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THE CORRELATION BETWEEN PUNITIVE CONSEQUENCES AND
THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SCHOOL-WIDE POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT
IN AN URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT IN THE SOUTH

by

Esther Plank Bledsoe

A Dissertation

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Major: Instruction and Curriculum Leadership

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Abstract

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Although many schools have begun developing school wide discipline plans for how school personnel should respond to problem behaviors, the discipline plans tend to rely heavily upon punishment and the application of punitive consequences. An alternative approach, School-wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS) is a proactive intervention and support strategy aimed at decreasing problem behaviors by strengthening pro-social behavior. Key components of SWPBS are the use of systemic preventative tactics such as school-wide rules, teaching behavioral expectations to all students, and buy-in from at least 80% of the school staff.

It is important to understand the impact of punitive consequences a school uses on the success of SWPBS in reducing problem behavior in schools. The purpose of the current study was to examine the effectiveness of the SWPBS program in schools that continue to implement highly punitive consequences for problem behaviors. Seventeen schools from an urban southeastern community participated. The schools had been implementing SWPBS for one year, but also consistently used referrals to the office, referrals to in-school suspension, referrals to out of school suspensions, and expulsions as consequences for problem behaviors.

The current study found that the continued use of punitive consequences had no impact on the schools' implementing SWPBS in regard to decreasing problem behavior, but that a current commonly used school assessment instrument used for SWPBS was not able to detect the impact of the continued use of punitive consequences.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

A recent survey of middle and high school teachers found that 76 % of teachers reported that they would be better able to educate students if discipline problems were not so prevalent in their school and classrooms (Public Agenda, 2004). Additionally, over one-third of the teachers indicated that they had seriously considered quitting the teaching profession because student discipline and behavior was such a problem (Warren, Bohanon-Edmonson, Thurnbull, & Sailor, 2006). Furthermore, half of school children interviewed reported that they felt unsafe while at school (Lietman & Bines, 1993), and two-thirds of interviewed parents reported they do not believe their children were safe while at school or in the neighborhoods surrounding the school (Rose & Gallup, 1998). The problem behavior of students in schools is affecting not only attitudes and feelings of the teachers and students, but also the level of success of students in the classroom (i.e., test scores), (Luiselli, Putnam, Handler, & Feinberg, 2005).

Traditional approaches to inappropriate student behavior have emphasized the use of punitive procedures, often addressing problem behaviors with reactive strategies (Carr, Robinson, & Palumbo, 1990). For example, Brodinsky (1980) found that schools spend significantly less time implementing and planning preventative measures than reactive negative consequences. All too often, educators respond to problem behaviors by ignoring the errors, using warnings as consequences, removing the student from the classroom, and rapid escalation of a punitive consequence (including suspensions and expulsions). The focus on punitive consequences to address problem behaviors in schools (as opposed to preventative measures) can lead to the school environment

becoming overly negative, particularly for the students engaging in the misbehavior (Mayer, 1985). Additionally, students may show fewer displays of appropriate social behavior, lower academic achievement, more antisocial behavior, and more coercive interactions with adults (McEvoy & Walker, 2000; Patterson, Reid, & Dishion, 1992; Skiba & Peterson, 1999, 2000). By preventing, and, therefore reducing, the problem behavior of students may significantly improve teachers' efforts in teaching; thus, the teachers can be better able to help students become proficient in reading, writing, science, the arts, and other academic areas.

The SWPBS approach is a broad range of systemic and individualized strategies that work to achieve socially and academically important outcomes while preventing problem behaviors (Lewis & Sugai, 1999). At the center of SWPBS is the idea that the school will promote more positive outcomes (appropriate behavior) for the students through extensive systematic changes (Sugai et al., 1999) and a three-tiered model of intervention.

It is important to understand the impact of the punitive consequences a school uses on the success of positive behavior support and the reduction of the occurrences of problem behavior in schools. Teachers spend a large amount of time and energy implementing punitive consequences, which often results in the loss of instructional time and in students not learning how to behave appropriately. The SWPBS system of addressing problem behaviors in schools has been shown to be effective at teaching students appropriate behaviors and decreasing inappropriate behaviors. However, it is unclear if SWPBS works to decrease a school's reliance on punitive consequences. The purpose of the current study is to examine the effectiveness of the SWPBS program in

schools that continue to implement highly punitive consequences for problem behaviors, specifically office discipline referrals, referrals to in-school suspensions (ISS), referrals to out of school suspensions (OSS), and expulsions.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Discipline problems are a challenge that school administrators and classroom teachers face each and every day. Rose and Gallup (2006) found that discipline is consistently reported as one of the most significant issues in today's schools. Discipline referrals are increasing in number for all students, from elementary school through high school. In fact, 59% of disciplinary referrals in elementary school can be accounted for by 5% of the students; in high schools, 49% of disciplinary referrals can be accounted for by 5% of the students (Sprague, Sugai, Horner, & Walker, 2000). Teachers and administrators are referring students with increasingly problematic behaviors, which often result in punitive consequences such as detention, corporal punishment, in-school suspension (ISS), out of school suspension (OSS), and even expulsion.

Although many schools have begun developing discipline plans for how school personnel should consistently respond to problem behaviors, the discipline plans tend to rely heavily upon punishment and the application of punitive consequences for undesired behaviors (Colvin, Kame'enui, & Sugai, 1993). Reactive consequences (or punitive consequences) are those that are "strictly punitive in nature with no opportunity for teaching alternative and expected behaviors" (Fenning et al., 2008).

One study examining the disciplinary practices of an elementary school found that punishment was the only consequence for 90% of the behavior problems (Colvin et al., 1993). In another study, over 60% of schools listed suspension and expulsion in their discipline plans as a consequence for mild behaviors, such as truancy and class disruption (Fenning et al., 2008). When punitive and reactive consequences are used most often (as

opposed to preventative measures), the school environment becomes overly negative, particularly for the students engaging in the misbehavior (Mayer, 1985). Additionally, students may show fewer displays of appropriate social behavior, lower academic achievement, more antisocial behavior, and more coercive interactions with adults (McEvoy & Walker, 2000; Patterson et al., 1992; Skiba & Peterson, 1999, 2000).

Suspensions and Expulsions

Fenning et al. (2008) completed a survey in which they examined the codes of conduct used by administrators in making disciplinary decisions. The results indicated that the majority of the discipline plans examined focused on suspension and expulsion as the primary discipline decisions. In schools around the United States, suspension continues to be the most widely used form of discipline (Skiba & Knesting, 2002). Additionally, increasingly punitive consequences, such as ignoring the errors, warnings as consequences, removing the student from the classroom, suspension, and expulsion, were chosen as consequences for behaviors such as tardies, trancies, and class disruptions. These same consequences were issued for severe behaviors that included bullying, fighting, vandalism, drug possession, weapons possession, and gang behavior. Such consequences can lead to student behaviors such as destruction of property, truancy, and aggression (Sulzer-Azaroff & Mayer, 1977).

School exclusions (particularly suspensions and expulsions) put children at risk for a variety of negative social outcomes. Many students continue to struggle academically and socially upon their return to the classroom and/or school. Students who are excluded from the classroom and/or school have an increased likelihood to experience academic failure, and subsequently to drop out (Costenbader & Marskon, 1998). These

failures place them at a great risk for involvement in juvenile courts and corrections (Leone et al., 2003).

Unfortunately suspensions and expulsions have been shown to differentially exclude students across racial, ethnic, and disability groups, particularly African American students and those students with disabilities (Leone et al., 2003; Skiba & Peterson, 2000; Townsend, 2000). In one study examining racial differences in suspensions, expulsions, and office discipline referrals, Skiba and Knesting (2002) found that, when controlling for socioeconomic status, African American students receive more suspensions than White students. Furthermore, Zhang, Katsiyannis, and Herbst (2004) reported that African American and Native American students were suspended disproportionately more often than students from other racial subgroup. In another similar study, Rabrenovic and Levin (2003) found that although Hispanic and African American students comprised 56.7% of school suspensions and expulsions, despite the fact that they made up 19.4% of the schools' population.

Additionally, students with disabilities appear to be at greater risk for disciplinary procedures than their peers without disabilities (Cooley, 1995; Leone et al., 2003; Zhang et al., 2004). Leone and his colleagues (2000) reported that students with disabilities represent approximately 11% of all school-age children but nearly 20% of the students who are suspended. Zhang et al. (2004) confirmed those findings in a similar study when they reported that students with disabilities were disproportionately suspended. Results from Cooley's survey (1995) indicated even higher disproportionate rates of disciplinary suspensions for students with disabilities. He reported that students with disabilities comprised 24% of students suspended but only 11% of the student population, and

students with EBD comprised 11% of students suspended but only 1% of the student population.

As an alternative to out-of-school suspensions and expulsions, many schools have begun implementing the use of ISS. ISS is “a widely used approach to school discipline that relies on the practice of excluding a student from access to the classroom and peers as a consequence for student” (Peterson & Rismiller, 2005). According to Short (1988), although the problem student is excluded from the classroom, an educational experience should still be provided.

Unfortunately, ISS has not been effective in reducing the occurrences of problem behaviors in schools (Diem, 1988; Stage, 1997; Turpin & Hardin, 1997), and may even be providing a more reinforcing environment than the general education classroom from which the student was referred (Henderson & Friendland, 1996; Tobin, Sugai, & Colvin, 1996). Moreover, research has shown that teachers and administrators often use ISS as place to simply send those students who are displaying problem behaviors in the classroom, as opposed to using ISS as an effective consequence (Mizell, 1978; Opuni, 1996).

One such study examined the effectiveness of assigning students to ISS in decreasing the occurrences of truancy and poor attendance in two different schools. Mendez and Sanders (1981) found that ISS was not effective in improving the attendance rates to those students who had been assigned. The researchers also examined the graduation rates in students who had been frequently been assigned to ISS for problem behaviors, and those students who were never assigned ISS. The results showed that students who had never been assigned ISS graduated at a rate 40% than those who hadn't

been assigned to ISS.

In a similar study examining the effects of ISS on the rates of school attendance Diem (1988) found that repeatedly sending students to ISS did not improve their school attendance rates. Additionally, the results indicated that assigning students to ISS did not decrease the likelihood of their returning to ISS in the future. Anecdotally, Diem (1988) noted that the students and teachers were not presented with information regarding effective alternative behaviors or behavior modifications, and that there appeared to be a correlation between students who repeatedly attended ISS and those who dropped out of school.

School-wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS)

The SWPBS approach involves developing procedures and consequences that create opportunities for learning and maintaining appropriate behaviors, as well as utilizing efficient systems for identifying students at-risk for chronic behavior problems. *Positive behavior* includes any skills that “increase the likelihood of success and personal satisfaction in academic, work, social, recreational, community, and family settings” (Carr et al., 2002, p. 4). *Support* includes any method that teaches and/or strengthens the positive behaviors, while *systems* includes methods that increase the likelihood of the positive behavior occurring again in the future. SWPBS has been credited with improving school climate, academic achievement, attendance, learning time, staff satisfaction, and school morale (Carr et al., 2002). Carr et al. (2002) described the goal of SWPBS as “render[ing] problem behavior irrelevant, inefficient, and ineffective by helping an individual achieve his or her goals in a socially acceptable manner, thus reducing, or eliminating altogether, episodes of problem behavior” (p. 5).

SWPBS is not a packaged program, curriculum or intervention, but is intended to enhance an individual's quality of life and reduce problem behaviors (Carr et al., 2002). SWPBS systems are said to promote positive, safe, and cooperative student behavior through prevention (Carr et al., 2002).

SWPBS organizes interventions along a three-tiered prevention continuum. At the first or primary intervention tier, proactive practices are identified that will prevent the development of new cases of problem behaviors for the population as a whole. Prior to implementing a SWPBS program, a school must first form a leadership team that is comprised of a representative sample of the faculty and staff (i.e., administrator, grade level teachers, special education teacher, paraprofessional, etc.). The leadership team develops the three to five positively stated universal rules that will be posted in non-classroom locations throughout the school. The team then presents the rules to the faculty and staff to ensure at least 80% of the faculty and staff "buys in" to the chosen expectations. Consistency from class to class and adult to adult is very important for successful implementation of SWPBS, and support from all faculty and staff members helps to ensure that consistency occurs.

The team then creates a matrix of what the behavioral expectations look like, sound like, and feel like in all the non-classroom areas. This matrix will have approximately three positively stated examples for each area. These positively stated expectations are explicitly taught to all students (regardless of grade level or disability) using direct instruction techniques, and are used to guide the students' behavior by describing what behaviors are expected of them throughout the school building. Many

schools choose to use several days at the beginning of each year to take the students around the school to stations, where the skills are taught in specific locations and settings.

Furthermore, the leadership team develops a reinforcement program that will serve to reward those students who are actively following the rules and expectations. Every student should have access to the reinforcement, despite the number of ODRs or other referrals they receive (making it universal in nature). Specific praise is extremely important in increasing the reoccurrence of appropriate behavior. The reinforcement component serves to recognize those students who are behaving appropriately, as well as a “teachable moment” for those students who may need their behavior corrected in a proactive manner.

Primary prevention, through school-wide positive behavior support, decreases the problem behaviors of over 80% of all students in a given school (based on a criterion of the number of students who have one or fewer office discipline referrals) (Lewis & Sugai, 1999). But, obviously, no intervention (no matter how well planned and implemented) works for all students. For a variety of reasons, some students do not respond to the kinds of efforts that make up the primary intervention tier of SWPBS, just as some students do not respond to initial teaching of academic subjects.

At the secondary and tertiary levels of prevention, more focused interventions are implemented. Approximately 15% of students who are not responsive to the primary level of prevention will respond to secondary level interventions (by receiving two to five office discipline referrals), and approximately 5% of students will need interventions at the tertiary level of prevention due to their not responding to primary or secondary interventions (Horner et al., 2004; Marchant et al., 2009; Scott & Caron, 2005). Uniform

but more specialized behavior supports are added for those students whose behaviors are not sufficiently responsive to primary tier interventions, while highly specialized and individualized behavior supports are considered for those students whose behaviors are unresponsive to primary- and secondary-tier interventions (Crone & Horner, 2003; Sugai, Lewis-Palmer, & Hagen-Burke, 1999-2000).

The logic behind SWPBS rests on two key assumptions. The first assumption is that a central feature for promoting appropriate student behavior is a set of clearly stated expectations for that behavior. Many students are more likely to behave appropriately when the school personnel clearly define, actively teach, and consistently acknowledge and reward appropriate behavior. There is no expectation that these efforts will affect the smaller number of students with more intense patterns of problem behavior, but there is an expectation that a reduction in the overall rate of problem events will allow school personnel to focus resources on those students who need the most intense support (Lewis & Sugai, 1999).

A second assumption is that the behavioral climate of a school is influenced by peer interactions as much as, or more than, by adult-student interactions. If all students know the school's behavioral expectations and that all other children have been presented with the same information, they are more likely to prompt and support appropriate behavior in their peers. Establishing a positive student social culture involves providing students with (a) a common set of behavior and academic expectations, (b) a common language, and (c) a common set of expectations associated with the defined behavioral rules (Cushing, 2000).

Theory of SWPBS

SWPBS is based on the theories of behavior and applied behavior analysis. The proponents of SWPBS believe that behavior is learned, lawful, and able to be manipulated. When this theory is applied to observable behaviors, socially significant changes in behavior can be made. Sugai et al. (1999), one of the developers of the SWPBS program, stated:

PBS is not a new intervention package or a new theory of behavior, but an application of behaviorally based systems approach to enhance the capacity of schools, families and communities to design effective environments that improve the fit or link between research-validated practices and environments in which teaching and learning occur. (p.14)

As a result, the guiding theory behind SWPBS includes teaching all students through comprehensive and preventive approaches to discipline, rather than focusing only on the “problem students.”

Tenets of SWPBS

The SWPBS process emphasizes the creation of systems that support the adoption and implementation of evidence-based practices and procedures. Four elements guide the systematic implementation of SWPBS: outcomes, data, practices, and systems. The school selects long-term goals, or outcomes, that are supported by faculty and staff, and identifies practices that must be in place to reach those outcomes. These practices must also be implemented and embraced by faculty and staff, and, if possible, by outside influences, such as family and the surrounding community. The school should identify any support systems (funding, training, etc.) that are available to ensure the practices are

successful in guiding the school toward their behavior outcomes. Additionally, the school must collect and analyze data to monitor the efficacy of positive behavior support practices that have been put in place, as well as to determine any changes that need to be made to the program.

The four elements of positive behavior support systems are not solitary pieces of the puzzle; rather, they work together and interact with one another. For example, “data are used to define outcomes, evaluate progress toward achieving these outcomes, guide selection of practices, and specify the kinds of supports needed to implement these practices” (Sugai & Horner, 2006, p. 249).

Effectiveness of SWPBS

Research has shown that SWPBS can reduce the occurrences of problem behaviors, therefore increasing the amount of time students receive academic instruction in the classroom. In one study examining the effectiveness of SWPBS in an urban elementary school, Scott and Barrett (2004) found that when a student receives a referral for problem behavior he/she loses approximately 20 minutes of instructional time, while a student who is given a suspension loses one day of instructional time. Following the implementation of a SWPBS program, the researchers found that the annual rate of ODRs decreased by 562 occurrences and suspensions by 55 occurrences over a two-year time period. Additionally, the number of instructional days gained through the reduction of referrals was 29.5 days. The number of instructional days gained through the reduction of suspensions was 50 days, for a total of 79.5 days of instructional time gained through the implementation of SWPBS. In a similar study examining the implementation of SWPBS in an urban elementary school, Putnam, Handler, Ramirez-Platt, and O’Leary-Zonarich

(2003) reported gains of 169 instructional days following implementation.

SWPBS can also help to reduce the occurrences of more severe problem behaviors, including bullying. Bullying in schools has become an increasing problem across the United States, with a recent survey indicating that 30 % of students had been involved in bullying as either a victim or the bully. Because SWPBS works to increase the occurrence of appropriate behaviors, schools have addressed bullying problems through their SWPBS programs. Ross and Horner (2009) found over a 60% decrease in the problem bullying behavior following the implementation of the positive behavior support program in an elementary school. Additionally, the researchers found that students were significantly more like to respond appropriately to bullying behaviors of other students following the introduction of SWPBS (by reporting the problem bullying behavior to the school's staff members) than they were before SWPBS were implemented.

Effectiveness of SWPBS in Reducing the Use of Punitive Consequences

Several studies have examined the effects of SWPBS on reducing the use of punitive consequences in schools. For example, Luiselli, Putnam, and Sunderland (2002) investigated the effects of implementing the SWPBS model on student behavior in a suburban middle school. The school developed a lottery in which students could earn tangible reinforcements, such as homework passes, extra gym time, etc. Students could be eligible for the lottery based on criteria that included maintaining a specific GPA, receiving no detentions, and receiving passing grades in classes. Following implementation of SWPBS, the percentage of students who were eligible for the lottery increased from 40% of the student population to 55% of the student population.

Scott (2001) examined the effects of implementing the SWPBS model on the number of student referrals and suspensions in an inner city elementary school. At the school, a student who received an office discipline referral would sometimes be sent to the SAFE (Suspension And Failure Eliminated) room, depending on the severity of the problem behavior. The researchers found that, following implementation of the SWPBS model of responding to problem behavior, the total number of hours the students spent in the referral room decreased by 61% following implementation. Additionally, the school found a decrease of 65% in the number of days students were suspended.

Warren et al. (2006) investigated the effects of implementing SWPBS on disciplinary outcomes (office referrals, in-school conferences, time outs, in-school suspensions, short-term suspensions, and/or out-of-school suspensions) at an inner-city middle school. The researchers found that, following implementation, the total number of office discipline referrals decreased by 20%, time-outs decreased by 23%, in-school suspensions decreased by 5%, and short-term suspensions decreased by 57%. However, Warren et al. (2006) noted that the decreased in disciplinary outcomes may not have necessarily been indicative of increased positive behavior, but may have instead been due to teachers' perceptions or tolerance of student behavior at the school. Nevertheless, the implementation of SWPBS seemed to dramatically decrease the occurrences of problem behavior at the school.

Relationship between School SWPBS and Punitive Consequences

SWPBS subscribes to the idea that problem behavior is only a problem, to the "extent that it interferes with achieving positive results" (Carr et al., 2002, p. 7). The primary intervention strategy includes changing the environment in which problem

behavior occurs (to prevent future occurrences from taking place), rather than applying consequences directly to the problem behavior (Shores, Gunter, Denny, & Jack, 1993).

In the classroom, teachers typically use “clearly defined rules, expectations, and routines in the classroom setting, use positive systems to reinforce rule following, employ active supervision, and develop an environment structures in ways to encourage appropriate behaviors” (Tidwell, 2003, p. 20). Teachers can ensure that students will follow the rules and behavior as expected through the enforcement of those classroom rules and expectations and the use of proactive techniques for responding to rule violations (Lewis & Sugai, 1999).

When developing the SWPBS program, schools must determine the consequences the students will receive when an episode of problem behavior occurs. According to Anderson and Kincaid (2005), the consequences should be “systematic and consistent...and match the severity of the rule violation” (pp. 54-55); however, the schools determine just how punitive the consequences will be. Tidwell, Flannery, and Lewis-Palmer (2003) found that the most commonly used administrative decisions in response to problem behaviors are conferences with the student, parent contact, in-school suspension, out of school suspension, individualized instruction, and time in the principal’s office. Additionally, schools implement consequences such as loss of privileges, verbal reprimands, and detention (Anderson & Kincaid, 2005).

In an attempt to specify the parameters of SWPBS, Horner et al. (1990) asserted that it encompassed many distinctive elements, including multi-component interventions, antecedent manipulation, building environments with effective consequences, and minimizing the use of punishers. The proactive aspect of positive behavior support is

seen in the multiple-tiered strategies that are systematically implemented to prevent the recurrence of problem behavior. These strategies may include modifying the environment to increase likelihood of appropriate behavior occurring, increasing the value of reinforcers for appropriate behaviors (Horner, Day, & Day, 1997), teaching self-management skills (Gardner, Cole, Berry, & Nowinski, 1983; Koegel, Koegel, Hurly, & Frea, 1992), increasing opportunities for students making independent choices (Dunlap et al., 1993), and changing curriculum to teach appropriate behaviors (Dunlap, Kern-Dunlap, Clarke, & Robbins, 1991).

Treatment Integrity of SWPBS

In order to evaluate the level of implementation of SWPBS systems (and, therefore, the perceived effectiveness of the program) in a standardized manner, schools complete the School-wide Evaluation Tool (SET), the Effective Behavior Support Survey (EBS) or the Benchmarks of Quality (BOQ).

Effective Behavior Support Survey (EBS). The EBS Survey is used for initial, as well as annual, assessment of the SWPBS in schools. The EBS Survey is completed at the beginning and end of each school year by every staff member in the school, and is used to examine the status of four behavior support systems: school-wide discipline systems, non-classroom management systems, classroom management systems, and systems for individual students engaging in chronic problem behaviors. Staff members rank features of the SWPBS as “in place,” “partially in place,” or “not in place.” For those items that are not “in place,” staff members also rank the priority for improvement as “high,” “medium,” or “low.” The results of the EBS Survey are used to develop an action plan for implementing and sustaining an effective SWPBS in the school.

Currently, there is no research on the validity or reliability of the EBS survey.

Benchmarks of Quality (BOQ). The BOQ is used to identify areas of a schools' SWPBS program which are successful, and those that may need to be improved. The BOQ is completed at the end of the school year by members of the SWPBS planning team. The BOQ is comprised of 53 questions in which team members rank items as "in place," "needs improvement," or "not in place." Following completion of the BOQ, the leader of the SWPBS team leads the team members through a discussion of those areas that were identified as strengths and those which were identified as needing the most improvement. The results of the BOQ are used to assist the team in planning the SWPBS program for the next school year. Currently, there is no research on the validity or reliability of the BOQ.

School-wide Evaluation Tool (SET). The SET is intended only for assessing the primary prevention features of SWPBS. The SET does not offer information about secondary and tertiary prevention efforts in school. The SET demonstrates high test-retest reliability, is able to document changes in levels of implementation of SWPBS from year to year and location to location, produces a valid indicator of SWPBS as defined by Lewis and Sugai (1999) (which allows schools to evaluate their own SWPBS program), and can be administered with high interobserver reliability (Horner et al., 2004). The SET also offers promise for administrators and those involved in training and dissemination of SWPBS practices to systematically evaluate training and development efforts in order to establish consistency across all schools.

Completed by an outside observer in a survey format, the SET has been shown to be a reliable and valid measure of the schools' primary prevention strategies of SWPBS

(Horner et al., 2004). The SET examines the seven key features of SWPBS in 28 items: (1) school-wide behavioral expectations are defined, (2) these expectations are taught to all children in the school, (3) rewards are provided for following the expectations, (4) a consistently implemented continuum of consequences for problem behavior is put in place, (5) problem behavior patterns are monitored and the information is used for ongoing decision-making, (6) an administrator actively supports and is involved in the effort, and (7) the school district provides support to the school in the form of functional policies, staff training opportunities, and data collection options (Horner et al., 2004).

The relationships between SET scores and the reductions in discipline referrals, including office discipline referrals, referrals to ISS, referrals to OSS, and expulsions, have not been examined in the literature. As a result, schools are not able to fully evaluate their level of implementation of SWPBS. Horner et al. (2004) suggest that a school is effectively implementing the primary prevention practices of SWPBS when the SET total is at least 80%. Horner et al. (2004) purport that change in student behavior is unlikely before a school teaches the school-wide expectations and that stability of the effect is unlikely without the constellation of practices in the remainder of the SET. It is important to understand the impact of these punitive consequences on the success of positive behavior support in schools.

Office Discipline Referrals

A common source of information across schools is office discipline referral data (ODR). Office discipline referrals are a readily available source of information regarding student problem behaviors and describe the complex social nature of discipline problems involving administrators, teachers, and students (Tobin et al., 1996). These data can be

useful in making a range of decisions such as needs assessment, program planning, staff development, and program evaluation (Tobin et al., 1996).

The ODR is typically a report that indicates information about the rule infraction or problem behavior that occurred. The information should include the setting, time, teacher or staff member who observed the problem behavior, and the consequence that was given for the occurrence of problem behavior (Sprague et al., 2000). Ideally, ODRs should be used by schools to monitor the occurrence of problem behaviors.

The information should be entered into a school-wide or system-wide monitoring program that allows administrators to track when and where the problem behaviors occur, and which students are engaging in problem behaviors most often. Schools can also track ODRs by behaviors, including those which occur most frequently, those behaviors that are most common by grade level, or those behaviors that are most common to occur in the presence of specific teachers. Schools may choose to examine the patterns of behavior in order to develop a more effective school-wide discipline plan.

Some researchers, however, caution the effects of using office discipline referral information. For example, schools and/or teachers may define behaviors differently, therefore making consistent use of office discipline referrals difficult (Sprague et al., 2000). Additionally, implicit understandings at the building or district level that encourage or discourage certain types of office referrals may exist (e.g., unclear definitions of problem behavior, disagreement about office vs. staff managed types of behavior). However, Irvin, Tobin, Sprague, Sugai, and Vincent (2009) found that ODR data is a valid measure of the effects of school-wide behavior interventions as well as the school-wide behavioral climate. As a result, office discipline referrals can be

successfully used to provide a description and effective measure of school-wide behavior discipline systems (Skiba, Peterson, & Williams, 1997; Sugai et al., 1999).

Purpose of Study

It is important to understand the impact of the punitive consequences a school uses on the success of SWPBS in schools. Furthermore, it is important to determine if implementing a SWPBS program in schools helps to reduce the occurrences of ODRs, ISS referrals, OSS referrals, and/expulsions. The purpose of the current study was to examine the effectiveness of the SWPBS program in schools that continue to implement highly punitive consequences for problem behaviors.

Research Questions

The current study examined the correlation between the number of punitive consequences implemented in schools and the implementation of the SWPBS program, as measured by the SET. The study will answer the following research questions:

(1) Is there a correspondence between the number of punitive consequences implemented by the school (in-school suspensions, out of school suspensions, expulsions, and number of office discipline referrals) and the level of implementation of SWPBS (measured by the school's score on the School-wide Evaluation Tool [SET])?

(2) Is there a statistically significant difference in the number of punitive consequences (office discipline referrals, in-school suspensions, out of school suspensions, and expulsions) in the school prior to and following the implementation of SWPBS?

Hypotheses

1. There will be a statistically significant negative correlation between the number of punitive consequences implemented by the school (ISS, OSS, expulsions, ODRs) and the schools' scores on the SET. In other words, the more punitive consequences a school implements, the lower the school's score on the SET.

2. The implementation of SWPBS in a school will significantly reduce the number of punitive consequences in the school, when controlling for other variables that would also work to reduce punitive consequences.

Chapter 3

Method

Participants and Setting

Seventeen schools (14 elementary schools, 2 middle schools, and 1 high school) from one school district in an urban southeastern city in the United States participated in the study. The schools were receiving assistance with implementing SWPBS through a state grant-funded project that seeks to build capacities within schools and teams of individuals to better implement best and most promising practices in inclusive education and SWPBS. Assistance includes trained consultants attending discipline team meetings, conducting positive behavior support assessments, and providing professional development training on positive behavior support. The Tennessee State Report Card data for each participating school was collected (Tennessee Department of Education, 2009), including percentage of students from various ethnic backgrounds, and the percentage of economically disadvantaged students. Participating schools provided enrollment numbers for the 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 school years. Table 1 displays each school's enrollment and Tennessee State Report Card data. Table 2 displays each school's discipline data.

Table 1

2008-2009 School Year Tennessee State Report Card Data and 2009-2010 School Year

Enrollment Data for Participating Schools

School	2008-2009 Enrollment	2009-2010 Enrollment	Percentage of economically disadvantaged students	Percentage of white students	Percentage of non-white students
1	461	435	95.0	.80	99.2
2	669	692	95.0	.70	99.3
3	648	655	95.0	0	100.0
4	407	407	95.0	6.10	93.9
5	320	342	95	.60	99.4
6	632	606	94.7	.30	99.3
7	531	516	87.7	5.20	94.8
8	447	433	93.4	0	100.0
9	350	446	95	.70	99.3
10	421	409	94.1	00	100.0
11	247	277	95.0	0	100.0
12	640	655	69.8	6.50	93.5
13	1017	1042	95.0	1.10	98.9
14	714	646	95.0	0.10	99.9
15	503	577	95.0	33.10	66.9
16	544	649	93.1	3.30	96.7
17	383	595	90.2	.20	99.8

Table 2

Discipline Data (Number of ODRs per Student, Number of ISS Referrals per Student, Number of OSS Referrals per Student, and Number of Expulsions per Student) for Participating Schools for 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 School Years

School	2008-2009				2009-2010			
	Number of ODRs per student	Number of OSS referrals per student	Number of ISS referrals per student	Number of Expulsions per student	Number of ODRs per student	Number of OSS referrals per student	Number of ISS referrals per student	Number of Expulsions per student
1	2.84	.25	.75	.09	1.44	.1	.6	.06
2	.41	.35	.17	.01	.72	.23	.35	.01
3	.75	.13	.22	.01	.98	.22	.13	.01
4	.72	.33	.16	.01	.84	.19	.33	.01
5	.32	.08	.23	.02	.7	.33	.08	.02
6	.6	.18	.14	0	.56	.24	.18	0
7	.58	.21	.21	.02	.67	.31	.21	.02
8	.48	.56	.14	.01	.89	.16	.56	.01
9	.76	.18	.14	.02	.63	.22	.18	.02
10	.91	.3	.2	0	.77	.25	.3	0
11	.9	.22	.34	.02	1.82	.19	.22	.02
12	.76	.16	.11	0	.43	.25	.16	0
13	.42	.19	.08	0	.44	.19	.19	0
14	2.84	.25	.75	.09	2.76	.27	.25	.09
15	.23	.12	.09	.02	.35	.26	.12	.02
16	.39	.14	.32	.01	.63	.51	.14	.01
17	.58	.44	.6	.1	1.68	.36	.44	.1

Participant Inclusion Criteria

In order to be included in the study, the schools were required to be implementing SWPBS with fidelity (receiving a score of at least 80% on the School-wide Evaluation Tool; Horner et al. 2004), and agreed to provide discipline data (number of ODRs, OSS, ISS, and expulsions for 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 school year) and enrollment figures to the grant-funded project providing SWPBS assistance.

Additionally, each of the schools participating in the study attended an initial training on SWPBS that was conducted by the school district and employees of the grant-funded project that provided assistance throughout the school year. Training provided information and examples regarding developing school rules and expectations, developing reinforcement systems, defining office discipline referral forms, and data collection and interpretation. Portion of the training was allocated to allow school personnel to begin developing elements of their SWPBS plan with immediate guidance and feedback from the school district and grant employees.

Materials

The materials for the present study included the SET Assessment and school discipline data (i.e., number of office discipline referrals, in-school suspensions, out of school suspensions, and expulsions).

SET Assessment. Trained observers/data collectors from the grant-funded project providing assistance with SWPBS gathered SET data from schools. The observers spent 1 to 2 hours in the school conducting interviews with the administrators, teachers, staff members, and students; reviewing permanent products such as school policies, training curricula, and meeting minutes; and examining data systems currently in use. For

example, to determine if behavioral expectations had been defined, observers examined written behavioral policies and observed the extent to which defined behavioral expectations are displayed in public locations in the school. To determine how well behavioral expectations had been taught, the observers asked at least 15 students and 10 staff members to state the behavior expectations in their school. To determine the extent to which problem behavior patterns were monitored, the observers examined (a) currently used behavior-related data reports, (b) the process by which these data have been collected and communicated to school teams, and (c) meeting minutes documenting any previous use of the data for active decision-making.

Punitive consequences. The punitive consequences that were measured in the current study include ODRs, referrals to ISS, referrals to OSS, and expulsions. An ODR was defined as a record of a problem behavior that indicates information about the rule infraction or problem behavior that occurred, including the setting, time, teacher or staff member who observed the problem behavior, and the consequence that was given for the occurrence of problem behavior. Suspensions (ISS and OSS) and expulsions were defined as those consequences for problem behaviors in which a student was excluded from the classroom for a period of one to three days, either to another classroom (ISS) or to his or her house (OSS). An expulsion was defined as a consequence for a problem behavior in which the student was permanently removed from the school.

Variables. The variables in the current study included the level of implementation of positive behavior support in the school (measured by the score on the School-wide Evaluation Tool), and the number of punitive consequences present in the school (measured by the number of office discipline referrals, number of in-school

suspensions, number of out of school suspensions, and number of expulsions).

Research Design

To address the first research question, a Pearson R correlation was used to compare the schools' scores of the SET Assessment and the mean number of each punitive consequence (ODRs, ISS, OSS, and expulsions) for the 2009-2010 school year.

It is appropriate to use a Pearson R correlation when attempting to determine the extent to which two or more variables are related or are proportional to each other.

To address the second research question, a t-test for dependent samples was used to compare the mean number office discipline referrals, referrals to OSS, referrals to ISS, and expulsions prior to and following the implementation of SWPBS in the schools (a pre and post test comparison). It is appropriate to use a t-test for dependent samples whenever assessing whether the means of two groups (based on the same sample) that have been tested before and after a treatment are statistically different from each other (Jaeger, 1993).

Observation, Recording, and Measurement

SET Assessment. The SET Assessment was administered to the schools in October 2009 by trained consultants from the grant-funded project. Each evaluation began with a brief interview of the school's administrator, during which the school's rules, reinforcement system, staff training methods, and team leaders were all identified. Following the administrator interview, a grant project consultant toured the school, interviewing 10 teachers and 15 students, who were chosen by convenience as the interviewer toured the school. The grant project consultants completing the SET Assessment were blind to discipline data, including the number of ODRs, number of

referrals to ISS, number of referrals to OSS, and number of expulsions while interviewing the administrator, staff members, and the students.

Each teacher who was interviewed was asked approximately seven questions, including identifying the school rules, whether or not they had given students reinforcement for good behavior in the past two months, and which student behaviors would be directly referred to the principal. Each student who was interviewed was asked two questions: what are the school rules, and have you received any rewards for good behavior in the past two months? A list of teacher, administrator, and student questions is included in Appendix A. A summary of responses was recorded in vivo, as the interviewers encountered the teachers and students in the hallways, classrooms, and other areas of the school.

Scoring for the SET involved assigning a value of 0, 1, or 2 (0 = not implemented, 1 = partially implemented, 2 = fully implemented) for each of the 28 items. Subscale summary scores (percentage of possible points for each of the seven key features) were produced, and a total summary score as the mean of the seven subscale scores was computed. Table 3 displays each participating school's total summary SET Scores.

Table 3

SET Scores for Participating Schools; SET Assessment Completed in October 2009

School	SET Score
1	97
2	94
3	87
4	100
5	89
6	86
7	83
8	82
9	85
10	85
11	97
12	95
13	87
14	91
15	89
16	89
17	87

ODRs, ISS, OSS, expulsions. ODR, ISS, OSS, and expulsion data was collected from the participating schools' district office as a part of end of the year reports that are due to the state funded grant project. A count of each discipline data per student was calculated by dividing the overall number of ODR, ISS, OSS, and expulsions (respectively) by the number of students enrolled for the school year. The participating school district utilizes a computer database in order to collect the discipline data by

school and by student.

Reliability

Interobserver reliability was collected for calculating SET scores for 33% of the participating schools. To determine interobserver reliability for the SET scores, a second grant project consultant independently calculated a school's score, based on the observation sheet that had been completed in October. Interobserver reliability for calculating SET scores was 100%.

Chapter 4

Results

Relationship Between SET Score and Number of Punitive Consequences

Schools' scores on the SET and the number of office discipline referrals, suspensions, and expulsions were compared using a Pearson R correlation. Results indicate there was not a statistically significant relationship between the schools' SET scores and the number of punitive consequences. Specifically, results indicate there was not a statistically significant relationship between the schools' SET scores and the number of ODRs per student for the 2009-2010 school year, $r = .26, p = .16$; results indicate there was not a statistically significant relationship between the schools' SET scores and the number of OSS referrals per student for the 2009-2010 school year, $r = -.26, p = .15$; results indicate there was not a statistically significant relationship between the schools' SET scores and the number of ISS referrals per student for the 2009-2010 school year, $r = .13, p = .31$; results indicate there was not a statistically significant relationship between the schools' SET scores and the number of expulsions per student for the 2009-2010 school year, $r = .099, p = .35$. Results from the Pearson R correlation are displayed in Table 4.

Table 4

Results of Pearson R Correlation Comparing SET Scores of Participating Schools with Discipline Data (Number of ODRs per Student, Number of OSS Referrals per Student, Number of ISS Referrals per Student, Number of Expulsions per Student)

	SET	ODR	OSS	ISS	Expulsions
SET $r =$	1.00	.26	-.26	.13	.099
$p =$.16	.15	.31	.35

*. Correlation is significant at the .05 level.

Number of Punitive Consequences Prior to/following Implementation of SWPBS

Dependent t-tests were completed comparing the mean number of office discipline referrals per student, mean number of in-school suspensions per student, mean number of out of school suspensions per student, and mean number of expulsions per student in the participating schools prior to and following the implementation of SWPBS. Results indicate that there was not a statistically significant difference in the mean number of punitive consequences in participating schools' from the 2008-2009 school year to the 2009-2010 school year. The mean number of ODRs per student in the schools' for the 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 school years was .85 and .96 ODRs per student, respectively. The mean number of referrals to OSS per student in the schools for the 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 school years was .24 and .25 referrals to OSS per student, respectively. The mean number of referrals to ISS per student in the schools for the 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 school years was .27 and .26 referrals to ISS per student, respectively. The mean number of expulsions per student in the schools for the 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 school years was .03 and .02 expulsions per student, respectively.

Results from the dependent t-test analysis are displayed in Table 5.

Table 5

Results of Dependent t-test Comparing Mean Number of Punitive Consequences per Student Prior to and Following Implementation of SWPBS in Participating Schools

Pair	t =	Significance	Mean =	SD =
ODRs	-.83	.42		
2008-2009			.85	.77
2009-2010			.96	.63
OSS	-.27	.79		
2008-2009			.24	.12
2009-2010			.25	.091
ISS	.26	.80		
2008-2009			.27	.22
2009-2010			.26	.15
Expulsions	1.00	.33		
2008-2009			.025	.033
2009-2010			.024	.030

*. t-value is significant at the .05 level.

Chapter 5

Discussion

In an attempt to determine if a school can implement SWPBS with fidelity while continuing to use punitive consequences in response to problem behaviors, the current study examined the correlation between the number of punitive consequences implemented in schools and the effectiveness of the implementation of the SWPBS program, as measured by the SET.

The hypothesis for the first research question regarding a negative correlation between the number of punitive consequences and the level of implementation of SWPBS was not confirmed. The average SET score for participating schools was 89.6 and ranged from 82 to 100, which indicates that the schools were implementing positive behavior support with fidelity, but with a low level of acceptable fidelity (Horner et al., 2004). Furthermore, the results of the present study indicate that there was not a significant relationship between the number of punitive consequences present in the participating schools and their level of implementation of SWPBS. Thus, based on the current study, it appears that the implementation of SWPBS did not significantly decrease the use of punitive consequences in the schools, however, the schools were able to achieve acceptable SET scores of at least 80%.

The hypothesis for the second research question related to a decrease in the number of punitive consequences administered following implementation of SWPBS was not confirmed. The number of ODRs, referrals to ISS, referrals to OSS, and expulsions was not significantly different from prior to implementation of SWPBS (2008-2009 school year) to after implementation of SWPBS (2009-2010 school year). Thus, based

on the current study, the implementation of a SWPBS did not significantly decrease the number or use of punitive consequences in the participating schools.

In regard to the present study, the term *school-wide positive behavior support* was coined to refer to non-aversive behavior management procedures and was developed “as an alternative to the use of more extreme aversive events” (Horner et al., 1990, p. 126). Sugai and Horner (2008) rationalize the adoption of a school-wide preventative approach for problem behaviors to reduce punishment oriented approaches; however, that does appear to be the case in many instances in the schools participating in this study. Although a school can still be considered to be successful at implementing SWPBS regardless of the consequences it chooses to implement, it is important to note that a high number of punitive consequences can lead to a negative school environment. Schools in the present study implemented such punitive consequences as suspension and expulsion, in-school suspension, and parent conferences. Unfortunately, when punitive consequences are used on a wide variety of problem behaviors (or all problem behaviors) over extensive periods of time, those consequences become much less effective and the problem behaviors do not change. Although the negative responses used by the schools in the present study may work to stop the problem behavior from occurring for a short period of time, SWPBS views discipline as another aspect of teaching students. The goal of SWPBS is to reduce problem behavior in the schools by implementing more positive interventions. Is a school really implementing SWPBS with fidelity if punitive consequences are still being used?

The SET was not able to identify and evaluate the high number of punitive consequences that the schools were implementing. This may be due to the fact that the

SET did not accurately evaluate how well the schools are implementing positive behavior support. It is possible that certain pieces of SWPBS are in place (e.g., rules are in place and posted in the school, the discipline team looks at discipline data during meetings, teachers are able to identify which behaviors should be referred to the office), while some of the features, such as a having a school-wide reinforcement system established or teaching the rules and expectations to students, are not in place. If a school reaches 80% on the SET, then they are considered as implementing SWPBS with fidelity. However, it is possible that a school may have one or two features not in place that could have an impact on the success of positive behavior support and still score an 80% on the SET. For instance, a school could receive a low score in an important aspect of school-wide positive behavior support, such as teaching behavior expectations, and still have adequate fidelity of implementation as measured by the SET.

Therefore, it would be beneficial for changes to be made to the SET that would allow those implementing SWPBS in schools to evaluate and monitor the level of punitive consequences being implemented. More specifically, when completing the SET, the evaluator asks the administrator if ODRs are collected, who looks at the ODR data, and what problem behaviors the administrator expects the teachers to refer directly to the office. However, there are no questions regarding what specific consequences are implemented for major and minor behaviors or how the consequences are handed out (by administrators or teachers).

Current research has shown the SWPBS is successful in reducing the number of problem behaviors that occur in schools. However, in most of the schools examined in the literature, SWPBS has been implemented by employees of large grant-funded projects

that are able to provide day-to-day on-site training and assistance. For example, Bradshaw, Reinke, Brown, Bevans, and Leaf (2008) examined the effectiveness of SWPBS in reducing the number of occurrences of problem behaviors in 21 schools in which the team members had been formally trained in SWPBS compared to 16 schools where the team hadn't received formal training on SWPBS. The formal training the 21 schools received was completed by the developers of SWPBS (Rob Horner and George Sugai). Additionally, the 21 schools received regular on-site technical assistance from members of the state leadership team. It is possible that much of the success of the SWPBS implementation in the 21 schools was a result of the being trained by the developers of SWPBS and their collaborators, as well as the regular technical assistance that was provided. All of the schools in the current study refused the on-site technical assistance of the grant-funded project.

Limitations

The schools who participated in the current study attended an initial training on SWPBS by self-nomination. The school district arranged for the training to be provided by the grant project, and schools were able to choose whether or not they would commit to implementing SWPBS. As a result of the self-nomination, it is possible that some of the participating schools had characteristics that made them more successful at establishing a team, developing rules and expectations, and/or teaching the rules and expectations to the students than those schools who chose not to attend the initial training. Conversely, it is possible that the schools who did not attend the initial training, had they been included in the research study, may have impacted the results. For example, the schools who did not attend the initial training have felt they did not need to

due to the fact that they were already implementing SWPBS with fidelity.

Another limitation of the current study includes the possibility of the SET introducing a testing bias to the results. When trained observers/interviewers complete the SET Assessment in a school, they complete interviews with 10 teachers and 15 students. However, personal testing bias on the part of the person completing the assessment may become introduced. It is possible that one person completing the assessment may knock on closed doors and speak with teachers in their classrooms, while another person completing the SET may only interview those teachers who are walking in the hallway or sitting in the teachers' lounge. Consequently, the observer/interviewer may not gain an accurate measurement of the knowledge of staff and students regarding SWPBS in their school.

Finally, there is a possibility that the schools' participating in the study may have implemented interventions other than SWPBS from the 2008-2009 school year to the 2009-2010 school year that may have impacted the results of the study. However, the schools did not report the use of any other interventions. Additionally, the population of the schools did not change more than 10% from one school year to the next, meaning the population remained stable across time.

The results of this study should be considered cautiously because of the small number of participants in the study. The results may not be sustainable and stable across groups of larger size. Nonetheless, these results contribute to the literature on SWPBS by providing an initial evaluation of the relationship between the fidelity of school-wide positive behavior support and the punitive consequences in schools.

Implications for Practice

It would be beneficial for schools implementing SWPBS to have more guidance on the type of punitive consequences that should be implemented, rather than simply continuing with the consequences that have always been used. Guidance might include training school personnel on the importance of teaching functional replacement behaviors to students, encouraging SWPBS team members to visit and consult with the SWPBS of a school who has been implementing SWPBS with fidelity for several years, and SWPBS team members attending national conferences on the implementation of SWPBS in schools across the country. The goal of SWPBS is to change the focus of schools from reactive procedures to preventative procedures. To simply add the teaching and reinforcement components of SWPBS to a school's procedures, while keeping the punitive consequences the same, may not allow the school to fully succeed at reducing the occurrence of problem behaviors. Moreover, it seems disingenuous to call a school-wide behavior management system *positive* when extensive and sometimes even draconian punitive procedures are left in place as the only means available to school personnel when rule violations happen. For example, the schools in this study often and routinely suspended students for multiple infractions of dress code policy (i.e., students had to wear a standard white polo or oxford shirt and dark pants, wearing anything else was considered an infraction). In addition, in some cases punitive measures were delivered arbitrarily without reference to the code of conduct.

Schools in the current study appear to have implemented SWPBS with fidelity based on their SET scores, but it is possible that they are simply teaching rules to students, rather than fully implementing every piece of the SWPBS system. Although the

schools may develop a reinforcement system in hopes of rewarding students for engaging in appropriate behavior, all too often the reinforcement system is instead used as a bribe. For example, teachers may say things such as, “If you are quiet, then I will give you a token,” which reduces the effectiveness of the reinforcement. Additionally, staff members may implement a token economy system (in which the student loses an earned token) or refuse to reinforce a “bad” student when he or she behaves appropriately. When initial training on implementing SWPBS takes place at a school, staff members need to be explicitly trained on the importance of consistent and effective reinforcement systems. This may include training on behavior, reinforcement, and punishment so that layman definitions and conceptions can be dismissed. Furthermore, schools should look at the data regarding the students who are receiving reinforcement to ensure that all students are given the same opportunities, rather than only the “good” students.

Future Research

Future research should examine the impact to the SET’s validity and reliability by adding questions that address the type of consequences a school has chosen to implement when problem behaviors occur. Additionally, more schools should be evaluated in regards to their SET scores and the number and type of punitive consequences present in their discipline plan or codes of conduct, as well as the extent to which they follow the SWPBS guidelines.

Even more, codes of conduct should be examined to determine the extent to which positive consequences are included. Future research should examine the effectiveness of using punitive consequences at reducing the occurrence of problem behaviors in schools. Specifically, have certain consequences been more effective at

reducing problem behaviors than others? It may also be beneficial to determine if particular reinforcement programs are more beneficial (result in the use of fewer punitive consequences) than others.

Although the schools in current study did self-nominate in terms of their participation in the initial training, the superintendent directed all schools in the district to implement an SWPBS program. Future research should examine the effectiveness of SWPBS programs in reducing problem behaviors in schools in which the initiative is directed to occur by the superintendent or school board as compared to those schools that initiate the implementation of the program without a directive.

Finally, future research should examine the effectiveness of SWPBS in urban settings. The current study was completed in schools that are heavily populated by minority students, some with a large majority of students learning English as a second language. The variables that are present in urban schools (i.e., low SES, high number of minority students, high crime areas, etc.) may have an impact not only on the implementation of SWPBS, but also the types of consequences that are used when problem behaviors occur. For example, administrators in urban schools may choose to implement more highly punitive consequences than those administrators in more rural schools.

Conclusion

Traditional approaches to student behavior have emphasized the use of punitive procedures, often addressing problem behaviors with reactive strategies (Carr et al., 1990). The SWPBS approach, on the other hand, is a broad range of systemic and individualized strategies that work to achieve important social and academic outcomes

while preventing problem behaviors from occurring (Lewis & Sugai, 1999). Simply adding elements of SWPBS to a school's discipline program while continuing to rely heavily on suspensions and expulsions as consequences does not necessarily lead to effective implementation of SWPBS. It is important for a school to ensure that, not only are they implementing SWPBS with fidelity, but that they are also addressing the use of punitive and negative consequences.

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Appendix A

School-wide Evaluation Tool

(SET) **Version 2.1**

Data Collection Protocol

- ✓ Conducted annually.
- ✓ Conducted before school-wide positive behavior support interventions begin.
- ✓ Conducted 6-12 weeks after school-wide positive behavior support interventions are implemented.

School-wide Evaluation Tool (SET)

Overview

Purpose of the SET

The School-wide Evaluation Tool (SET) is designed to assess and evaluate the critical features of school-wide effective behavior support across each academic school year. The SET results are used to:

1. assess features that are in place,
2. determine annual goals for school-wide effective behavior support,
3. evaluate on-going efforts toward school-wide behavior support,
4. design and revise procedures as needed, and
5. compare efforts toward school-wide effective behavior support from year to year.

Information necessary for this assessment tool is gathered through multiple sources including review of permanent products, observations, and staff (minimum of 10) and student (minimum of 15) interviews or surveys. There are multiple steps for gathering all of the necessary information. The first step is to identify someone at the school as the contact person. This person will be asked to collect each of the available products listed below and to identify a time for the SET data collector to preview the products and set up observations and interview/survey opportunities. Once the process for collecting the necessary data is established, reviewing the data and scoring the SET averages takes two to three hours.

Products to Collect

1. _____ Discipline handbook
2. _____ School improvement plan goals
3. _____ Annual Action Plan for meeting school-wide behavior support goals
4. _____ Social skills instructional materials/ implementation time line
5. _____ Behavioral incident summaries or reports (e.g., office referrals, suspensions, expulsions)
6. _____ Office discipline referral form(s)
7. _____ Other related information

Using SET Results

The results of the SET will provide schools with a measure of the proportion of features that are 1) not targeted or started, 2) in the planning phase, and 3) in the implementation/ maintenance phases of development toward a systems approach to school-wide effective behavior support. The SET is designed to provide trend lines of improvement and sustainability over time.



School-wide Evaluation Tool (SET)

Implementation Guide

School _____

Date _____

District _____

State _____

Step 1: Make Initial Contact

- A. Identify school contact person & give overview of SET page with the list of products needed.
- B. Ask when they may be able to have the products gathered. Approximate date: _____
- C. Get names, phone #'s, email address & record below.

Name _____ Phone _____

Email _____

Products to Collect

- 1. _____ Discipline handbook
- 2. _____ School improvement plan goals
- 3. _____ Annual Action Plan for meeting school-wide behavior support goals
- 4. _____ Social skills instructional materials/ implementation time line
- 5. _____ Behavioral incident summaries or reports (e.g., office referrals, suspensions, expulsions)
- 6. _____ Office discipline referral form(s)
- 7. _____ Other related information

Step 2: Confirm the Date to Conduct the SET

- A. Confirm meeting date with the contact person for conducting an administrator interview, taking a tour of the school while conducting student & staff interviews, & for reviewing the products.
Meeting date & time: _____

Step 3: Conduct the SET

- A. Conduct administrator interview.
- B. Tour school to conduct observations of posted school rules & randomly selected staff (minimum of 10) and student (minimum of 15) interviews.
- C. Review products & score SET.

Step 4: Summarize and Report the Results

- A. Summarize surveys & complete SET scoring.
- B. Update school graph.
- C. Meet with team to review results.
Meeting date & time: _____



School-wide Evaluation Tool (SET) Scoring Guide

School _____

Date _____

District _____

State _____

Pre _____ Post _____

SET data collector _____

Feature	Evaluation Question	Data Source (circle sources used) P= product; I= interview; O= observation	Score: 0-2
A. Expectations Defined	1. Is there documentation that staff has agreed to 5 or fewer positively stated school rules/ behavioral expectations? (0=no; 1= too many/negatively focused; 2 = yes)	Discipline handbook, Instructional materials Other _____ P	
	2. Are the agreed upon rules & expectations publicly posted in 8 of 10 locations? (See interview & observation form for selection of locations). (0= 0-4; 1= 5-7; 2= 8-10)	Wall posters Other _____ O	
B. Behavioral Expectations Taught	1. Is there a documented system for teaching behavioral expectations to students on an annual basis? (0= no; 1 = states that teaching will occur; 2= yes)	Lesson plan books, Instructional materials Other _____ P	
	2. Do 90% of the staff asked state that teaching of behavioral expectations to students has occurred this year? (0= 0-50%; 1= 51-89%; 2=90%-100%)	Interviews Other _____ I	
	3. Do 90% of team members asked state that the school-wide program has been taught/reviewed with staff on an annual basis? (0= 0-50%; 1= 51-89%; 2=90%-100%)	Interviews Other _____ I	
	4. Can at least 70% of 15 or more students state 67% of the school rules? (0= 0-50%; 1= 51-69%; 2= 70-100%)	Interviews Other _____ I	
	5. Can 90% or more of the staff asked list 67% of the school rules? (0= 0-50%; 1= 51-89%; 2=90%-100%)	Interviews Other _____ I	
C. On-going System for Rewarding Behavioral Expectations	1. Is there a documented system for rewarding student behavior? (0= no; 1= states to acknowledge, but not how; 2= yes)	Instructional materials, Lesson Plans, Interviews Other _____ P	
	2. Do 50% or more students asked indicate they have received a reward (other than verbal praise) for expected behaviors over the past two months? (0= 0-25%; 1= 26-49%; 2= 50-100%)	Interviews Other _____ I	
	3. Do 90% of staff asked indicate they have delivered a reward (other than verbal praise) to students for expected behavior over the past two months? (0= 0-50%; 1= 51-89%; 2= 90-100%)	Interviews Other _____ I	
D. System for Responding to Behavioral Violations	1. Is there a documented system for dealing with and reporting specific behavioral violations? (0= no; 1= states to document; but not how; 2 = yes)	Discipline handbook, Instructional materials Other _____ P	
	2. Do 90% of staff asked agree with administration on what problems are office-managed and what problems are classroom-managed? (0= 0-50%; 1= 51-89%; 2= 90-100%)	Interviews Other _____ I	
	3. Is the documented crisis plan for responding to extreme dangerous situations readily available in 6 of 7 locations? (0= 0-3; 1= 4-5; 2= 6-7)	Walls Other _____ O	
	4. Do 90% of staff asked agree with administration on the procedure for handling extreme emergencies (stranger in building with a weapon)? (0= 0-50%; 1= 51-89%; 2= 90-100%)	Interviews Other _____ I	

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Feature	Evaluation Question	Data Source (circle sources used) P= product; I= interview; O= observation	Score: 0-2		
E. Monitoring & Decision-Making	1. Does the discipline referral form list (a) student/grade, (b) date, (c) time, (d) referring staff, (e) problem behavior, (f) location, (g) persons involved, (h) probable motivation, & (i) administrative decision? (0=0-3 items; 1= 4-6 items; 2= 7-9 items)	Referral form (circle items present on the referral form) P			
	2. Can the administrator clearly define a system for collecting & summarizing discipline referrals (computer software, data entry time)? (0=no; 1= referrals are collected; 2= yes)	Interview Other _____ I			
	3. Does the administrator report that the team provides discipline data summary reports to the staff at least three times/year? (0= no; 1= 1-2 times/yr.; 2= 3 or more times/yr)	Interview Other _____ I			
	4. Do 90% of team members asked report that discipline data is used for making decisions in designing, implementing, and revising school-wide effective behavior support efforts? (0= 0-50%; 1= 51-89%; 2= 90-100%)	Interviews Other _____ I			
F. Management	1. Does the school improvement plan list improving behavior support systems as one of the top 3 school improvement plan goals? (0= no; 1= 4 th or lower priority; 2 = 1 st - 3 rd priority)	School Improvement Plan, Interview Other _____ P			
	2. Can 90% of staff asked report that there is a school-wide team established to address behavior support systems in the school? (0= 0-50%; 1= 51-89%; 2= 90-100%)	Interviews Other _____ I			
	3. Does the administrator report that team membership includes representation of all staff? (0= no; 2= yes)	Interview Other _____ I			
	4. Can 90% of team members asked identify the team leader? (0= 0-50%; 1= 51-89%; 2= 90-100%)	Interviews Other _____ I			
	5. Is the administrator an active member of the school-wide behavior support team? (0= no; 1= yes, but not consistently; 2 = yes)	Interview Other _____ I			
	6. Does the administrator report that team meetings occur at least monthly? (0=no team meeting; 1=less often than monthly; 2= at least monthly)	Interview Other _____ I			
	7. Does the administrator report that the team reports progress to the staff at least four times per year? (0=no; 1= less than 4 times per year; 2= yes)	Interview Other _____ I			
	8. Does the team have an action plan with specific goals that is less than one year old? (0=no; 2=yes)	Annual Plan, calendar Other _____ P			
G. District-Level Support	1. Does the school budget contain an allocated amount of money for building and maintaining school-wide behavioral support? (0= no; 2= yes)	Interview Other _____ I			
	2. Can the administrator identify an out-of-school liaison in the district or state? (0= no; 2=yes)	Interview Other _____ I			
Summary Scores:	A = /4	B = /10	C = /6	D = /8	E = /8
	F = /16	G = /4	Mean = /7		



Administrator Interview Guide

Let's talk about your discipline system

- 1) Do you collect and summarize office discipline referral information? Yes No If no, skip to #4.
- 2) What system do you use for collecting and summarizing office discipline referrals? (E2)
 - a) What data do you collect? _____
 - b) Who collects and enters the data? _____
- 3) What do you do with the office discipline referral information? (E3)
 - a) Who looks at the data? _____
 - b) How often do you share it with other staff? _____
- 4) What type of problems do you expect teachers to refer to the office rather than handling in the classroom/ specific setting? (D2)

- 5) What is the procedure for handling extreme emergencies in the building (i.e. stranger with a gun)? (D4)

Let's talk about your school rules or motto

- 6) Do you have school rules or a motto? Yes No If no, skip to # 10.
- 7) How many are there? _____
- 8) What are the rules/motto? (B4, B5)

- 9) What are they called? (B4, B5)
- 10) Do you acknowledge students for doing well socially? Yes No If no, skip to # 12.
- 11) What are the social acknowledgements/ activities/ routines called (student of month, positive referral, letter home, stickers, high 5's)? (C2, C3)

Do you have a team that addresses school-wide discipline? If no, skip to # 19

- 12) Has the team taught/reviewed the school-wide program with staff this year? (B3) Yes No
- 13) Is your school-wide team representative of your school staff? (F3) Yes No
- 14) Are you on the team? (F5) Yes No
- 15) How often does the team meet? (F6) _____
- 16) Do you attend team meetings consistently? (F5) Yes No
- 17) Who is your team leader/facilitator? (F4) _____
- 18) Does the team provide updates to faculty on activities & data summaries? (E3, F7) Yes No
If yes, how often? _____
- 19) Do you have an out-of-school liaison in the state or district to support you on positive behavior support systems development? (G2) Yes No
If yes, who? _____
- 20) What are your top 3 school improvement goals? (F1)

- 21) Does the school budget contain an allocated amount of money for building and maintaining school-wide behavioral support? (G1) Yes No



Additional Interviews

In addition to the administrator interview questions there are questions for Behavior Support Team members, staff and students. **Interviews can be completed during the school tour.** Randomly select students and staff as you walk through the school. Use this page as a reference for all other interview questions. Use the interview and observation form to record student, staff, and team member responses.

Staff Interview Questions

Interview a minimum of 10 staff

- 1) What are the _____ (school rules, high 5's, 3 bee's)? (B5)
(Define what the acronym means)
- 2) Have you taught the school rules/behavioral expectations this year? (B2)
- 3) Have you given out any _____ since _____? (C3)
(rewards for appropriate behavior) (2 months ago)
- 4) What types of student problems do you or would you refer to the office? (D2)
- 5) What is the procedure for dealing with a stranger with a gun? (D4)
- 6) Is there a school-wide team that addresses behavioral support in your building?
- 7) Are you on the team?

Team Member Interview Questions

- 1) Does your team use discipline data to make decisions? (E4)
- 2) Has your team taught/reviewed the school-wide program with staff this year? (B3)
- 3) Who is the team leader/facilitator? (F4)

Student interview Questions

Interview a minimum of 15 students

- 1) What are the _____ (school rules, high 5's, 3 bee's)? (B4)
(Define what the acronym means.)
- 2) Have you received a _____ since _____? (C2)
(reward for appropriate behavior) (2 months ago)



Interview and Observation Form

Staff questions (Interview a minimum of 10 staff members)								Team member questions			Student questions	
	What are the school rules? Record the # of rules known.	Have you taught the school rules/ behave. exp. to students this year?	Have you given out any _____ since _____? (2 mos.)	What types of student problems do you or would you refer to the office?	What is the procedure for dealing with a stranger with a gun?	Is there a team in your school to address school-wide behavior support systems?	Are you on the team? If yes, ask team questions	Does your team use discipline data to make decisions?	Has your team taught/ reviewed SW program w/staff this year?	Who is the team leader/ facilitator?	What are the (school rules)? Record the # of rules known	Have you received a _____ since _____?
1		Y N	Y N			Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N		1	Y N
2		Y N	Y N			Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N		2	Y N
3		Y N	Y N			Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N		3	Y N
4		Y N	Y N			Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N		4	Y N
5		Y N	Y N			Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N		5	Y N
6		Y N	Y N			Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N		6	Y N
7		Y N	Y N			Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N		7	Y N
8		Y N	Y N			Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N		8	Y N
9		Y N	Y N			Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N		9	Y N
10		Y N	Y N			Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N		10	Y N
11		Y N	Y N			Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N		11	Y N
12		Y N	Y N			Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N		12	Y N
13		Y N	Y N			Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N		13	Y N
14		Y N	Y N			Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N		14	Y N
15		Y N	Y N			Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N		15	Y N
Total											Total	
Location		Front hall/ office	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Cafeteria	Library	Other setting (gym, lab)	Hall 1	Hall 2	Hall 3	
Are rules & expectations posted?		Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	
Is the documented crisis plan readily available?		Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	X	X	X	

