences that individuals gain from being in an academic environment (Thapa et al., 2012), are a portion of the School Accountability Report Card (SARC). The SARC, allocated to discuss the school climate, provided data on the safety plans, pupil suspension rates, pupil expulsion rates, and local measures based on the senses of safety (CDE, 2019). Calculated by the number of students suspended in the current year divided by the cumulative school enrollment, the data provided the researcher with the suspension and expulsion rates. Suspension rates and expulsions rates vary every year, as shown in Table 4. School B, an SW-PBIS school, had a



higher suspension rate than School A, an SW-PBIS and SWRP school, in the academic years 2014 – 2015 and 2015 – 2016. School B suspended 10.01% of its student population while School A suspended 8.65% of its students in the 2014 – 2015 academic year. During the 2015-2016 academic year, School A decreased its suspension rate to 7% of its student population compared to the increased rate of 10.40% of students that School B suspended. In the academic year 2016 – 2017, School A’s suspension rate rose to 8.30%, while School B’s suspension rate declined by 4.5% to 5.90% of its student population. For the academic year of 2017 – 2018, School A’s suspension rate dropped to 7.10%, and School B’s suspension rate rose to 6.20%.

Also shown in Table 5, School A had a higher expulsion rate than School B in the school years 2014 – 2018. School A expelled .24% of its student population while School B expelled .18% of its students in the 2014 – 2015 academic year. During the 2015 – 2016 academic year School A increased its school expulsion rate to .70% of its student population compared to the slight expulsion increase of .20% of students at School B. In the academic year 2016 – 2017, School A’s expulsion rate declined to .30% while School B’s expulsion rate declined to zero expulsions for the academic year. For the academic year of 2017 – 2018, School A’s expulsion rate declined to .40%, and School B’s suspension rate rose to .10%.

Table 5.

*2014 – 2018 Suspensions and Expulsions*

Year	Suspensions Rate		Expulsions Rate	
	School A	School B	School A	School B
2014-2015	8.65	10.01	0.25	0.18
2015-2016	7.00	10.40	0.70	0.20
2016-2017	8.30	5.90	0.30	0.00
2017-2018	7.10	6.02	0.40	0.10

*Note:* (CDE, 2018).

### **Instrumentation and Measures**

Secondary data, a researcher constructed survey and participant interviews, were used to understand the effects of SW-PBIS and SW-PBIS with SWRP on academic achievement, school climate, and teacher perceptions. Using a survey, the researcher collected quantitative and qualitative data about behavioral disruptions, effective strategies, academics, and SEL. Conducting a semi-structured online interview with educators to increase researcher knowledge about teachers' perceptions resulted in the collection of qualitative data.

#### **Secondary Data**

Secondary data is defined as data collected for a purpose and then used for another research question (Hox & Boeije, 2005). The amount of time needed to gather the information being minimal was the advantage of using secondary data. Due to secondary data having already been collected, the information is readily available for use. The disadvantage of using this data is that it may not be optimal in answering the research questions (Hox & Boeije, 2005). The researcher collected secondary demographic data, numbers of suspensions, and student graduation rates from the California Department of Education (CDE, 2018).

#### **Survey**

An online, researcher constructed survey was designed to gather data on teacher perspectives of the implementation of the SW-PBIS and SWRP, school climate, teacher's perceptions on students with disruptive behavior disorders, and social-emotional learning (see Appendix D). Constructed as open-ended, close-ended, and Likert scaled questions, addressed survey questions, discipline procedures, school climate, SEL, and training (see Table 6).

Table 6

*Types of Survey Questions Utilized*

Type of Question	Explanation of type of question	Sample Question
Close Ended	School Climate	Do you believe students with disruptive behaviors should be educated in the general education environment?
Open-Ended	Social-Emotional Learning	What do you need most from your school administration to best meet the academic needs of students with disruptive behavior disorders at your school?
Likert Scaled	Training	How adequate do you feel your training in disruptive behaviors has been?

The survey was piloted to a sample population to improve the quality of the instrument. Testing the survey allowed the researcher to assess the organization and structure of the tool to ensure that participants understood the wording and the expectations. Piloting the survey also allowed individuals an opportunity to provide feedback on the amount of time that was required to complete the survey before it was implemented (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017).

### **Interviews**

The semi-structured educator interview was conducted and recorded in a Zoom online classroom. A sample of research questions, in Table 6, with the entire document found in Appendix E. Research-based interview strategies, were used by the researcher to establish trust. Interview participants were provided a fixed questionnaire with pre-specified questions, which allowed the researcher to control the interview without being in the same physical location (Blair, Czaja & Blair, 2014). Teachers were presented with a copy of the interview questions to

create a structured, standardized open-ended interview (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003). This commonly used interview-style provided vibrant viewpoints and the ability for participants to express their experiences fully (Creswell, 2015).

Table 7

*Sample of Interview Questions*

Type of Question	Explanation of type of question	Sample Question
Introductory	General information	What are your feelings about building relationships with students?
Transitions Questions	Questions that create smooth transitions to further questions	The term Positive Behavior Intervention and Support has appeared in a lot of research, and I know that the site has been working in this area. How do you define Positive Behavior Interventions and Support?
Key Questions	Questions that are focused on validating teacher perceptions in the survey	How would you describe the impact of PBIS on students who demonstrate disruptive behaviors?
Closing Question	Question that provides opportunity to give personal input to research	Is there anything else you would like to add to this study that we have not discussed?

The researcher piloted the interview questions with six educators in various positions who were not involved in this study. This process allowed the researcher to refine the questions.

### **Data Collection**

The district was first contacted by email, by the researcher, for permission to conduct a study. An application to conduct research was submitted to the Northern California school

district's research department. Approval from the Northern California school district's Institutional Review Board (IRB) to collect and analyze secondary data on its high schools was sought and received. Permission from the district's IRB department to interact with the high school staff members was also obtained. A research application agreement to pledge confidentiality and anonymity of the school observations and the individuals associated with, through the survey and interview, was signed and returned to the district before beginning the study. Proper university protocols for the IRB were also followed, including the National Institute of Health (NIH) research certification of practice.

### **Secondary Data**

The researcher gathered secondary quantitative data on the California Department of Education website and the district website. Tracked from the implementation of the SW-PBIS and SWRP programs, data was used from the 2014 – 2015 school year to the 2017-2018 school year. A survey was presented to the educators that were employed at the participating schools. The survey collected data on the extraneous variables, educator perceptions, and implementation of discipline programs. The California State Educational Code 33126 required that the Department of Education receive yearly SARC's from each public school; a similar requirement was contained in the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The SARC was implemented through the School Funding Initiative Constitutional Amendment and Statute of 1988 to ensure California schools show accountability on how they spent the monies in the education system (CDE, 2018). Although there was considerable variation in the design of SARCs, they provide background information about the school and its students. Summarizing the school's mission, goals, and accomplishments, the profile, contains all the following per state law: “demographic data, school safety and climate for learning information, academic data,

school completion rates, class sizes, teacher and staff information, curriculum and instruction descriptions, postsecondary preparation information, fiscal and expenditure data” (CDE, 2018).

### **Survey Distribution**

Quantitative and qualitative data were collected in the form of an internet survey to assess staff opinions and perspectives regarding the achievement of students with disruptive behavioral disorders, implementation of disciplinary programs, and school culture. Initial contact was made with the administration to explain the importance of the survey, identify the researcher, and provide assurance of confidentiality. The electronic survey provided participants with a waiver of release of information and permission to record audio interviews. Once the release of information was received, the participant was able to complete the electronic survey.

### **Interviews**

The researcher collected qualitative data through interviews. Before the beginning of the interview process, the researcher developed interview protocols for recording the interview and piloted the forms designed to collect the data. The data collected was stored on a portable flash drive, which was stored in a locked drawer when not in use by the researcher. Participants agreed to be interviewed by checking their intent on the survey and providing contact information. Interviews averaged 12 minutes in length. Interviews were conducted in a Zoom classroom and recorded for accuracy. After completing the interview, the recording was sent to Rev.com, a transcription company, for dictation. Once the researcher received the transcription, they compared the transcribed notes to the original record for accuracy. The data was then sent to the participants for an additional accuracy check. Quantitative and qualitative dimensions of the study were used to obtain in-depth knowledge of teacher perceptions on SW-PBIS, SWRP, and disruptive behavior disorders. Survey Monkey was used to collect the data on a researcher-

designed survey, and the researcher conducted interviews with volunteer staff members from the school sites. Participant interviews were recorded on the web-based Zoom classroom platform, transcribed through Rev.com, a professional transcription service, checked for accuracy by the researcher, and then emailed to the participant for validation. Semi-structured questions, developed by the researcher, were provided to the interviewee to view during the interview process.

Some of the qualitative data collected in the survey were used to provide more in-depth explanations of the quantitative data, while quantitative data from the survey were compared to qualitative data collected from interviews. Some qualitative data was transformed into quantitative data in the form of frequency analysis and the production of descriptive statistics that aided in interpreting and reporting results.

### **Reliability and Validity**

The convergent design of this study allowed the researcher to gather quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously. The central qualitative phenomena and qualitative constructs were parallel. A similar sample size was utilized in this study School A had 63 participants, and School B had 58 participants. The researcher used similar schools with similar demographics in the same school district to create parallel units of analysis. The protocols in this study were developed in accordance with the literature.

### **Survey**

The reliability of the survey was determined by conducting a Cronbach's alpha and interrater reliability test. The Cronbach's alpha discovered that each item on the survey correlated with the rest of the survey. The researcher controlled for extraneous variables to ensure the accuracy of the intended relationships by choosing schools that were demographically

similar in size, socioeconomic status, and race. The survey findings were generalized to districts having similar demographics. The survey for this study was validated by utilizing face and construct validity. These measurements were used to ensure that the content of the survey accurately measured the intended construct and obtained feedback from a non-expert population to assure questions gave an appropriate measurement, were clear and concise, and questions were apparent. To establish a nomological network, the researcher used the following forms of validity: convergent validity to analyze high correlations between items in the survey, discriminant validity to analyze low correlations and seek for construct redundancies, concurrent validity to examine the relationships between the measure and criterion at the same time to determine relationships (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008; Sliter, 2014).

## **Interviews**

In qualitative methodological literature, “validity” has been labeled with alternative terms such as *authenticity*, *adequacy*, *plausibility*, and *neutrality* (Maxwell, 2004). To determine the authenticity of findings from qualitative research, the researcher used rigor in the application of method and precision in interpretation (Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2011).

To increase the reliability of the data, three forms of validity were utilized: member checking, external evaluators, and audit trail. Transcribing the interviews and emailing the transcripts to the participants and requesting confirmation of adequacy or corrections the result of member checking (Creswell, 2015; Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011b; Lincoln et al., 2011; Lub, 2015). External evaluators were used to review the data and verify the interpretation of the procedural meanings, descriptions, and conclusions of the investigation (Lub, 2015). An audit trail can be described as the process of meticulously and chronological documentation of the data collection process that the researcher followed (Lub, 2015). The interrater reliability test ensured



that there was a correlation between all observers. Questions on the interview protocol were cross-referenced to questions on the survey.

### **Data Analysis**

The quantitative and qualitative data for this study were analyzed separately, then combined at the end of the study. Data was acquired through the gathering of secondary information, educator survey responses, and educator interviews. The quantitative data collected from educators was analyzed using descriptive statistics, simple percentages, and histograms, whereas, the qualitative data were analyzed by using descriptive coding and pattern coding.

#### **Quantitative Data Analysis**

The quantitative data for this study utilized secondary data and descriptive statistics. Secondary data used for this study described school demographics, school climate, and academic achievement. The demographic data for survey participants were presented using cross-tables. Descriptive statistics were analyzed using Stats Plus in Microsoft Excel. Descriptive statistics included the use of percentages, bar charts, and Pearson's Linear Correlation.

Data for the first research question in this study, answering whether SW-PBIS or SW-PBIS with SWRP had the strongest impact on increased academic achievement of high school students with disruptive behavior disorders, was analyzed by using secondary data provided from the California Department of Education website through DataQuest, an online data reporting resource. The CDE analyzed student results of the California Assessment of Student Performance and Assessment (CAASSP) testing responses by calculating the percentage of students who took the assessment and met or exceeded the test standards. Data for the second research question addressing teacher perceptions on student behavior and effectiveness of SW-PBIS and SWRP was addressed by utilizing percentages presented in bar charts, a content table,

and a pie chart. The third research question addressing the correlation between teacher perceptions of professional learning and school climate was analyzed by running a Pearson's Linear Correlation. To conduct the Pearson's Linear Correlation, two multi-dimensional constructs were created. These constructs were created by combining survey results for multiple questions to create an overall score for total training and a total climate. To create the multiple dimensions, the formative combination of survey questions 32, 12, and 16 were combined to create a total score value for school climate, and questions 11, 13, 17, 19, and 21 were combined to create a total score value for teacher training. The responses for question 32 were reversed since the question was written as a negative formulated item.

### **Qualitative Data Analysis**

The qualitative data for this study was prepared for analysis through text transcription, survey results, and the creation of codebooks. The researcher read the transcripts of the interviews and the open-ended survey questions several times through to get a feeling of the data. Researcher notes expressing feelings of the data were written in the margins of the transcripts; these notes assisted in the process of writing codes. In qualitative data analysis, a "code is a researcher generated construct that symbolizes or translates data" (Vogt, Vogt, Gardner, & Haeffele, 2014, p. 13), therefore giving meaning to each piece of data. During this time, codebooks were generated to help organize the data. The researcher used a two-cycle coding method to analyze the information. Descriptive coding was used during the first cycle to keep the data rooted in the participant's own language, and pattern coding was used during the second cycle to find the relationship between educator responses and multiplicity (Kozleski, 2017).

The researcher hand-coded the data for both cycles. During the descriptive coding process, the data was labeled into groups that reflected a broad perspective from the educators.

The researcher continually reviewed the data comparing and questioning to narrow the themes into a shortlist of codes. For the second cycle, pattern coding was utilized. A pattern is considered a repetition of words or regular occurrence of words or word phrases that appear more than twice in the data (Saldaña, 2016). Patterns become trustworthy evidence for analysis as they help the researcher describe observations into concrete meaning. Pattern codification should be used with caution to avoid oversimplifying the data confining rich theory developed during the analytical process (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2011).

### **Ethical Issues**

In qualitative research that involves humans, the researcher must complete an application for a research ethics committee in one of the early stages of the research process (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). It is the researcher's responsibility to anticipate any adverse effects that may occur to the participants of the study. Arguably, research is a human activity, and as such, it has all the same kinds of failings as any other human activity. The online survey administered was kept confidential. The survey was not made public and could only be accessed by the researcher. The survey was not anonymous due to participants providing their names and contact information if they agreed to participate in the interview process. The survey was confidential by avoiding asking questions that would request personal identifiers. The researcher created the survey in SurveyMonkey, allowing for greater confidentiality due to the SurveyMonkey site being password protected by the creator. SurveyMonkey provides a comprehensive, physical and digital privacy policy in regard to all the information provided by respondents. The publication of the dissertation only used aggregate information, which kept participants anonymous. All recordings of online interviews and other research-related data will be permanently deleted after three- years of the completed research.

The survey consent offered that participants could withdraw from the research at any time. The researcher included contact details on the consent form so educators could contact the researcher at any time to express concerns about the study or any other issues.

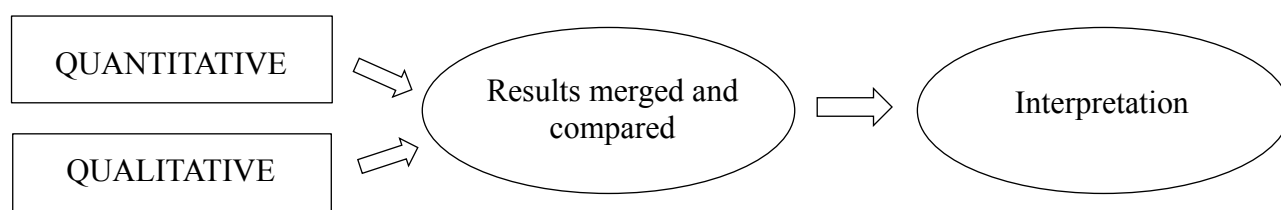
The researcher attempted to alleviate the participants' possible concern about the length of time it would take to complete the survey or the interview by pilot testing the survey to ensure fluidity and maintain time constraints. Furthermore, the research offered a chance for participants to be compensated for completing the survey by providing 4 Visa gift cards, valued at \$25 a piece at each school site. Visa gift cards were awarded to 4 participants at each site through the conduction of a blind drawing. The researcher put the names of each participant into a hat and pulled out 4 names from each school. The winners were awarded their gift cards in a private thank you note.

## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study compared the relational ecology and academic achievement of students with disruptive behavior disorders. Specifically, the researcher sought to determine the achievement levels of disruptive students when exposed to school cultures that utilized school-wide positive behavior interventions and supports (SW-PBIS) strategies and school-wide restorative practices (SWRP). The researcher sought to determine, within a high school setting, if PBIS or SW-PBIS with SWRP had a stronger impact on students with disruptive behavior disorders by studying achievement rates, teacher perceptions of discipline practices, and teacher perceptions on school culture. Based on Bandura's (1971) Social Learning Theory, the researcher hypothesized that by creating relational discipline practices, the school environment and culture would experience a decrease in student disruptive behaviors. Using Freire's (2008) Critical Theory, the researcher hypothesized that by training staff members and implementing SW-PBIS and SWRP with fidelity the sense of power would shift from the domination of rule-based schooling to a structured managerial environment where students are taught to use critical thinking skills when confronted in situations of conflict. Applying Fullan's (2008) Change theory, the researcher hypothesized that when engaged in an effective school-wide reform, the relational trust would improve school culture and increase stakeholders' motivation to build capacity and implement the initiative with fidelity. Implementing the Restorative Justice Theory (Zehr, 2002) the researcher hypothesized that through the process of reconnecting people, establishing relational qualities, and teaching social engagement, schools would move into a safer climate where stakeholders understood how to speak, listen, and feel heard across the school and community environments.

### Data According to the Research Questions

This study used a convergent mixed methods research design that combined quantitative statistical analysis and qualitative data to address the research questions, as seen in Figure 9. These methods required the researcher to utilize multiple theoretical lenses while collecting and analyzing data (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). A researcher created survey was given to staff members at two high schools in a large district in California with similar demographics of socioeconomic status, race, and number of attendees. The researcher constructed survey fulfilled the quantitative requirements of the study and partially fulfilled the studies' qualitative research requirements. Using phenomenological strategies to acquire qualitative data, the researcher interviewed voluntary school employees. Bracketing was used for the qualitative data increasing the rigor of the study by easing the potentially harmful effects of any unacknowledged preconceptions related to the research (Tufford & Newman, 2012). Emerging themes reflected in the data presented an understanding of the information and unique statements that addressed the research question.



*Figure 9.* Convergent flow chart demonstrating the data analysis process.

### **Research Question 1: Impact of Strategies on Academic Achievement**

Which has the strongest impact on increased academic achievement of high school students with disruptive behavior disorders: students receiving SW-PBIS combined with SWRP or students receiving only SW-PBIS?

Secondary data was collected from the California Department of Education website, and the California School District's website, to address the first question in the study. Data was also attained from the researcher constructed a web-based survey.

#### **State Testing Results: Quantitative**

California high school students are offered state testing in grade eleven. After the exam completion, overall scores are displayed on the state website in the School Accountability Report Card (SARC). The California Assessment of Student Performance and Assessment (CAASPP) consists of the online Smarter Balanced Assessment and the California Alternative Assessment (CAA) which, measures English Language Arts (ELA) and Math progress of students in third, eighth and eleventh grades. The CAA is a modified assessment allowing students with documented cognitive disabilities to be appropriately assessed. All California students are requested to take the CAASPP exams, although it is not required. The following CAASPP scores, seen in Table 5 are measured by the percentage of students that met or exceeded the standard on tests divided by the total number of students who participated in the tests at school sites A and B. Table 5 shows that over a 4 year time span, 2014 – 2018, the average number of eleventh grade students who met or exceeded the CAASPP tests fluctuated. The students for this study were represented in the 2017 – 2018 school year. According to the 2017 – 2018 SARC, School A had 94.04% of all 11th graders complete the CAASPP testing while School B had 96.48% of all 11<sup>th</sup> graders complete the exams. School A's test results showed that 25% of the

11<sup>th</sup> grade students that finished the exam met or exceeded expectations in English Language Arts, and 11% met or exceeded expectations in Math. School B's 11<sup>th</sup>-grade students who took the CAASP test results showed that 31% met or exceeded expectations in English Language Arts, and 21% of students met or exceeded expectations in Math. Due to the limited time of implementation and site data further research is required to determine the effectiveness of the site's implementation of SW-PBIS or SWRP on the academic achievement of students with disruptive behaviors.

Table 8

*2014-2018 CAASPP Results for Eleventh Grade Students*

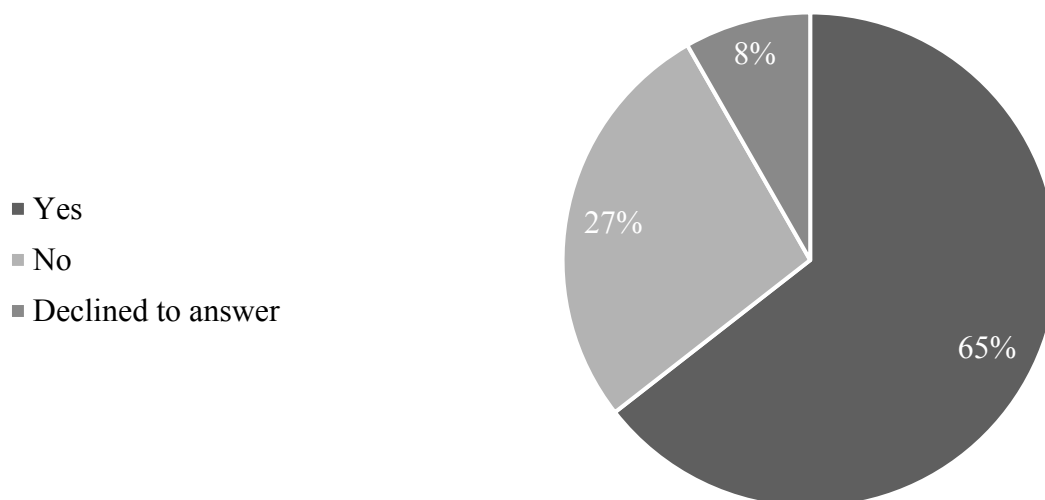
Percent of Students Meeting or Exceeding the State Standards (grade 11)				
Year	ELA		Math	
	School A	School B	School A	School B
2014-2015	35	34	15	20
2015-2016	35	30	10	22
2016-2017	27	28	15	23
2017-2018	25	31	11	21

### **Teachers Perceptions of Academics: Qualitative**

Survey participants ( $N = 121$ ) answered the dichotomous question, "I believe that Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports as the primary intervention strategy increases academic achievement" (see Figure 10). This question allowed teachers to input their perception of the impact of SW-PBIS strategies on academic achievement by answering yes or no on the survey. Out of the 121 survey responses, an average of 65% ( $n = 78$ ) of the participants agreed that SW-PBIS was the primary strategy used to increase student academic achievement, 27% ( $n = 33$ ) of participants felt that SW-PBIS was not the main strategy used to improve student



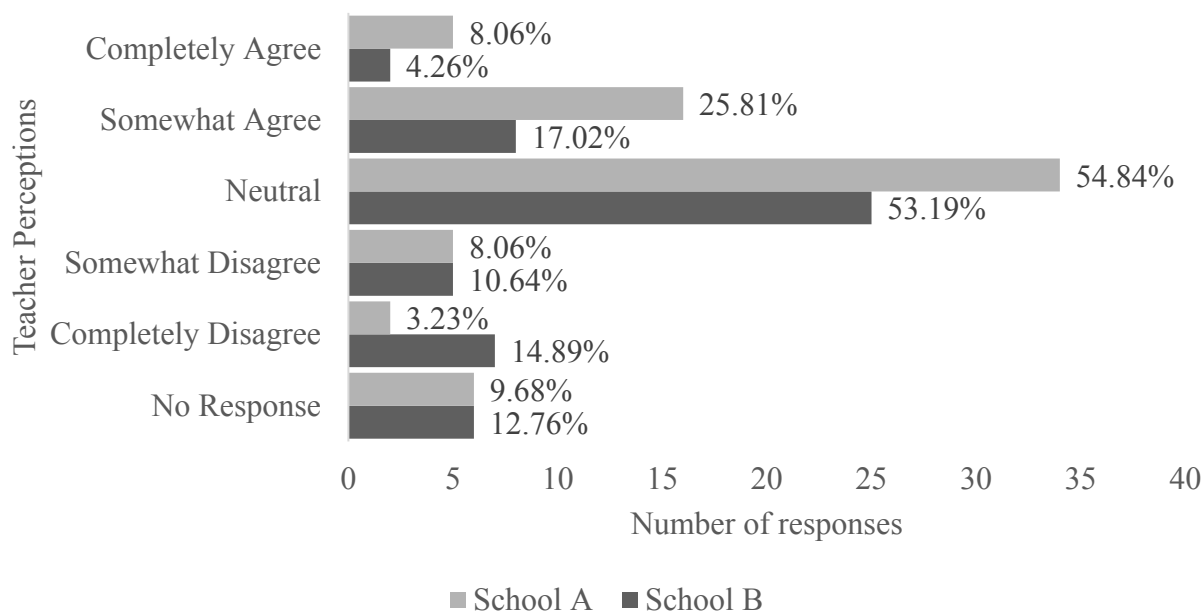
academic achievement, and 8% ( $n = 10$ ) of participants declined to answer the question. Overall responses exemplified the use of SW-PBIS as a critical aspect of student academic achievement.



*Figure 10: Average of total survey responses signifying teacher perceptions on academic achievement and the use of SW-PBIS ( $N = 121$ ).*

Participants ( $N = 121$ ) were given a Likert scaled question that asked respondents if they had seen an increase in students' academic achievement since implementing restorative practices. Participants answered the questions with the following statements; *completely disagree, somewhat disagree, neutral, somewhat agree, or completely agree*. Figure 11 compares the raw data of responses between School A, and School B. From School A ( $N = 68$ ) 9.68% of participants ( $n = 6$ ) had no response, 3.23% ( $n = 2$ ) of participants completely disagreed, 8.06% ( $n = 5$ ) of teachers somewhat disagreed, 54.84% ( $n = 34$ ) of teachers remained neutral, 25.81% ( $n = 16$ ) somewhat agreed, and 8.06% ( $n = 5$ ) completely agreed. School B's participants ( $n = 53$ ) responded with 12.76% ( $n = 6$ ) did not respond, 14.89% ( $n = 7$ ) completely disagreed, 10.64% ( $n = 5$ ) somewhat disagreed, 53.19% ( $n = 25$ ) remained neutral, 17.02% ( $n = 8$ ) somewhat agreed, and 4.26% ( $n = 2$ ) respondents completely agreed. It is important to note

that School A began the implementation process of restorative practices in 2017, while School B started the professional development sessions on the implementation process in 2018.



*Figure 11.* Average of teacher's perceptions of an increase in students' academic achievement since implementing restorative practices ( $N = 121$ ).

### **Administrative Academic: Qualitative**

When analyzing the qualitative data from the survey question referring to what teachers needed most from their school administrator to best meet the academic needs of students with disruptive behavior disorders, three themes emerged from the data. Teachers repeatedly requested additional training, consistency, and support from their colleagues and administrators. These reflections are shown in Table 9. Survey data was downloaded from Survey Monkey into an Excel document for qualitative coding. The data was split into smaller codable moments before descriptive coding was utilized, which established a pattern in the data. Each codable moment received a cell in the matrix, enabling analytic induction and comparisons as rows and columns were rearranged for analysis. Data was coded and categorized to generate themes that

assisted in building theory. Cells were color-coded to enhance analysis. A codebook was created and reviewed by a colleague to establish inter-coder reliability. Five descriptions were derived from the codes.

Table 9

*Teacher Responses Describing What is Needed to Meet the Academic Needs of Students*

Participant	Code	Description Shared
T54 TT8	Consequences	"More classroom presence and more immediate action" "Actual consequences."
T19 TT3	Training	"training and back up when behavior is unmanageable." "Training on how to create, maintain, and repair relationships. Training and guidance on good classroom management."
T66 TT28	Collaborative Support	"I need administration to back me up when I have gone through all of the steps and have nowhere else to turn." "Counselors need to support teachers and be willing to work as a facilitator between teacher, student, and parents."
TT29	Consistency	"a clear and precise policy." "Consistency, clarity, and support when the behaviors are beyond manageable and require more strict interventions."
TT51 T63	Progressive Practices	"Restorative best practices" "School administration need to provide research-based resources and settings that does not violate the least restrictive environment that will provide supports and instruction for the students to successfully manage problem behaviors as they access the general education curriculum."

## **Research Question 2: Teachers Perceptions of Learning Needs and Behaviors**

Research question two asked, “What are teacher perceptions about student behaviors? How effective is RP combined with PBIS for behavior management, according to teachers?”

### **Teacher Perception**

Both survey data and interview data were collected to measure teacher perceptions of SW-PBIS and SWRP and disruptive behavior.

#### **Perceptions of Learning Needs: Qualitative**

The researcher constructed survey asked participants the open-ended question, “What are your perceptions/beliefs regarding the learning needs of students with disruptive behavior disorders?” This ontological question addressed the nature of the participant's perceptions regarding the needs of learners in the classroom. Survey data was downloaded from Survey Monkey into an Excel document for qualitative coding. The data was split into smaller codable moments to establish a pattern in the data before using descriptive coding. Each codable moment received a cell in the matrix, enabling analytic induction and comparisons as rows and columns were rearranged for analysis. Data was coded and categorized to generate themes that assisted in building a theory. Cells were color-coded to enhance analysis. A codebook was created and reviewed by a colleague to establish inter-coder reliability. Eight descriptions were derived from the codes, as shown in Table 10. Although the data demonstrated a variance in responses, most alluded to primarily positive perceptions regarding the learning needs of students with disruptive behavior disorders; however, there was a negative perception documented by some staff members.

Table 10

*Teacher Responses Describing Learning Needs of Students with Disruptive Behavior Disorders*

Participant	Code	Perception Shared
T9	Social-Emotional	"DBD students often deal with trauma that causes the DBD to be established and then reoccurring."
TT23	Learning Issues	"They frequently have learning disabilities which cause them to get lost or confused, at which time they start misbehaving."
T3	Extra Supports	"Counseling"
TT32	Teacher Training	"The district and the school do not address those issues rigorously enough."
T34	Curriculum	"Our school needs to offer job skill courses for trades and office work."
TT1	Consequences	"defined consequences for inappropriate behavior"
T60	Relationships	"building relationships"
T46	PBIS Like Strategies	"Constant positive reinforcement"

The researcher analyzed teacher perceptions of learning needs by teacher age groups, as seen in Table 11. Utilizing the eight themes that were coded for learning needs, the researcher categorized the data based on the survey age groups 18-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, and 60 years of age and older. In the age group 18-29 ( $n = 23$ ) 4% of teachers responded that the primary student learning need was building relationships with students and extra-support provided to the students. In the age group of 30-39 ( $n = 30$ ), 43.5% of teachers felt that assisting with social-emotional needs was most prevalent in improving student's learning needs. In the age group of 40-49 ( $n = 30$ ), 33.3% of teachers felt that teacher training was the most crucial need to increase student learning. In the age group 50-59 ( $n = 30$ ) 53.5% responded that social-emotional needs were most important in meeting student needs, and teachers in the 60 years of age and older category ( $n = 8$ ) 62.5% felt that social-emotional needs were most important for student learning.

Table 11

<i>Perceptions of Learning Needs of Teachers Based on Age</i>										
Perceived learning Need	Years of Age									
	18-29		30-39		40-49		50-59		60-plus	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Social Emotional	2	14.3	10	43.5	6	20	16	53.3	5	62.5
Consequences	3	21.4	4	17.4	6	20	3	10	0	0
Relationships	4	28.6	3	13	4	13.3	4	13.3	0	0
Extra Support	4	28.6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PBIS Like Strategies	1	7.14	1	4.35	1	3.33	0	0	0	0
Learning Ability	0	0	1	4.35	2	6.67	1	3.33	0	0
Teacher Training	0	0	2	8.7	10	33.3	6	20	3	37.5
Curriculum	0	0	2	8.7	1	3.33	0	0	0	0

### Perceptions of Relationships: Qualitative

Participants  $N = 6$  were asked, “*What are your feelings about building relationships with students?*” This ontological question allowed the exploration of personal, interpretive meaning to be found in the data (see Table 12). This data was not coded to allow for the participant's perceptions to reflect the multiple lenses and filters of the participant's worldviews.

Table 12

*Interviewee Perceptions of Building Relationships with Students*

Teacher	Perception Shared
I2	"It's the most important thing in teaching."
I3	"Without having a relationship with students you can't address whatever behavioral issues you might experience or you're experiencing in a classroom setting otherwise, or the choices that they're making. You can't really address that without having a good relationship with the student."
I4	"I think we all become teachers, because we want to build relationships with students and help them improve their lives and do great things, and teach them about the world. So I always try and get to know them as much as I can and learn personal things about them, and try and ask about them, and try and know what's going on in their lives."
I5	"Well, I think it's absolutely essential that you do anything like that. The day is long past where you can simply have the student be a number or a kid in the back of the room."
II1	"I think to build relationships with students, you actually have to put yourself in the student's shoes. I think a lot of what I see is that teachers are missing in my site."
II2	"I think it's extremely important to be honest with the students, and I think the teachers in order for us to build a relationship with the students."

Interviews were conducted with volunteer participants  $N = 7$ . During the interaction, the researcher asked the participants *"How do you feel that building relationships impact students with disruptive behaviors."* All participants responded positively (see Table 13). The detailed transcripts of the qualitative data were used to capture the nature of the participant's realities.

Table 13

*Interviewee Perceptions on the Impact of Relationships on DBD Students*

Teacher	Perception Shared
I1	"I think that positive relationships is even more essential for students with disruptive behaviors, because for some students it's natural to build those relationships, or easy to build those relationships with teachers. But with students who have disruptive behaviors, it's a challenge. So for them, it's even more essential to have those positive relationships.
I2	"I think where they can be developed, it makes a difference in students' futures, as well as their behavior in the classroom. But you've got to realize that students are going to be more influenced by other students in their ... well, about ... by me, no matter what their relationship with me, in the classroom."
I3	"Students with disruptive behaviors, I find that often that they might try to challenge the relationship or may do things to try to not want to have a relationship with that. They test those boundaries, and there may be trust issues, that got them to have those boundaries."
I4	"It can help a lot, because if they like you, then they tend to behave better for you. Definitely true. That's why I do a lot of quiet talking to them. I even call them at home, sometimes, and talk to them. I'll use my prep to go out and find them and talk to them privately."
I5	"It would depend on the student, obviously. I've had instances in which a counselor came to me in tears and she, "I didn't like Johnny, so I tried ... " The counselor said to me, "I didn't like Johnny, so I tried to understand him, and now that I understand him, I hate him." Because there are some that are disruptive just for the sake of being disruptive. But that is very rare."
II1	"Oh, it's big. It's really big."
II2	"I think if you have an honest relationship with them, I think you will lessen the disruptive behaviors..."

**Defining Disruptive Behaviors: Qualitative**

Survey participants ( $N = 121$ ) were asked to define disruptive behavior disorders in an open-ended survey question (see Table 14). Teachers responded with a variety of behaviors that were open-coded; each definition received its own Excel cell on the matrix. The codes were color-coded for the ease of analysis. The following four themes were derived from the data: disruptions, disrespect, mental disorders, and aggression. Of the teachers surveyed, 52.06% ( $n = 63$ ), defined disruptive behaviors as disruptions in the classroom, 18.18% ( $n = 22$ ) defined



disruptive behavior as disrespectful actions, 14.87% ( $n = 18$ ) teachers defined classroom disruption as an occurrence related to mental health disorder, 7.43% ( $n = 9$ ) of educators defined classroom disruption as aggressive behavior and 7.43% ( $n = 9$ ) of the teachers did not respond to the as question.

Table 14

*Teacher Responses Defining Disruptive Behavior Disorders*

Participant	Code	Definition Shared
T8	Aggression	"DBD are a group of behavioral disorders that have continuous patterns of defiant and hostile behaviors that are directed towards authority figures."
T40	Disrespect	"Students who have habitual behaviors that interrupt the learning environment and need special assistance in being corrected."
T22	Disruption	"Behaviors that would inhibit other individuals from a safe and possibly quiet learning environment. Behaviors that would distract and otherwise disrupt others from the daily objective and task."
TT24	Mental Health	"An underlying condition which may cause a student to lose control of his/her actions, including anger issues or emotional disturbance."

*Note.* Responses showed that in the educational environment, the definition of disruptive behavior varied greatly.

### **Describing Disruptive Behaviors: Qualitative**

An open-ended question in the web-based survey asked teachers to explain what disruptive behaviors looked like in the educational environment. Teacher responses highlighted defiant and aggressive behaviors that were consistent of students that displayed disruptive behavior disorders (see Table 15). The survey data was downloaded into an Excel spreadsheet where each answer was given a cell in the matrix. The data was split into smaller codable moments to establish a pattern in the data before using descriptive coding. Each codable

moment received its cell in the matrix, enabling analytic induction and comparisons as rows and columns were rearranged for analysis. Data was coded and categorized to generate themes that assisted in building a theory. Cells were color-coded to enhance analysis. A codebook was created and reviewed by a colleague to establish inter-coder reliability. Six themes were discovered in the data: technology, conversations, moving around, aggression, teaching, and learning.

Table 15

*Teacher Responses Describing What Disruptive Behavior Looks Like in the Educational Environment*

Participant	Code	Description Shared
TT23	Moving Around	"Moving around the room without permission."
T10	Technology	"Students constantly using cellphones in class."
TT26	Aggression	"Physically violent."
T7	Conversations	"Talking while instruction is going on."
T25	Eating	"Eating"
T21	Teaching	"Any behavior that keeps the teacher from instructing,"
TT3	Learning	Behaviors that rob other students of their academic time.
TT34	Cussing	"Obscene language."
T4	Yelling	"Yelling"

### Defining Strategies: Qualitative

Interview participants  $N = 7$  were asked to describe PBIS and RP in their own words. Due to the varied responses, the data was not coded to allow for the spectrum of the answers to be viewed (see Tables 16 and 17).

Table 16  
*Interviewee Responses Defining PBIS*

Teacher	Definition Shared
I1	"My definition of Positive Behavior Intervention and Support, these are just guidelines, norms that are established throughout the school to show the students what is expected of them, so their expectations. And I think it's a way to have a uniform process or a uniform system where all students know what it's like, what is expected of them, and they know that those expectations are school-wide. Because I know it affects the way they walk from class to class, the way they behave in class, the way they use the restrooms, the way they wait for the bus to pick them up, and it's just a set of standards and expectations for the whole school as a whole."
I2	"Well, this is a problem. Because Positive Behavior Intervention and Support has done away with a lot of discipline, and actually across the country, students ... teachers are having more and more problems in the classroom, because discipline, when it's positive, which is not necessarily a bad term, discipline has been supportive of students' misbehavior."
I3	"Well I think that, I'm using my own words not necessarily the words that are used in training. I would just say that, we're looking at, what is causing the behavior? What can we do to help a student be more successful? Rather than just looking at it in an opinionative measure or disciplinary measure. Working together with a student as a partner to help them be more successful."
I4	"I am assuming that it means that we work to ... I mean, I know that they are doing something with it. I know we're trying to do like the peer ... I think they call it something else now, but it's the one where peers ... I'll get it. I've got the name of it. It's the one where the peers talk to a meeting group with peers. They talk to them about their behavior."
I5	"I would define it as anything in which you, the teacher, are one of several links. You're a link to the parents. You're a link to a counselor. You're a link to administration."
II1	"A positive behavior intervention is, to me, it's outside the box thinking, something that you may not learn in the classroom, you just have to actually experience it and go through with and learn from that experience. And that may not work all the time."
II2	"It's having the rapport with the kids, and when you have that rapport with the kids."

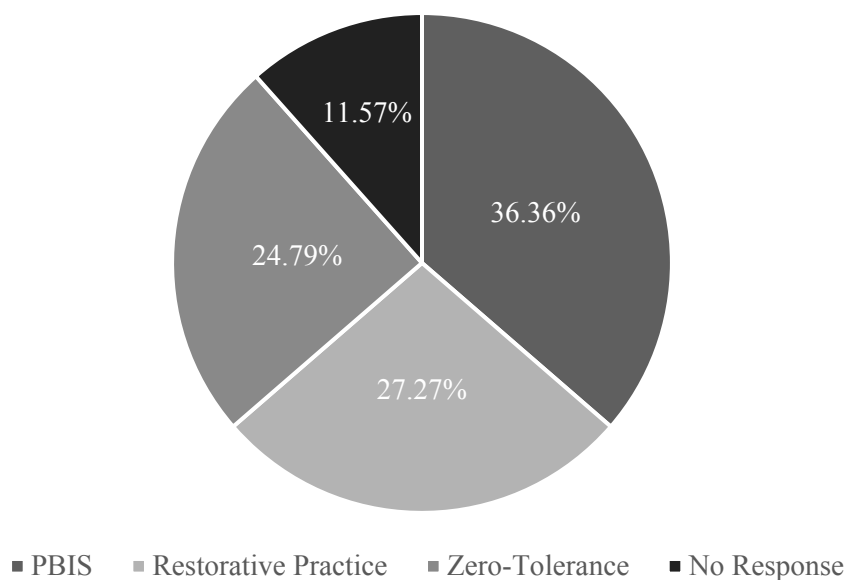
Table 17  
*Interviewee Responses Defining RP*

Teacher	Definition Shared
I1	"I'm not very knowledgeable about restorative practices, but I know that it's a way for students to work through issues, problems, to build confidence, to work with conflict. And I think restoring means working on something that at one point was negative and building that into positive either emotions or feelings, or even positive results. So it's fixing something that needs to be worked on."
I2	"I don't know if I could because I don't fully understand RP."
I3	"Well, when I look at our site what I see that we have had a lot of peer intervention which has been great. We have built programs around other students being involved, we've tried to get students involved in activities making sure that they have connections with other students. We don't just have staff as role models, we also have students as role models. We've eliminated a lot of things like, sending students just to in school suspension or just sending our a referral or just suspending students. A lot of that I believe has been reduced at the site and I think that we've see less behavioral issues and just in a more positive manner."
I4	"I'll get it. I've got the name of it. It's the one where the peers talk to a meeting group with peers. They talk to them about their behavior."
I5	"They define it in terms of steps ... Well, here. We have a cell phone policy to give an example of it, that they have a list of consequences."
II1	"To tell the truth, I'm kind of what is restorative practices? I don't know."
II2	"I think that it's looking at the individual, and having those students really be involved with, okay, what do you suggest we should do for this behavior that we came across that we know that it's not positive? I think it's getting them involved with the discipline process, or just when we have to confront any kind of disruptive behaviors, and having them involved, and understanding what their seeing, so that way they can see that it's not that we're trying to pick on people, or individually it's just, you know what? We did something that was inappropriate, how are we going to handle it?"

### **Behavioral Management Systems: Qualitative**

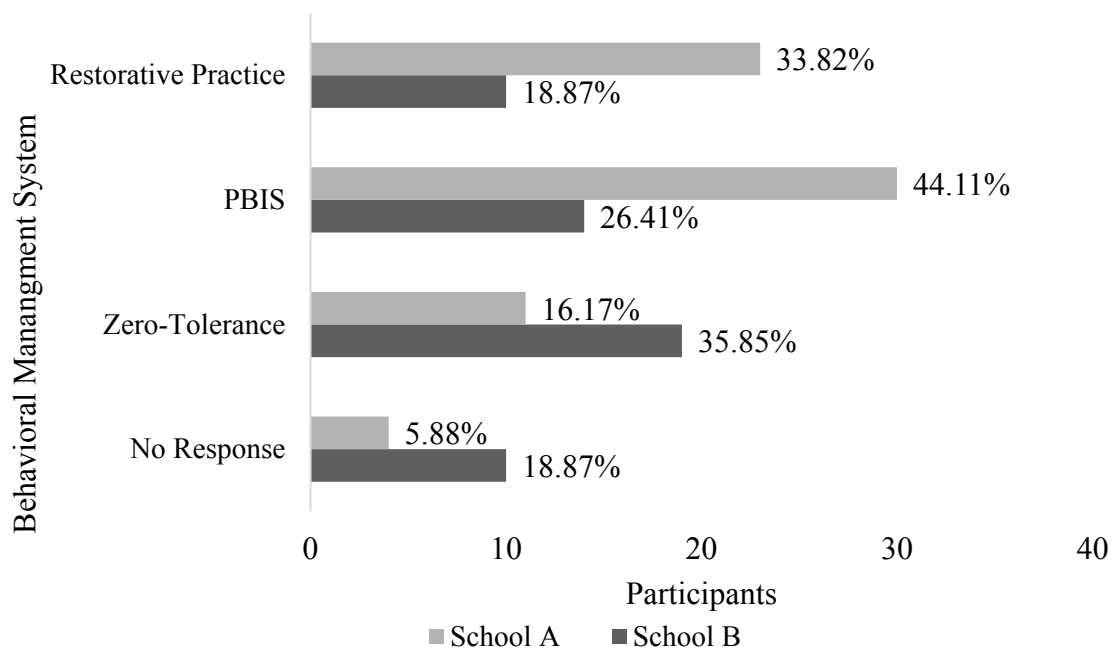
Survey participants ( $N = 121$ ), were asked an open-ended question about "what behavioral management system they used with students." This open-response question allowed teachers to input their preferred behavioral management system on the survey (see Figure 12). The data was then open-coded by the researcher using keywords found in the data. Overall responses exemplified the use of SW-PBIS and SWRP strategies over zero-tolerance by a small

margin. Of the survey responses, an average of 36.36% ( $n = 44$ ) of teachers answered that they used PBIS as their behavioral management system, 27.27% ( $n = 33$ ) of teachers used RP, with 24.79% ( $n = 30$ ) of teachers reported that they used zero-tolerance techniques, and 11.57% ( $n = 14$ ) did not respond to the question.



*Figure 12.* Participants preferred behavioral management system

When comparing School A and School B's responses together, data showed that School A implemented more positive behavioral strategies than School B, as shown in Figure 13. SWRP were implemented by 33.82% ( $n = 23$ ) of the participants at School A and 18.87% ( $n = 10$ ) of the participants at School B. SW-PBIS were implemented by 44.11% ( $n = 30$ ) of the respondents at School A, and 23.41% ( $n = 14$ ) of the respondents at School B. Zero-tolerance procedures were implemented by 16.17% ( $n = 11$ ) teachers at School A and 35.85% ( $n = 19$ ) teachers at School B.



*Figure 13.* Bar chart used to compare the implemented strategies between School A and School B.

### **Teachers Opinion on Strategies: Qualitative**

Participants,  $N = 7$ , responded to the interview question, “*What is your opinion on PBIS?*” The data was split to obtain clear answers (see Table 18). The information was not coded to allow for the core ideas of the participants to be experienced.

Table 18

*Interviewee Opinions on PBIS*

Teacher	Perception Shared
I1	"I know that the program on its own, it's very strong. I just think it's different in how it's implemented at every school. So I know there's a lot of room for implementation. I know at some schools it's implemented differently, but overall as a program, I think it's a really strong program."
I2	"I think in the long run it's going to lower test scores."
I3	"I think it's been great for our site. I have never found that with a lot of our students that traditional, disciplinary measures have been successful or really help."
I4	"I don't know. Actually, I don't know the whole thing about it, but I like the concept and the idea of it."
I5	"My opinion about it is I think it's nothing but good. I think it's better than any of the punishment oriented interventions and orientation we've been used to. It's better than anything I've seen in my thirty years of teaching."
II1	"I think it's very much needed, and we need to make these connections. There can't be no learning in the classroom unless these behaviors are under control, because then you're just going to be wasting your whole class time putting out these little fires, and no instructions going to be done, and those who are there to learn are going to be losing out."
II2	"PBIS is great. All staff members must be on board or target the majority."

Participant's,  $N = 7$ , responded to the interview question, "*What is your opinion on RP?*"

The data was split to obtain clear answers (see Table 19). The information was not coded to allow for the viewing of the information through a holistic lens.

Table 19

*Interviewee Opinions on RP*

Teacher	Perception Shared
I1	"I've heard wonderful feedback from teachers and students who have imparted it because it really makes the students open into dialogue instead of maybe negative actions."
I2	"I think it's amazing. Again, it has to be 100% follow through, and unfortunately sometimes when you have those, I think when students are aware of the situation, and how to deal with those situations by bringing up that, You know what? You're not going to get it from everybody, but there's people out there who will try and help you out. I think just letting them be aware of what's happening around the surroundings. Again, if you get the majority of the people on a site to follow through and to have that kind of mindset, I think it works out amazing. As long as they know how to use it, and they're trained to do it, and appropriately."
I3	"My opinion is that that really is the way to go. We don't have disciplinary issues because students are just wanting to misbehave."
I4	"I think it's a good idea. We used to do conflict managers, been doing that since I've been around, a long time. That was kind of the same idea, where they used to meet with just to resolve conflicts between a couple of kids with other students."
I5	"Absolutely necessary. I don't think we can do without them."
II1	"Like I said, it's an art. You're going to have to go through it. You're going to have to see it in action to really know what it is, and to really put it to best use. But no. It's definitely, definitely needed. And even before restorative practices, that behavior, I think if we get that down first, we wouldn't have to go here."
II2	"I think it's amazing. Again, it has to be 100% follow through."

**Most Effective Strategy: Quantitative**

Participants ( $N = 121$ ) were given a survey question asking which strategy they believed was the most effective in dealing with student behaviors (see Figure 11). Respondents were given the following choices to select an answer from with the ability to include their own response: *implement SWRP, implement SW-PBIS, classroom consequence, remove a student from class, take away class activity, office referral*. Zero-tolerance strategies were separated for clarification on the survey. These strategies included the following choices: *taking away class activity, classroom consequences, send student to the office for discipline and remove student*



from classroom. Participants responded from the selections with 55.23% ( $n = 58$ ) of the teachers felt that PBIS was the most effective strategy, 21.90% ( $n = 24$ ) viewed SWRP as most effective, and 11.5% ( $n = 23$ ) of teachers felt that using a zero-tolerance type strategies was more effective, as shown in Figure 14.

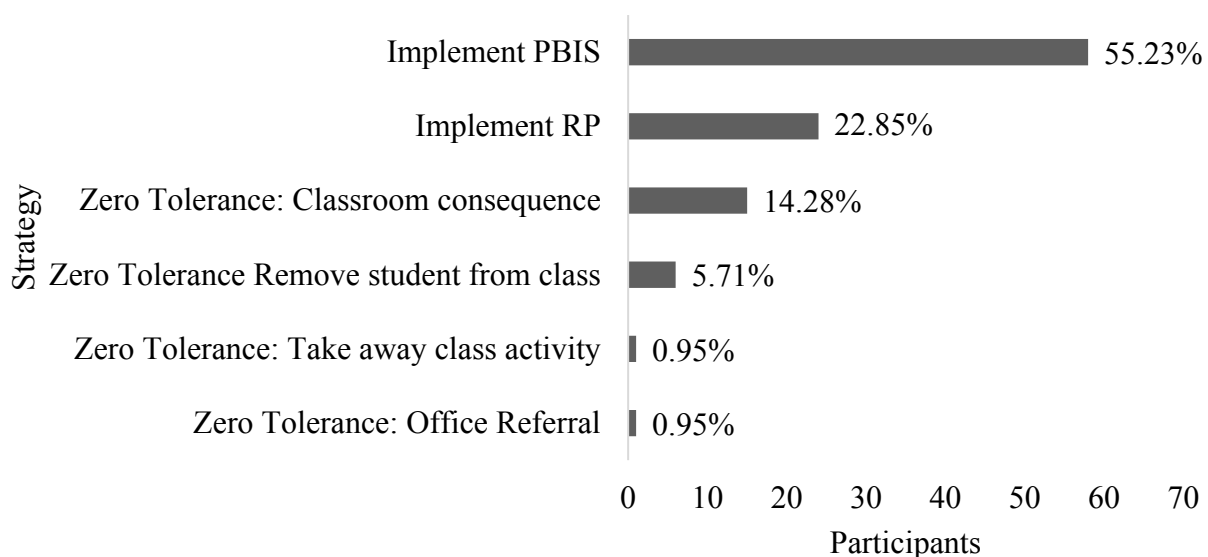


Figure 14. Participants ( $N = 121$ ) perception of most effective strategy when dealing with disruptive behaviors.

Reviewing the schools independently showed that 61.67% ( $n = 37$ ) School A's teachers chose SW-PBIS strategies as the most effective strategy for dealing with students with disruptive behaviors, while 46.67% ( $n = 21$ ) School B teachers chose SW-PBIS strategies. Restorative practices strategies were chosen by 25% ( $n = 15$ ) of teachers at School A and 20% ( $n = 9$ ) of participants at School B. School A respondents 13.33% ( $n = 8$ ) chose zero-tolerance strategies while School B respondents 33.33% ( $n = 15$ ) chose zero-tolerance strategies as the most effective for students with disruptive behavior disorders (see Figure 15).

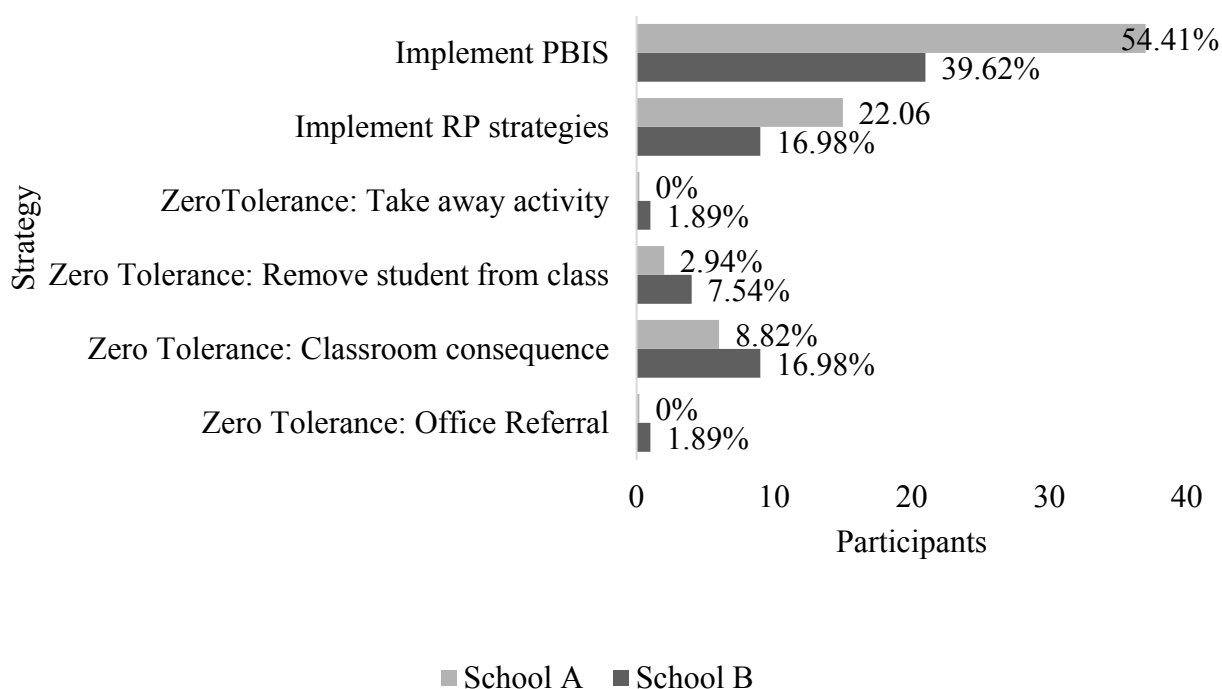


Figure 15. Comparison of participants' perception of the most effective strategy when dealing with disruptive behaviors between School A and School B.

With the option to write in their responses, teachers offered their personal strategies to the data, as seen in Table 20. The researcher analyzed the qualitative responses and found three apparent themes in the data: consequences, alternative systems, and restorative type strategies.

Table 20.

*Most Effective Behavioral Management Strategy*

Participant	Code	Definition Shared
T2	Consequences	Remove the student, consequences, parental support, intervention.
T23	Alternative	Any and/or all of the above depending on my relationship with the student and the student's history of disruptive behavior.
TT11	Restorative Type	Speak one on one and find out what is the problem

The researcher asked the interview participants from School A,  $N = 5$ , “*Since their site has implemented both PBIS and RP how do they implement the two strategies together?*” (see Table 21). Using raw data allowed the researcher to explore the personal meanings of implementation found in the data.

Table 21

*Interviewee Utilization of PBIS and RP together*

Teacher	Perception Shared
I1	"I believe PBIS is a school-wide approach, and restorative practices is more of a group approach. So that's how I see being used together."
I2	"PBIS and RP together, the philosophy is really not discipline. And they're not getting disciplined at home, and now they're not getting disciplined here, which to me is ... which means I have to do everything in my classroom."
I3	"...we're kind of doing our own thing in our own way."
I4	"They haven't trained me in them, so I don't."
I5	"PBIS is the toolbox and RP is the tools I take out of the box."

### **Research Question 3: Correlation of Professional Learning and School Climate**

What is the correlation between teacher perceptions of professional learning and school climate?

#### **Correlation of Professional Development and School Climate: Quantitative**

The researcher analyzed data for survey participants ( $N = 121$ ) to find the total climate and total training score creating climate and training constructs for School A and School B. A total score for school culture and total score for training was calculated by adding individual scores on specific survey items that were moderately correlated to one another with a range of 0.0027 to 0.5561 (see Table 25). To create the total climate construct, the researcher attained a total climate score by combining/adding up the scores from survey questions 32, 12, and 16 (see

Table 22). The total training construct was created by the data from questions 11, 13, 17, 19, and 21, as shown in Table 24. A Pearson linear correlation was employed to determine the linear relationship between teacher perceptions of professional learning and school climate for both schools. The Pearson correlation coefficient ( $r = 0.556$ ) of School A, shown in Table 22, suggests a medium positive correlation between teacher perceptions of professional learning training and school climate  $r(67) = .556, p > .05$ . The Pearson correlation coefficient ( $r = .463$ ) for School B, as seen in Tables 22 and 23, suggests a moderate positive correlation between teacher perceptions of professional development and school climate  $r(52) = r = .556, p > .05$ . The researcher found a statistical significance between teacher perceptions on professional learning and school climate.

Table 22

*Climate*

	School A			School B		
	Q32	Q16	Q12	Q32	Q16	Q12
Q12	$r = 0.4037$			$r = 0.2026$		
Q16	$r = 0.0027$		$r = 0.1744$	$r = -0.0975$		$r = 0.2551$
Q32						

Table 23

*School A Total Training*

	Q21	Q19	Q17	Q13	Q11
Q11	$r = 0.4513^*$	$r = 0.3271^*$	$r = 0.2866^*$	$r = 0.4202^*$	
Q13					
Q17				$r = 0.4937^*$	
Q19			$r = -0.0271$	$r = 0.2657^*$	
Q21		$r = 0.1822$	$r = 0.4641^*$	$r = 0.6476^*$	

Table 24

*School B Total Training*

	Q21	Q19	Q17	Q13	Q11
Q11	$r = 0.3456^*$	$r = 0.2538$	$r = 0.0385$	$r = 0.2817^*$	
Q13					
Q17				$r = 0.4955^*$	
Q19			$r = 0.0012$	$r = 0.1398$	
Q21		$r = 0.586$	$r = 0.4879^*$	$r = 0.5561^*$	

Table 25

*Survey Questions Creating Training and School Climate Constructs*

Construct	Survey Items Number	Survey Items
Training	Q12	How confident are you that your school does all it can to help students with disruptive behaviors?
	Q16	How well informed of the behaviors on campus do you think your school administration is?
	Q32	Prior to the implementation of restorative practices the school campus was an unsafe environment.
School Climate	Q11	How prepared do you feel to handle students who demonstrate disruptive behaviors in the classroom?
	Q13	How adequate do you feel your training in disruptive behaviors has been?
	Q17	Estimate the number of in-service or workshop hours you have attended for student behaviors.
	Q19	Educators need more information and support on how to best address the needs of students with disruptive behavior disorders.
	Q21	Positive behavior intervention supports strategies have not made a positive impact on student achievement.

Interview participants,  $N = 7$ , responded to the question asking, “How would you describe the impact of PBIS on students who demonstrate disruptive behavior disorders” (see

Table 26). Respondents replied with a variety of answers. The raw data shows the knowledge of the participants.

Table 26

*Interviewee Responses Describing the Impact of PBIS on students demonstrating DBD*

Teacher	Response Shared
I1	"For students who demonstrate disruptive behaviors, PBIS, once again, can be a set of standards and expectations, norms, that they need to then follow. So I think even when they see the posters, or they even see their fears following those expectations, then it gives them something concrete for them to see and follow."
I2	"I think it has a high impact on students' behaviors when they notice that the PBIS is being followed through the majority all across the board, then they see what the expectations are. I think it can make a really positive impact if everybody's on board, in terms of taking away those positive behaviors. Those destructive behaviors. We want to keep those positive behaviors, I apologize."
I3	"I would say that, the impact is a lot of students are being suspended less. We have a reduction or suspension, and a pathway to get students back into school and be more positive within school. And teaching the students their own conflict resolution skills. Skills to deal with whatever issues are resulting in them maybe not being successful at school. Being at risk for ID differences going on. Whether it be, drugs or fighting or not getting along with their peers or even having problems at home."
I4	"I only had the one student, and it did help that one student."
I5	"It isn't immediate in most cases. They don't just oh suddenly light up and say, "Oh, you love me. You really love me." But, they are nonplussed by it because they expect negativity, they expect anger, they expect punishment."
II1	"I think, and I'm speaking for myself, I think it really depends on the person delivering it. Like I said, I'm speaking for myself, where I've threw myself in the middle of a conflict and was able to deescalate it because of the history I already have with these students. "Hey. You don't want to do this. You don't ... Okay, I hear you. I hear you too. Come on. You know what? As a matter of fact. Do you really want to do this? Okay. We're going to ..." And it's a dialog and understanding that I have with these students because, I can have that because of my history with them already. I've already had a one-on-one connection with them, and describe ... Well, speaking from my behalf, it works. But like I said, it takes a real skilled person to do this, because all the training and book reading in the world is not going to prepare a person to go do this. You have to have a history with the students in order to implement this."

- II2      I think it has a high impact on students' behaviors when they notice that the PBIS is being followed through the majority all across the board, then they see what the expectations are. I think it can make a really positive impact if everybody's on board, in terms of taking away those positive behaviors. Those destructive behaviors. We want to keep those positive behaviors, I apologize.
- 

Interview participants,  $N = 7$ , responded to the question asking, "*How would you describe the impact of RP on students who demonstrate disruptive behavior disorders?*" (see Table 27). Respondents replied with a variety of answers. The data was left as raw data to show the participant's interpretive meanings.

Table 27

*Interviewee Responses Describing the Impact of RP on students demonstrating DBD*

Teacher	Responses Shared
I1	“Again, I haven't seen it firsthand, but I've heard that has a strong impact on them. Because especially for students who usually demonstrate disruptive behaviors, they deal with a lot of negativity. So for them to be able to sit with adults and peers who are having problems with them, and be able to work through those problems, it's very empowering for them because it builds their self-esteem, it gives them control, and it gears them towards positive behavior instead of negative.”
I2	Yeah. You send them out and they're sent right back. Well, the impact is very small.
I3	“I think that students are surprised when there's people that are trying to look at things from a different point of view. They look at their own behavior and what their choices are. A lot of students are reactionary they don't realize that sometimes, they have choices in how they behave. Their focus of control is a lot of times external not internal. That's an impact, their own way of controlling what those goes in their environment.”
I4	“Again, I'm not sure. The one student, he wasn't a problem for me, but apparently, he was for others, so I'm understanding that he did better after that. I would think peer pressure has always worked on teenagers.”
I5	“I would say restorative practices are specific enough to the point where in some cases, other kids can identify what you're doing. I will try a reverse psychology, I'll try an impact, I'll try a closeness move, I'll try anything like that, and then the kid says, "Can I go?" "Yeah, you can go. Step on outside to just take a minute," and et cetera. And I had one kid look at me and say, "I saw what you did. You've done that with me a couple of times." I was like, "Yeah, this is what I do. This is what ... we call it restorative practices if you really want to know." He said, "I didn't want to know." I said, "Okay." But, yeah, RP, the system itself is what initiates the ideas, but the RP are the specific things you do with them, and you should, if you had them in the system of restoration, you should, if you actually practice RP, see results fairly quickly with it.
II1	I really can't say no negatives. There has been positives. There really has been. I would actually say less fights between students. Yeah, this prior year, there wasn't that many that I can recall, like previous year. For the most part I would say after the restorative practices, for the most part they were resolved.
II2	Honestly, I don't think I have seen much of a difference yet, just because we don't have that much follow through, yet. I think that as a person who was involved with PBIS, that whole committee, we were the high team, and the argument that we always came across is how do we get all the everybody that's on board? Because we're all stakeholders, and the thing is, it's just trying to make sure that we get everybody on board to implement this, and to see how when everybody follows through on this, then the culture and the climate can become a lot more positive than what it is right now.



## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION, IMPLEMENTATION, RECOMMENDATIONS

### **Introduction**

As discussed in the literature, concerns about student misbehavior in the school environment have been an issue since the inception of the public education system in the early 1900s. Frontline educators have attempted a variety of techniques to prevent, change, reduce, and eliminate behaviors that disrupt the learning environment (Bernes, Bernes, & Bardick, 2011; Grothaus, 2013; Madigan, Cross, Smolkowski, & Strycker, 2016), but are consistently unprepared for dealing with the behavioral challenges presented in today's classroom (Dicke, Elling, Schmeck, & Leutner, 2015). Students with challenging behaviors frustrate teachers and disrupt instruction. Frustrated educators tend to request for the exclusion of students from classroom instruction with punitive tools, such as office referrals, in-school suspensions, out-of-school suspensions, and expulsions; they “just want to teach the students that want to learn” (Participant T42). Students with disruptive behaviors require that teachers focus their attention and time away from instruction and onto the students that are exhibiting the behaviors, reducing everyone's academic potential. By reducing disruptive behaviors in the classroom, educators could increase students' exposure to curriculum, decrease student absenteeism by reducing out-of-school and in-school suspensions, and reduce the likelihood of emotional exclusion from school environments. Improving student behavior should lead to gains in academic achievement. When students are successful in their core educational classes, it contributes to the richness of their pursuits after high school — increasing their ability to be successful members in their communities and societies (Madigan et al., 2016).

### **Discussion of the Research Questions**

The following information highlights the researcher's conclusions on the data presented in Chapter 4. The discussions corresponded to each research question and were comprised of the sub-themes given in the previous chapter. To further validate the researcher's conclusions, it should be noted that member checking was employed.

#### **Research Question 1: Impact of Strategies on Academic Achievement**

Which has the strongest impact on increased academic achievement of high school students with disruptive behavior disorders: students receiving SW-PBIS combined with RP or students receiving only SW-PBIS?

The researcher hypothesized that implementing SW-PBIS and SWRP together would have a stronger impact on increased academic achievement than only implementing SW-PBIS even though high schools face unique challenges with whole school implementations, due to their large sizes (Bohanon-Edmonson, Flannery, Eber, & Sugai, 2004). Previous studies have confirmed that SW-PBIS, implemented with fidelity, showed positive outcomes in attendance, behavior, and academics (Flannery et al., 2013). While SW-PBIS has improved the climate of schools, the implementation of SWRP takes the process one step further for students with DBD by creating environments that builds trust and community, problem-solve disruptive behaviors, teach students appropriate social strategies (Hopkins, 2004, 2011; Morrison, 2006, 2007a; Morrison & Vaandering, 2012; Riestenberg, 2012), and reduces the impact of shame and strengthens social ties (Hopkins, 2004; Karp & Breslin, 2001; Morrison, 2007a, 2007b; Morrison & Vaandering, 2012). Using the Change theoretical framework, a portion of this study aimed to show that academic improvement was more significant for students with DBD in a school that had implemented both SW-PBIS and SWRP in comparison to a school that had implemented

SW-PBIS. Academic development was analyzed by the use of state testing results and teacher perceptions.

### **State Testing Results**

Students in the California public school system, in third, seventh, and eleventh grades, are requested to take the California state standardized test. Two state assessments are offered, the California Assessment of Student Performance (CAASPP) and the California Alternative Assessment (CAA). The CAASPP is a series of exams in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics, and the CAA is a modified version of the CAASPP offered to students with limited cognitive ability based on their individualized education plan (IEP). The researcher found this tool ineffective to measure academic growth on students with disruptive behavior disorders due to the confidentiality regulations on information regarding students. The data requested for this study would need to identify students that demonstrated DBD and individually track those students throughout their academic career. Further studies would be necessary to show whether SW-PBIS, combined with SWRP or SW-PBIS, as a standalone framework, had a stronger impact on increased academic performance of high school students with disruptive behavior disorders in this California school district.

### **Teacher Reported Needs for Improving Academic Achievement**

The creation of a collaborative culture is necessary when bringing value-added change to a school. For SW-PBIS with SWRP to be successful, school professionals need to work together to solve problems, analyze and share data, and collaboratively make decisions. These activities have shown to have a positive long term effect on school change and have a history of better outcomes for students (Dufour, Dufour, Eaker, & Many, 2006; Friend & Cook, 2007; McLeskey & Waldron, 2002; Waldron & McLeskey, 2010). In the pursuit of understanding teachers'

perspectives on academic needs and the collaborative culture at the high schools, participants were asked the survey question, “What do you need most from your school administration to best meet the academic needs of students with disruptive behavior disorders at your school.” Of the survey participants that responded to the question, 65% agreed that SW-PBIS had assisted in the academic achievement of students with disruptive behavior disorders. However, teachers at both sites remained neutral on the impact of SWRP on student academic achievement; School A 54.84% of participants and School B 53.19% participants. Teacher neutrality could be due to the SWRP not being fully implemented at either site. The researcher used the lens of SW-PBIS in analyzing teacher responses when asked what they needed from the administration to improve academic performance, they requested additional training, consistency, consequences, and support from their colleagues and administrators.

**Consistency.** Survey responses showed that to assist students in achieving academic success, teachers needed consistency in discipline from the administration. In expressing the need for consistency, teachers used words and phrases such as “*consistent*,” “*consistency*,” “*each and every time*,” “*clear and precise*,” and “*common goals*.” These terms showed a philosophy of discipline-based in traditional adherence to the authority of rules. An example of this was provided by educator TT12 when they expressed the need for “consistent disciplinary actions,” and validated by educator TT40 who needed a “consistent system of consequences.” These types of traditional authoritarian policies can be confusing to students with DBD when they are required to adapt to multiple teachers’ perceptions of discipline and disruption. Educators, individualized conceptions of discipline can cause student frustration and place limits on consistency, which may undermine the social-emotional and relational approaches to discipline (Irby & Clough, 2015)

Other participants requested a broader scope of consistency need from the administration. Educator T51 gives an example in their statement, “Common goals and expectations of teachers and students, with support from Admin.” These shared goals and understanding of expectations should occur during the first phase of the implementation process. During the first level of implementation, a team of coaches, trainers, and educators should dedicate time to create school-wide goals and expectations along with a series of acceptable behaviors eliminating inconsistencies within school discipline policies and practices. MTSS models eliminate inconsistencies in schools when stakeholders focus on fidelity of implementation (Horner et al., 2009; Irby & Clough, 2015). The combined framework, SW-PBIS, and SWRP models create an approach to consistency that provides opportunities for stakeholders to reflect, collaborate, and communicate changes in disciplinary expectations.

**Training.** In response to the question asking what teachers need from the administration to best meet student academic needs, teachers stated additional professional learning opportunities. By requesting more knowledge teachers demonstrated an understanding of the necessary steps needed to begin the process of fully implementing change. This foresight is shown in participant T16 response when they asked for overall general training from the administration, “More training and support from admin.” The response of participant TT3 requested specific training based on areas of need, “Training on how to create, maintain and repair relationships. Training and guidance on good classroom management”. While participant T8 requested opportunities of learning in increasing understanding and strategies, “Probably more training and understanding of the DBD itself and what it looks like. Also, more training on techniques to help better support the student and learning environment.” These foundational learning opportunities should be addressed in the first phase of the SW-PBIS and SWRP

implementation processes. By utilizing highly developed training techniques the administrators would provide educators with a voice on the topics of their training, creating a stronger collaborative culture, allowing the educator to participate in all aspects of professional learning process (Guskey, 2003; McLeskey & Waldron, 2002; Waldron & McLeskey, 2010). These exchanges would illuminate key differences in philosophical perspectives, give opportunities to understand other views and create a collaborative environment amongst the educational team, increasing collective capacity (Fullan, 2010)

**Support.** To create a whole system change, leaders must focus on capacity building and creating a robust relationship between school sites and the district office (Fullan, 2010). One aspect of achieving this level of change is the administrative support of teacher learning through professional development and the modeling of collaborative inquiry (Templeton, Willis, & Hendricks, 2016). In analyzing the data, the theme, administrative support, was a relevant need from teachers to assist in meeting the academic needs of students. Participants used the following words and phrases to describe the help they needed from administrators: “*support*,” “*supportive*,” “*back-up*,” and “*trust*.” Requesting consistent support from the administration, participant TT8 stated, “I believe that having support from administration when it comes to disruptive students. Having and implementing consequences that are followed each and every time it comes up.” Participant TT27 requested support from the administration and other stakeholders when they wrote, “I most need support and back up from administration and counselors. I find there is little to no follow through on their behalf. In addition, it would be great to have the parents support rather than them acting like their student is completely innocent.” While participant T23 requested more “conversations and communication” from administrators to meet the learning needs of students, focusing on these requests, leaders can build relational

trust with teachers. Through this level of trust, a strong sense of partnership amongst stakeholders can form, allowing for whole-systems change.

**Consequences.** Teachers expressed a need to have more consequences in place to meet student academic needs. The analysis of the data showed that educators requested stricter consequences and punitive measures to be enforced by the administration. The words and phrases used to describe consequences were “*consequences*,” “*discipline*,” “*alternative placement*,” “*isolation*,” “*more campus security*,” “*stronger discipline*,” “*suspend*,” “*expel*,” and “*remove from classroom*.” These types of exclusionary practices produce harmful effects on the school environment, such as disproportionately targeting specific ethnic groups and producing inequitable outcomes for all students (Curran, 2019).

In an attempt to address student accountability, participants also requested access to disciplinary outcomes from administrators. Participants wanted more accountability for students and an increase of follow-through from the administration. These perceptions were expressed by participant TT23 when they wrote, “A solid process in discipline that actually holds students accountable for actions.” Followed by participant T39 statement, “Follow through with disruptions, consequences that truly change the student’s behaviors.” Both of these statements were validated by participant TT36 when they stated, “I need administrators to do their job in creating and reinforcing behavioral expectations.” Fidelity of implementation of SW-PBIS and SWRP would create collaboration processes for teachers and administrators to develop disciplinary policies and practices that would provide a comprehensive plan that is transparent to all stakeholders. This system change moves the school culture from an authoritarian approach to a proactive, positive approach allowing stakeholders to administer consequences based on student needs and targeted expectations.

**Progressive practices.** Participants believed that additional progressive methods, initiated by the administration, were necessary to meet student academic needs. The researcher defined progressive practices as positive interventions that aligned with the SW-PBIS and SWRP frameworks. Understanding that students need accountability participant TT6 perceived that moving beyond punitive consequences was required to assist students academically when they stated, “Students need to understand that there are serious consequences to disrupting a learning environment or showing defiance. This does not necessarily mean students need to be punished, but students need to be shown in multiple ways the effect that their actions and decisions can have. Students with disruptive behaviors need outlets for their energy, and they need alternative spaces to learn that are supported by certificated staff that can assist them in a more intimate environment.”

A request for progressive solutions when dealing with students’ disruptive behaviors was made by participant T49 when they suggested, “A quiet area for students to go to cool off and be safe.” These sentiments were validated by participant TT23 when they wrote, “There needs to be progressive disciplinary steps that address student behavior. Teachers need training to prevent escalating bad situations.” Disruptive behaviors have led to a decrease in academic achievement and safety for some students (Algozzine et al., 2011; Skiba & Sprague, 2008). Managing disruptive students’ behaviors can cause stress and anxiety for many classroom teachers, resulting in less instructional time and an increased frustration levels from all stakeholders (Robers, Zhang, Truman, & Snyder, 2012).

The research question asked which strategy had the strongest impact on academic achievement, SW-PBIS or SW-PBIS combined with SWRP. Teacher responses indicated the SW-PBIS had a larger impact on student achievement. This response has the opposite of the



researcher's hypothesis. Additional studies should be conducted after full implementation of SWRP has been completed.

### **Research Question 2: Teachers Perceptions of Learning Needs and Behaviors**

What are teacher perceptions about student behaviors? How effective is RP combined with PBIS for behavior management, according to teachers?

#### **Introduction**

After reviewing survey results in response to the question asking “*What are your perceptions/beliefs regarding the learning needs of students with disruptive behavior disorders?*” the researcher found eight main themes in the data: *social-emotional, learning abilities, extra supports, teacher training, curriculum, consequences, relationships, and SW-PBIS like strategies*. These themes were present at both school sites in the district, showing various ways that teachers were concerned about classroom learning needs and disruptions. Teachers’ perceptions of student learning needs provided an essential view of how the implementation of SW-PBIS and SWRP effectively addressed these problems.

The researcher reviewed the data as a whole group and by the teacher age group to see if there was a difference in perceived learning needs. The results found that viewing the data both ways showed no significant difference in teacher perceptions. However, the impression that social-emotional needs must be met for maximum student learning to occur had the most significant number of responses in the age groups 30 – 39, 50 – 59, and 60 plus.

**Social-emotional.** Teachers’ focused on social-emotional competencies and social-emotional learning deficits when they discussed students learning needs in the survey responses. These deficits may manifest in students’ behavior due to the lack of skills needed to face daily conflicts, lack of support required to help build self-esteem, and low overall capacity for self-

confidence. Participant TT49 confirmed these perceptions when they discussed disruptive behaviors as a result of “Students trying to avoid something or gain something” alluding to B. F. Skinner’s theory about students disrupting environments to gain either positive or negative attention. Another concern for the lack of social-emotional development in students was the possibility of unaddressed mental health issues. Participant T64 discussed student’s lack of emotional control in the educational environment as a “Frustration that can cause anxiety; anxiety leads to the need to escape. For students with disorders, learning to cope, and organizational skills can help relieve anxiety.” These responses showed that participants held a basic knowledge of understanding behavioral research and how it has helped educators in understanding the antecedent and behavior of a disruptive episode.

Guided by Bandura’s theoretical framework of social-emotional learning, this study focused on students’ behavioral self-management and relationship skills. By implementing a whole-school approach to SW-PBIS and SWRP students’ social-emotional capacity could be improved, creating a more just approach to dealing with inappropriate behavior. Through the enhancement of communications and social literacy for all stakeholders, this whole-school transformation would allow for individuals to embrace responsibility for their actions while others focus on empathizing. Ultimately, forming a climate for behavioral issues to be resolved efficiently while increasing attendance rates and in-class engagement (Du Rose & Skinns, 2013).

However, this approach to discipline relies on external stimuli to promote the desired behavior. When the external stimuli have no value to the student, another technique is required to curb the behavior. SWRP can fill that gap by offering a relational self-discipline approach that increases student’s capacity for self-awareness, social-awareness, and a sense of community (Irby & Clough, 2015). As a combined framework, SW-PBIS and SWRP models create an

approach to discipline that provides opportunities for reflection and learning united with positive reinforcements.

**Learning abilities.** Participants acknowledged that students with learning disabilities could be a factor for disruptive behaviors. Students typically developed SEC and SEL skills during their early childhood education program with continued improvements during their elementary school years. Students who have deficits in SEC and SEL skills when they enter high school are, at times, referred to the special-education programs for targeted interventions (Pham, Murray, & Good, 2018). Participant T2 acknowledged students' behaviors might be linked to learning or cognitive abilities when they wrote, "They may struggle with learning and turn to acting out." The perception of learning disabilities being a learning need was expressed by participant TT52 when they stated, "They frequently have learning disabilities which cause them to get lost or confused, at which time they may start misbehaving." Participant T12 validated this belief when they stated, "These students want to learn, but may learn in a different modality than what is being used in class, and/or family/personal issues, etc."

**Extra supports.** Some participants perceived student learning needs as a request for additional support from administration, counselors, external supports, and families. Teachers are often unaware of the occurrences or effects of traumatic events in the lives of their students, yet they are required to deal with the challenges these bring to their classrooms every day, creating situations that the frontline teacher may not be equipped to handle (Dwyer, Nicholson, Battistutta, & Oldenburg, 2005). Survey participants felt that with extra supports in SEL, students could achieve academic and behavioral success. Participant T66 discussed the need for additional behavioral supports when they stated, "Students need help recognizing their behavior. What is the root of the behavior? They can't process/access information in the learning

environment when they are acting out.” This perception was validated by participant TT33 when they stated, “They often need emotional and/or additional academic supports.” Some teachers perceived the learning need as a need for more wrap-around services and mental health supports. Participant T3 saw students as needing more “counseling” services. This thought process was validated by participant T14, who stated, “Maybe there are home issues affecting their behavior, or they need additional services.” Teachers requested additional support outside of the school environment to assist with the SEL deficit of students with DBD. Home support has shown to be essential in increasing students' social-emotional development. When the support at home is lacking or missing, it is up to the school site and educators to fill the gap (Dyson et al., 2019). Research explained that students who live in poverty situations, experience traumatic events, or parental neglect are more likely to have deficits academically and social emotionally due to the stunting of their SEC and SEL development (Dodge, Bates, & Pettit, 1990; Eppler-Wolff, Martin, & Homayoonfar, 2019; Gulley-Oppenhimer & Hankin, 2014; McDonald, Baden, & Lochman, 2013). Participant T67 recognized this in their comment, “Students with disruptive behavior disorders tend to need extra support because their home life is often unstable.” Participant TT33 validated this perception when they wrote: “They often need emotional and/or additional academic supports.” Participant T2 also reiterated this sentiment when they stated, “Many come from unsupported environments or environments where abuse and chaos are rampant, which may be a contributing factor to this type of behavior.” SW-PBIS and SWRP provide additional supports throughout the school community working in tandem with school counselors, social workers, therapists, and wrap-around service providers. Together these supports create a school climate that teaches students that mistakes made in their academic

learning environment will be acknowledged with a response that would offer further support and instruction instead of punishment and shame.

**Teacher training.** Educators engaged in a deeper understanding of learning needs and behavioral expectations are critical to the implementation and success of SW-PBIS and SWRP. Essential ways for teachers to achieve knowledge is through rigorous training on students with DBD and the fidelity of the implementation of the SW-PBIS and SWRP programs. According to survey participants, the district should provide more training opportunities to assist educators with understanding DBD and the implementation process of the SW-PBIS and SWRP models to assist with solving behavioral issues. Participant TT32 addressed the need for increased training on disruptive behaviors and proactive strategies when they wrote: “The district and school do not address those issues rigorously enough.” Participant T31 supported the need for more training to gain knowledge about behavioral expectations when they stated, “I believe students and teachers need to be training about behavior disorders.” This perception was sustained with the comments from participant TT2 when they wrote, “They are entitled to the same education as those students without disorders. Staff needs to be trained adequately, boundaries need to be very clear and abided by all parties, positive reinforcement, consequences based on violation.” Respondent TT17 expressed the need for adequate training to handle disruptive behaviors in the classroom, “Every bad behavior is an indication of a need. Most needs I am ill-equipped to meet, therefore disruptive behaviors are likely not to go away.” Studies showed that teachers need support and training to understand how to effectively implement MTSS programs in the classroom (Fuchs et al., 2014). Even though educators expressed a need for more training at the time of the study, all SW-PBIS and SWRP training had been suspended due to the lack of funding and changes in the federal education policies, per staff members at the district office.

While survey participants requested more training, interview participants revealed a lack of knowledge of the implementation process of SW-PBIS and SWRP. Trying to implement a program without fully understanding its components can cause a breakdown in the effectiveness of the MTSS strategies. Demonstrating a basic level of understanding about SW-PBIS and SWRP in their responses, interviewees lacked a comprehensive knowledge that should be shown in a program that has been implemented with fidelity. When asked the question to provide specific details of the impact of SWRP strategies, interviewee I5 stated, restorative practices “are specific enough to the point where, in some cases, other kids can identify what you're doing. I will try a reverse psychology; I'll try an impact, I'll try a closeness move, I'll try anything like that...we call it restorative practices.” While the answer was comprehensive it revealed that the interviewee had not gained the necessary understanding of the knowledge from the implementation process. Another concern about the training was that once teachers were trained on the implementation process of SW-PBIS and SWRP, they adapted it to fit their personal preferences. This concept was shared by interviewee I3 when asked how they implemented SW-PBIS and SWRP together they stated, “we're kind of doing our own thing.”

To create whole system reform, guided by the Change theory, the details of the program must be explicitly conducted, repeatedly over time to improve the capacity of the entire system (Fullan, 2010) While the strategies will be adapted to individual personalities they must adhere to the models framework, combined with the collaboratively agreed-upon collective strategies creating a systems change.

**Curriculum.** Another perception that teachers expressed when addressing learning needs was the option of class choices and curriculum. Participants' overall impression was that current course selections focused singularly on college readiness, instead of providing a well-

rounded course schedule that offered more options in trade-specific classes. This is evident in the survey participant T33 comment when they stated, “All kids can learn, they just have to be engaged properly. There is not much for the interest of kids who aren't wanting to go to college. College and career ready is great, but there is very, very little focus on the career part. It needs to be balanced. Some kids are tangible learners, and simply do not want to be in the old classroom. They need to be learning skills like how to swing a hammer, use a wrench, and other valuable skills that they can use even before they graduate to help them be successful. There are plenty of jobs and even careers out there that aren't being filled, and we have the opportunity to get kids ready for them so they can be both college and career ready.” This sentiment was validated when respondent T34 stated, “Many students are disruptive because the school has a one-size-fits-all attitude. They use tired slogans like ‘all students will be college ready, career bound’ etc. That's great for WASC, but only around 10% are college ready. Our school needs to offer job skill courses for trades, and office work.”

Survey participants also expressed a need for teachers to actively implement accommodations, modifications, and scaffolding of the curriculum to meet students learning needs. Participant T50 when discussing disruptive behaviors, stated, “Even those students need accommodations and modifications in the way they are taught, so these should be implemented in their classes.” This one-size-fits-all programming created challenges for educators trying to implement strategies that utilize an MTSS framework.

**Consequences.** Zero-tolerance policies have proven to be ineffective (Rodríguez Ruiz, 2017; Teske, 2011), yet, many teachers perceived that the only way to deal with the learning needs of disruptive behaviors was to remove students from the classroom or school environment.

Survey participant T2 revealed this in their response when they stated that not including students in the general education environment was a solution for disruptive behaviors:

“For this reason, putting these students in with the general population, where they often can sense their inadequacies, leads them to act out. That is why putting them in an environment where they will have rigorous discipline with an office, counselor, and assistants to help would be beneficial. Putting them in with the general population does not help them, the teacher, or the students who are there to learn.”

This perception is further expressed by participant T43 when they wrote, “If they can’t behave in a regular classroom maybe they should be at an alternative site with a shortened day. Maybe working on computer based education.” However, some respondents felt that students should simply follow school and classroom policies, “They need to learn the school rules,” expressed by participant T26. These types of punitive beliefs are proven to have the opposite effect on student behaviors, and work against the district's efforts to decrease dropout rates and increase academic achievement for all students (Du Rose & Skinns, 2013; Riestenberg, 2013; Sellman et al., 2013).

The process of removing students from classrooms could create a climate rich in dehumanization practices and create potential injustices. This practice was evident in the response of participant TT34 when they stated, “Discipline the students for behavior, not their race.” By implementing the Critical theory framework with SW-PBIS and SWRP districts have the opportunity to be social change agents. Restoring humanity to both the victim and the offender (Freire, 2008).

**Relationships.** The key strength of restorative practices is about building relationships. One way to build relationships is to enhance social-emotional learning and change disruptive behavior by opening a productive dialogue between victims and offenders (Thorsborne & Blood,



2013). Survey participants focused on building relationships with students to enhance the classroom environment and the campus climate. This is evident when participant TT46 discussed the building of relationships and improving social skills in their comment, “First the students bond with teachers and have mutual respects with students and teacher; then it will be a piece of cake...”. Respondent T19 validated this perception when they stated, “I want to help students develop and practice social skills. I believe students can be successful if they are given the opportunity.” Educators want to improve teacher-to-student relationships; however, to increase the effort, school administration must also support relationship building. Studies show that school climate improves when the administration promotes a sense of community through strong relationships (Morrison & Vaandering, 2012). This need for a whole school approach is evident in participant TT1 response, “Model showing respect, define consequences for inappropriate behavior, show empathy and have a genuine concern for students, let disruptive students know that every day is a new opportunity to do better.”

During the researcher conducted interviews, teachers expressed that building relationships with students was an essential strategy in working with students with disruptive behaviors. Interview participant I2 shared that building relationship “is the most important thing in teaching.” Participant I4 extended these thoughts on relationship building when they stated: “I think we all became teachers because we want to build relationships with students and help improve their lives...” However, in the process of building relationships, the interview participants acknowledged that not all teachers invest the time needed to build relationships with their students. For example, interviewee III1 stated:

“A lot of what I see teachers are missing in my site is that teachers just get caught up in their own world where they have...deadlines and stuff they have to meet, and there’s

curriculum that they have to get out there and present to the students, but they are failing to make that real connection with the student.”

When teachers are unable to focus on building relationships, strategy effectiveness declines. It is only through increasing student engagement, SEL, and behavioral expectations that students feel a sense of community and belonging (Morrison & Vaandering, 2012; Sia, 2013). Recognizing that emotional security and belonging to a community are integral to adequate education, interviewee I5 stated that being aware of their life circumstances allows teachers to view students “in terms of what kind of trauma they are going through in their lives...(allowing teachers) to build a network around them, being a thread in the safety net that the school is becoming.” Utilizing the restorative justice framework creates the necessary spaces for stakeholders to speak and be heard while building healthy relationships. When the school culture is committed to proactively building positive relationships, students feel safe, have self-discipline and problem-solving skills increase (Morrison & Vaandering, 2012; Sia, 2013).

**SW-PBIS like strategies.** The IDEA '97 refers to the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports to identify and deter students who show or are at risk of developing problem behaviors in the classroom (Sugai & Horner, 2002). However, the implementation of SW-PBIS takes more intentionality and time at the high school level. A study conducted by Flannery et al. (2013) indicated that there was a correlation with the improvement of student behavior, attendance, and some academics when performing the implementation process of SW-PBIS with fidelity. Participants of this study saw the value of SW-PBIS and its ability to effect positive change in their comments when asked about student learning needs. Respondent T46 explained, “They need more attention, constant positive reinforcement, and other corrective behavior strategies.” Respondent TT25 discussed using PBIS strategies to identify and support

students that were misbehaving in their comment, “Students act out in class for a reason, it is important to discover that reason and find a way to intervene in that behavior to help students succeed academically. Participant T19 concurred with this process in their statement, “I want to help students develop and practice social skills. I believe students can be successful if they are given the opportunity.” An essential aspect to SW-PBIS is for students to be taught positively with stated behavioral expectations and clear definitions for rule violations, which assist in obtaining a school climate that promotes safety for all its stakeholders (Sugai & Horner, 2009). This component was of importance to participant T23 when they stated that, “All students need a safe place to learn and grow.”

**Teacher Perceptions of Defining Disruptive Behaviors.** Previous studies on teacher perceptions have determined that gathering a clear understanding of the most prevalent disruptive behaviors was challenging to identify due to the uniqueness of teacher personality and the variety of ways individuals view problematic behavior (Alter, Walker & Landers, 2013). For this study, the researcher asked participants in an open-ended survey question to define disruptive behaviors that they perceived as challenging in the classroom. The researcher found that most teachers had a unique interpretation of disruptive behavior. Four themes were identified by grouping the personal descriptions into four major categories: distractions, disrespect, actions related to mental health disorders, and aggressive behaviors. As seen in Table 9, teacher definitions of disruptive behaviors ranged from a student that is “refusing to do what the teacher asks” as mentioned by participant T65, to “violent behaviors, verbally disruptive behaviors, and socially unacceptable behaviors” as discussed by participant TT27. A way for the districts to support educators would be to create school PBIS teams that would outline specified behaviors and provide expectations and general supports that could be utilized for interventions.

**Describing Disruptive Behavior.** When participants were asked to describe what disruptive behaviors looked like in the classroom, teachers again gave a variety of responses. Educators described disruptive behaviors anywhere from “eating in class” to “physical violence,” creating a continuum too large to have a specific description. Previous research has shown that the individual personalities of teachers make finding a prevalent description challenging partly due to personal biases (Downey & Pribesh, 2004; Marcelo & Yates, 2014; McGrady & Reynolds, 2013). Behavior that one teacher may feel is disruptive may not have the same impact on another teacher. Cultural factors can also influence how DBD is described showing a lower tolerance for some students based on many discriminatory beliefs, including ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation (Auwarter & Aruguete, 2008; Sue, 2010). These types of biases alluded to being a concern at the site from participant TT34, who shared “Discipline the students for behavior, not their race.”

### **Effectiveness of RP Combined with PBIS Behavioral Management Systems**

Survey participants answered the question, “*Which behavioral management system they used with students?*” The responses to the question were open-coded into four themes; *SW-PBIS, SWRP, Zero-Tolerance, and no answer provided*. The results showed that SW-PBIS or SW-PBIS like strategies were the central behavioral management system used by both sites. The data-informed the researcher that the majority of educators at the sites understood the value of the social significance of implementing the SW-PBIS framework.

Interviewees used terms such as guidelines, norms, removal of discipline, outside the box thinking, and having an excellent rapport to define PBIS. However, after conducting interviews, it became apparent that teachers did not have a strong understanding of PBIS or RP. However, when asked to explain RP in their own words, interviewees struggled to have an answer,

ultimately admitting that they did not understand the concept. The school administrators and district officials are falling short with ensuring that stakeholders understand the basic concepts of these programs. This data led the researcher to believe that the district rushed to implement initiatives to comply with state requirements.

### **Most Effective Strategy Behavioral Strategy**

The participants felt that the most effective strategy for students with DBD's was SW-PBIS, with 52.23% of participants choosing this strategy. Selecting this strategy could be due to the comfort level of using an approach that has been utilized for a more extended time period at the school site since the implementation of SW-PBIS was before SWRP's.

The original research question asked about the effectiveness of SW-PBIS combined with SWRP and teachers' perceptions about student behavior. The data proved that educators were concerned about disruptive behaviors in the classroom, but their perceptions of what constitutes disruption were varied. Therefore, creating too broad of a construct to be accurately analyzed. More studies will need to be conducted to understand the full impact of SW-PBIS and SWRP and their effectiveness of being used together after the sites have implemented both strategies to fidelity.

### **Research Question 3: Correlation of Professional Learning and School Climate**

What is the correlation between teacher perceptions of professional learning and school climate?

The hypothesis of this study was that School A, with SW-PBIS and SWRP, would have a higher correlation between training and climate than School B, with only SW-PBIS. However, the data showed that the implementation of both programs affected their sites based on an increase in professional learning. The positive correlation between professional learning and

school climate shows that the more professional development that teachers receive the more positive the school climate becomes. Both relationships were positive with approximately the same size and moving in the same direction. Schools that provide more training created a more positive school culture (Dicke et al., 2015; Garbacz et al., 2014)

Developing professional learning programs that engage the professional adult learner and allows opportunities for growth and feedback will be an essential step of the districts move toward fidelity of implementation. High quality professional development has been effective in creating changes in the classroom while increasing student outcomes (Guskey, 2003; McLeskey & Waldron, 2002; Waldron & McLeskey, 2010). This type of collaborative learning requires the educator to actively participate in all aspects of the training including the selection of topics that will be delivered. Collaborative professional development provides extensive coaching and is actively supported by the administration. Due to its reliance on peer-to-peer support collaborative strategies provide the necessary social, emotional, and intellectual engagement that teachers needed to effect school-wide change.

Interview participants viewed the overall impact of PBIS on the campus culture as positive. However, it was discussed that the school systems have previously implemented change, and before the initiatives reached full implementation, the department of education swings in another direction and initiatives are dropped (Participant T2). Due to constant changes to the system, educators struggle to embrace change and implement initiatives with fidelity (Participant TT2). This constant changing of direction has left some educators weary of altogether buying into new strategies or initiatives.

This study proved that professional learning and school climate were positively connected. The research showed that teacher education was essential to the overall attitude and

culture of a school campus. Although the data shows frustration by educators in regard to initiative implementation, many showed a desire to gain more knowledge in the areas of disruptive behavior, SW-PBIS, SWRP, and classroom management.

### **Implications for Practice**

This study was initiated based on the researcher's experiences as a special education teacher in a large school that implemented an inclusive philosophy. The case study in Chapter 1 was a reflection of the daily experiences of the students and staff members at the site. Districts that integrate an inclusive environment create a culture where all students are viewed as integrals parts of the community (Kauffman & Badar, 2014). These community goals can be met by implementing SW-PBIS and SWRPs and establishing behavioral reduction strategies that will provide teachers with an encompassing range of tools to enhance students' SEL development, problem solving skills, and relationships (Kaufman, 2005). Therefore, providing students with the skills needed to remain in the classroom to receive the same instruction as their peers. The data showed that some teachers are opposed to an inclusive environment when students demonstrate disruptive behaviors in the classroom. These protests can manifest in teachers publicly ostracized and shaming students based on behavior, and teachers refusing to implement best practices due to the comfort of traditional ideology. The researcher realized that to create a systems change, a study needed to be conducted for students that require more than the third tier interventions of SW-PBIS.

This study explored the impact of delivering proactive, evidence-based programs on students with disruptive behavior disorders in the high-school setting. Utilizing an MTSS framework, the state of California implemented an initiative for schools to implement SW-PBIS and SWRP. This initiative was an attempt to effectively and efficiently improve student

academic achievement, address the social-emotional needs of students, and increase the overall perception of school climates. With the use of the critical, change, social learning, and restorative justice theoretical frameworks, this study provided valuable findings on the implementation of SW-PBIS in conjunction with SWRP as a combined hierarchical pyramid in the traditional MTSS three-tiered manner. The participants' experiences, shown in the data, informed school leaders, district leaders, and policy members on increasing academic achievement, teacher's perceptions on building relationships with students to decrease disruptive behaviors, and improving overall school climate.

PBIS emerged in the late 1980s after researchers merged two lines of work on behavioral support efforts and systematic change (Horner et al., 2017). A broad range of routine and individual strategies was used to assist educators in developing supports and interventions to meet academic, behavior, and socio-emotional needs of all students in an inclusive school setting (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012; Horner et al., 2010). This systematic model is a commitment to student achievement through positive interactions. Approximately 20 years since the first study, researchers are still improving on the methods and teachers continue to be introduced to the strategies used to develop SEL, academics, and behaviors. By combining SW-PBIS and SWRP, educators can utilize best practices that are designed to meet students' needs both academically (Fuchs et al., 2014) and behaviorally (Freeman et al., 2016). This study was not able to show that SW-PBIS implemented with SWRP had a stronger impact on academic achievement than SW-PBIS alone. However, the literature informs the field that SWRP increases academic achievement by keeping students physically in the classroom by decreasing suspensions and expulsions (Morris & Perry, 2016; Skiba et al., 2014). When students are at school actively engaged in the learning process, academic outcomes improve.



Recommendations are indicated to continue with the implementation of the decision-making frameworks of SW-PBIS in conjunction with SWRP. Results from this study suggest that both schools should implement data tracking systems to understand the value and impact of these programs. Data tracking programs will inform committee SW-PBIS and SWRP committee members on proactively identifying potential academic and behavior problems before they occur. By implementing data-informed interventions to guide committees', students will have quicker access to the necessary specialized groups for SEL, problem-solving skills, or reparation circles (Lane & Menzies, 2003; McIntosh, Chard, Boland, & Horner, 2006).

The literature shows that a combination of SW-PBIS and SWRP tier two and tier three interventions would produce effective interventions for students with DBD. The intervention tiers, when combined, include strategies to improve social skills instruction and the implementation of specialized groups. These are essential for impacting students with disruptive behavior disorders. Tier two strategies involve students focusing on social-emotional skills in specialized groups while the third-tier of SWRP focuses on prevention of disruptive behaviors with the inclusion of problem-solving and reparation circles. During the implementation of the third tier of SWRP students learn to build relationships through restorative conferencing, "functional-based behavior and support planning, wraparound supports, and culturally driven, person-centered planning, along with comprehensive school mental health supports" (Adamson, McKenna, & Mitchell, 2019, p. 63). These intensive programs should be run by educators that have completed the specified training needed to interact with students in specialized groups and restorative circles (Fuchs et al., 2014).

Data in the study showed that teachers perceived a lack of professional learning in classroom management, discipline policies, and MTSS programs when students with DBD in the

classroom. This lack of training prevents teachers from fully engaging with students with disruptive behaviors. Another finding in the data was that teachers felt unprepared to manage the demands of student behaviors in the classroom, resulting in the feeling of being unsupported by leadership and resentful of the inclusion of non-typical students in the general education environment. The district should reflect on providing high leveled, research-based MTSS training, which includes evidenced-based practices for effectively working with students with disruptive behaviors. This high-level professional learning can improve critical teaching skills, which will affect student achievement, increasing instruction related to research-based classroom management and school-wide programs. Increasing teacher training with a highly developed, collaborative professional learning model will increase implementation fidelity while continuing the utilization of the MTSS programs to create an overall positive impact on the school climate.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

The findings in this study have implications for the successful implementation of a combined framework of SW-PBIS and SWRP. However, there are limitations to this study that could be addressed in future research. This study looks at SW-PBIS and SWRP at the beginning of the implementation process. Further research would be interesting to conduct after the sites had fully implemented both programs. Having a larger sample size, in future studies, would increase the statistical significance of the findings. Future research should be conducted in the areas of teacher buy-in, teacher perceptions, and practical strategies after full implementation of SWRP. The comments made by teachers should be seen as evidence of concerns in the classroom setting and site culture. Further research could consist of including both qualitative and quantitative research into a meta-study. Furthermore, adding the perceptions of parents and other school stakeholders in the study could be added to give a detailed view of the success of

SW-PBIS combined with SWRP and how their attitudes affect the learning of students with disruptive behavior disorders.

### **Summary of the Study**

The study was conducted to examine teachers' perceptions of disruptive behaviors in the classroom, along with the effectiveness of evidence-based intervention methods. Mixed emotions existed about the implementation of SW-PBIS and SWRP, as demonstrated by the comments from teachers. Teachers perceived that they were ill-equipped to handle students with disruptive behavior disorders in the general education environment. Although federal law influenced the inclusion of students in the general environment, the need for acceptance and training will be an on-going process. The administration must provide support and guidance for teachers to build an active program to serve not only the social aspects of students with DBD by building a robust educational community for students to succeed in today's world.

There is a gap in the literature on the many facets of DBD and the attitudes of educators. This includes general education, special education teachers, and administrators. As this research has addressed, the impact of SW-PBIS and SWRP will be influenced by the attitude of the school leadership, whether it be at the district level or the building level. The leaderships' support, understanding of DBD, and knowledge of their teachers' can positively influence the success of the implementation of SW-PBIS combined with SWRP.

The findings of this study suggested that utilizing SWRP combined with SW-PBIS as a three-tiered hierarchy pyramid will improve school climate, stakeholder relationships, and increase academic achievement while developing social-emotional competencies.

The administration has the responsibility to provide teachers the time, training, and resources to make the SW-PBIS with SWRP implementation successful. Teachers must buy-in

to the implementation process and be consulted about undertaking an inclusive classroom that can adequately support students with DBD rather than just be assigned students with DBD. This is not a short-term intervention but a long-term commitment to excellence.

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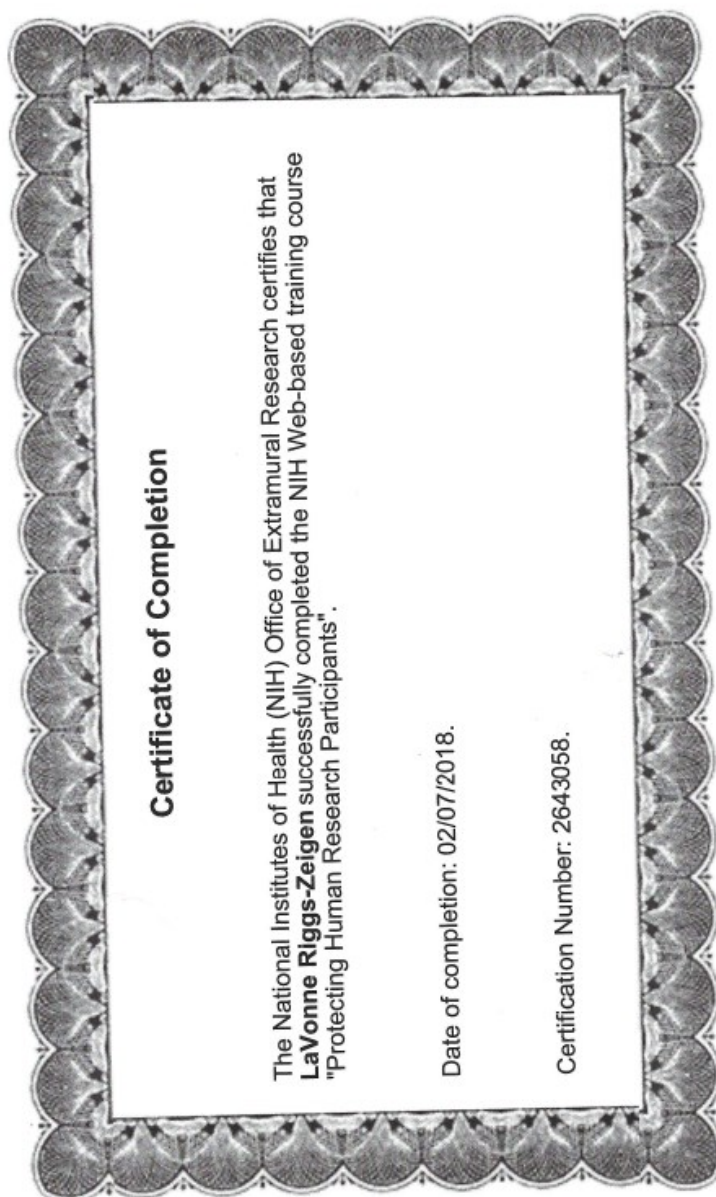
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**APPENDICES****APPENDIX A**

## National Institute of Health Certification



## APPENDIX B

### CUI International Review Board Approval



#### INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD DECISION

☐ Exempt Review 45 CFR 46.101    
 ☒ Expedited Review 45 CFR 46.110    
 ☐ Full Board Review 45 CFR 46

Review Date	10/31/18
IRB#	4677
Title of Project	Positive Behaviors Interventions and Supports with Restorative Practices: A Prescription for Change
Researcher/s	LaVonne Riggs-Zeigen

☒ **APPROVED**

Effective duration of IRB Approval: 12/01/18 to 12/1/2019

The research meets all requirements for IRB Human Subjects Protection. Best wishes on the study.

Recommendations (not necessary for approval): If you want to maintain interval level data, consider changing your numeric responses to open-ended responses and likert scale to 1=completely disagree, 3=neutral, 5=completely agree.

**For Exempt Approved, Please Note:** while your project is exempt from providing Informed Consent information to the IRB, your project must still obtain participants' informed consent.

**For Expedited and Full Board Approved, Please Note:**

a. The IRB's approval is only for the project protocol named above. Any changes are subject to review and approval by the IRB.

b. Any adverse events must be reported to the IRB.

c. An annual report or report upon completion is required for each project. If the project is to continue beyond the twelve month period, a request for continuation of approval should be made in writing. Any deviations from the approved protocol should be noted.

☐ **NEEDS REVISION AND RESUBMISSION**

☐ **NOT APPROVED**

Printed Name IRB Reviewer Eugene P. Kim, Ph.D.

Signature of IRB Reviewer Kim, Eugene

Digitally signed by Kim, Eugene  
Date: 2018.10.31 13:53:46 -0700

## APPENDIX C

### Stockton Application to Conduct Research Approval

#### Application to Conduct Research in the Stockton Unified School District

Fall 2018 Application, Deadline October 1, 2018



#### NONDISCLOSURE AGREEMENT

It is understood and agreed to that the Discloser and the Recipient would like to exchange certain information that may be considered confidential. To ensure the protection of such information and in consideration of the agreement to exchange said information, the parties LaVonne Riggs-Zeigen ("Individual"), who is an employee, consultant or student of Concordia University Irvine ("Organization"), and the Stockton Unified School District ("District") agree as follows for the purpose of conducting research (Name project here): **POSITIVE BEHAVIOR AND SUPPORTS WITH RESTORATIVE PRACTICES: A PRESCRIPTION FOR CHANGE**

**Duration-** This Agreement shall be in force for the duration of the research from date 3/2019 to 5/2019

This Agreement may be terminated without cause of any kind by the District provided written notice of the termination sixty (60) days prior to the effective date of the termination. Neither party shall be liable to the other party for any costs, losses or damages resulting from such termination.

**Confidential Information-** "Confidential Information" means written, graphic, electronic or pictorial information or material and the medium in which it is contained that the District, in its judgment, would reasonably consider as being confidential.

#### Individual's Obligation -

- A. Individual agrees that the Confidential Information is to be considered confidential and proprietary to the District and Individual shall hold the same confidence and shall not use the Confidential Information other than for the Purpose of Agreement.
- B. Confidential Information furnished in a tangible form shall not be duplicated by Individual except for the Purpose of Agreement. Individual shall return all Confidential Information received in tangible form, including all copies, reproductions or other media containing such Confidential Information upon completion of all work associated with the Purpose of Agreement or immediately upon request of District.
- C. Individual agrees to not reveal any individually identifiable information. Further, Individual agrees to not make any disclosure or publication whereby the data furnished by or related to any particular person, school, or the school district could be identified.
- D. Individual agrees to immediately notify District of any breach of this Agreement.
- E. Employees or consultants from Company designated above who are granted access to Confidential Information by Individual shall abide by the Obligations of the Individual.

**Governing Law and Equitable Relief -** This Agreement shall be governed and construed in accordance with the laws of the United States and the State of California and Individual consents to the exclusive jurisdiction of the state courts and U.S. federal courts located there for any dispute arising out of this Agreement. Individual agrees that in the event of any breach or threatened breach by Individual, District may obtain, in addition to any other legal remedies which may be available, such equitable relief as may be necessary to protect District against any such breach or threatened breach.

Individual

Signature

LaVonne Riggs-Zeigen

Printed name

Doctoral Student

Title

September 20, 2018

Date amended 2/12/19

SUSD Application for Research (rev. 2/13/2019)

Stockton Unified School District

Signature

Detanya Harris

Printed name

Research Specialist

Title

2/15/19

Date

## APPENDIX D

### Survey protocol (Word Version)

#### Participant Information

The study in which you are being asked to participate is designed to investigate the implementation of positive behavior intervention and supports and/or restorative practices as well as, teacher perspectives on students with disruptive behavior disorders in the classroom. This study is being conducted by LaVonne Riggs-Zeigen under the supervision of Dr. Belinda Karge, Dissertation Committee Chair, School of Education. This study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board at Concordia University Irvine.

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of my study is to evaluate the implementation process of positive behavior interventions and support and restorative practices programs. The findings will be used as part of my research study and could potentially lead to improvement towards institutional effectiveness.

**DESCRIPTION:** You are being asked to complete a survey regarding your experiences with positive behavior interventions and supports and/or restorative practices. The survey consists of demographic questions, Likert-scale type questions, and open-ended response questions.

**PARTICIPATION:** Participation in this study is completely voluntary and can be discontinued at any time.

**CONFIDENTIALITY OR ANONYMITY:** Confidentiality of the survey will be maintained to the degree permitted by the technology used. Specifically, no guarantees can be made regarding the interception of data sent via Internet by third parties. If you choose to participate in the interview process, your information will only be made available to the researcher and used for contact purposes only. Contact information will be removed once the interviews are conducted. Once the contact information is removed, the survey responses will be known to the researcher and his dissertation committee chair, Belinda Karge, Ed.D. Only aggregate data will be shared with dissertation committee. Participants will not be identified by name in the results. Data will be stored in Survey Monkey (password protected portal) and on the researcher's Dell laptop protected with a password. Any notes taken will be stored in a locked file cabinet. All data will be deleted from Survey Monkey and destroyed after data analysis has been completed in June 2019.

**DURATION:** The total time of participation is approximately 20 minutes to complete the survey.

**RISKS:** A potential risk perceived by a participant may be a feeling of uneasiness by faculty to give any negative information in the survey or focus group. While there is a risk, information shared should not impact employment or working conditions. The collection of data has been

approved by the University Provost and the Stockton Unified District Office. To reduce the feeling of uneasiness, the participants will not be identified by name. Participants will be assured of confidentiality. The data from the survey will be viewed in aggregate form only. The personal contact information will only be used for focus group invitations.

**BENEFITS:** This study will expand on the literature available on the implementation of positive behavior interventions and supports and restorative practices. It will give the district the ability to see what is being done well and what areas can be improved upon.

**VIDEO/AUDIO/PHOTOGRAPH:** No video or photographs will be taken.

**CONTACT:** For questions about the research and participant's rights or in the event of a research-related injury, please contact Dr. Belinda Karge, dissertation committee chair: (949)214-3333, [Belinda.karge@cui.edu](mailto:Belinda.karge@cui.edu).

**RESULTS:** The results will be published in the researcher's doctoral dissertation at Concordia University Irvine. The findings could potentially lead to improvement.

1. What is your current position at the school?
  
2. How many years have you been in your current position?
  
3. What is your gender?  
 Female  
 Male  
 Non-Identified
4. What is your age range?  
 18-29  
 30-39  
 40-49  
 50-59  
 60- above

5. What is your highest level of education?  
Some college classes  
Associates Degree  
Bachelors Degree  
Masters Degree  
Doctoral Degree  
Other
6. What is your definition of disruptive behavior disorders?
7. What strategy do you believe is most effective when dealing with students with disruptive behaviors?  
Send student to the office for discipline Classroom consequence  
Implement restorative practice strategies  
Take away class activity  
Implement positive behavior intervention and support strategies  
Remove student from the classroom  
Other (please specify)
8. Do you believe students with disruptive behaviors should be educated in the general education environment?  
Yes  
No
9. What behavioral management system do you use with students?
10. Describe what disruptive behavior looks like in the educational environment.

11. How prepared do you feel to handle students who demonstrate disruptive behaviors in the classroom?
- Completely unprepared
  - Somewhat unprepared
  - Neutral
  - Somewhat prepared
  - Completely prepared
12. How confident are you that your school does all it can to help students with disruptive behaviors?
- Extremely confident
  - Very confident
  - Somewhat confident
  - Not so confident
  - Not at all confident
13. How adequate do you feel your training in disruptive behaviors has been?
- No training
  - Very inadequate
  - Somewhat inadequate
  - Somewhat adequate
  - Very adequate
14. What do you need most from your school administration to best meet the academic needs of students with disruptive behavior disorders at your school?
15. What do you need most from your school administration to best meet the social-emotional needs of students with disruptive behavior disorders at your school?

16. How well informed of the behaviors on campus do you think your school administration is?
- Not at all informed
  - Not very well informed
  - Somewhat informed
  - Very well informed
  - Extremely informed
17. Estimate the number of in-service or workshop hours you have attended for student behaviors.
- 0 hours
  - 1-2 hours
  - 3-4 hours
  - 5-6 hours
  - 7+ hours
18. What are your perceptions/beliefs regarding the learning needs of students with disruptive behavior disorders?
19. Educators need more information and support on how to best address the needs of students with disruptive behavior disorders.
- Completely agree
  - Somewhat agree
  - Neutral
  - Somewhat disagree
  - Completely disagree
20. Survey Participation
- Yes
  - No



21. Positive behavior intervention supports strategies have not made a positive impact on student achievement.
- Completely disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- NeutralSomewhat agree
- Completely agree
22. I went through adequate training before my site began the implementation process of the positive behavior support and intervention program?
- Completely agree
- Somewhat agree
- NeutralSomewhat disagree
- Completely disagree
23. I use positive behavior interventions and support strategies exactly how I was trained.
- Yes
- No
24. What positive behavior intervention and support strategy that you use has been the most effective?
25. In my opinion, positive behavior interventions and supports is an effective strategy for students with disruptive behavior?
- Highly effective
- Somewhat effective
- Neutral
- Somewhat ineffective
- Ineffective

26. How many years have you implemented positive behavior interventions and supports?

27. I believe that Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports as the main intervention strategy increases student safety.

Yes

No

28. I believe that Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports as the main data-informed increases academic achievement.

Yes

No

29. What is your definition of restorative practices?

30. I use effective statements to help build relationships with students.

Yes

No

31. By using effective statements I can deal with conflict more effectively.

Completely disagree

Somewhat disagree

NeutralSomewhat agree

Completely agree

32. Prior to the implementation of restorative practices the school campus was an unsafe environment.
- Completely agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neutral
- Somewhat disagree
- Completely disagree
33. After the implementation of restorative practices, the school campus was an unsafe environment.
- Completely disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neutral
- Somewhat agree
- Completely agree
34. Restorative practices allows me to build trust with students that have disruptive behaviors.
- Completely disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neutral
- Somewhat agree
- Completely agree

35. I have seen an increase in students' academic achievement since implementing restorative practices.
- Completely agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neutral
- Somewhat disagree
- Completely disagree
36. Which do you believe is the most effective intervention program?
- Restorative practices
- Positive behavior interventions and supports
- Positive behavior interventions and supports combined with restorative practices
37. Do you use restorative practices on a daily basis?
- Yes
- No
38. I use restorative practices exactly how I was trained?
- Yes
- No

### Survey Consent

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports with Restorative Practices: A Prescription for Change

### Interview Participation Consent

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this study is to evaluate and understand the relational ecology of urban high schools that adopted school-wide positive behavior and supports and school-wide restorative practices and the academic achievement that occurred with students with emotional behavior disorders throughout the schools as a result of the implementation process. The findings will be used as part of my research study and could potentially lead to improvements in positive behavior intervention and supports and restorative practices implementation effectiveness.

### Terms of participation:

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to complete a brief survey and participate in an interview. As part of this research project, I will be recording the interview using audio only via Zoom. In any use of this audio recording, your name would not be identified. You may not directly benefit from this research; however, I hope that your participation in the study may help expand on the literature on positive behavior interventions and supports, restorative practices and disruptive behavior disorders. I believe there are no known risks associated with this study; however, a possible inconvenience may be the time it takes to complete the study.

Participation in research is entirely voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time.

If during the study, information becomes available that may relate to your willingness to continue to participate in the study, the researcher will provide you with such information.

Confidentiality will be protected to the extent provided by law. Although the interview will be audio recorded using Zoom, your responses will remain confidential and no names will be mentioned in the report. Research records will be labeled with a code. All identifiable information will be password protected. Any computers hosting such files will also have password protection to prevent access by unauthorized users. Only the researcher will have access to your identity and to information that can be associated to your identity.

If at any time you have questions regarding the research or your participation in it, please contact me at [lavonne.riggszeigen@eagles.cui.edu](mailto:lavonne.riggszeigen@eagles.cui.edu) or (949)422-3164.

**Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports with Restorative Practices: A Prescription for Change** The study in which you are being asked to participate is designed to investigate the implementation of positive behavior interventions and supports with restorative practices on students that demonstrate disruptive behaviors. This study is being conducted by LaVonne Riggs-Zeigen under the supervision of Dr. Belinda Karge, Dissertation Committee Chair, School of Education. This study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board at Concordia University Irvine and the Institutional Review Board at Stockton Unified School District.

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of my study is to evaluate and understand the relational ecology of urban high schools that adopted school-wide positive behavior and supports and school-wide restorative practices and the academic achievement that occurred with students with emotional behavior disorders throughout the schools as a result of the implementation process. The findings will be used as part of my research study and could potentially lead to improvements in positive behavior intervention and supports and restorative practices implementation effectiveness.

### 39. Interview Participation:

Yes, I would be willing to participate in an online interview.

No, I do not want to participate in any further research.

## 40. Contact Information

Name:

Email Address:

Phone Number:

## 41. Do you consent to the audio recording as indicated above?

Yes

No

Thank you!

Thank you for completing my survey. I will be contacting you soon to set up a time for the interview. Please click "next" below to submit the survey.

Best regards, LaVonne Riggs

Doctor of Education Candidate

## **APPENDIX E**

### **Interview Questions**

1. What are your feelings about building relationships with students?
2. How do you feel that these relationships impact students with disruptive behaviors?
3. The term Positive Behavior Intervention and Support has appeared in a lot of research, and I know that the site has been working in this area. How do you define Positive Behavior Interventions and Support?
4. What is your opinion about PBIS?
5. A large part of my research is on restorative practices in the school system. Your site has implemented RP. How would you define RP?
6. What is your opinion about RP?
7. How would you describe the impact of PBIS on students who demonstrate disruptive behaviors?
8. How would you describe the impact of RP on students who demonstrate disruptive behaviors?
9. Your site has implemented both PBIS and RP, how do you utilize the two strategies together?
10. What positive or negative impact have you seen on the campus culture since the implementation of PBIS?
11. What positive or negative impact have you seen on the campus culture since the implementation of RP?
12. Is there anything else you would like to add to this study that we have not discussed?