

INCREASING STAFF BUY-IN THROUGH AN INCENTIVE
PROGRAM TO INCREASE SW-PBIS PROGRAM FIDELITY:
A CASE STUDY OF A RURAL K-6 ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

A Thesis

Presented

to the Faculty of

California State University, Chico

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

in

Education

by

Kaylyn Lumsden

Spring 2019

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my husband,

Andrew

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Slemrod for his continuous support during the Education Master's Program and while serving as committee chair for this thesis. Dr. Slemrod's dedication and enthusiasm for teaching and research will always stay with me. His guidance and direction has solidified my desire to one day get my Ph.D. Without his supervision and support, this thesis would not have been possible.

I would also like to thank advisory committee member, Dr. Char Moffit, for her expert advice, edits, insightful comments, and questions. Without her knowledge and assistance, this study would not have been successful.

Many thanks to thesis formatter, Josie Smith. Her expertise and suggestions were very helpful to me during the final stages of the thesis and without her, I would be fighting with a computer program till the end of my days.

Special thanks to Dr. Kathleen Gabriel for her ongoing support, inspiration, and humor over as I completed my credential and graduate program. Without her, I would no doubt be a general education teacher and have no idea how much I was missing.

I would like to thank all my family members for believing in me and saying that I could do it. Finally, my special thanks go to my husband Andrew for his impressive take out ordering skills, patience, understanding, and unending support. Without his encouragement, I would not have been able to pursue this degree.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Dedication.....	iii
Acknowledgments.....	iv
List of Tables	vii
Abstract.....	viii
CHAPTER	
I. Introduction.....	1
Background.....	1
Statement of Problem.....	6
Purpose of Study	7
Limitations of the Study.....	8
Definition of Terms.....	8
II. Literature Review.....	10
Introduction.....	10
Background Information.....	12
Components of School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports Programs	14
Staff Buy-In	19
Professional Development Needs of Teachers in Rural Settings..	23
Summation	24
III. Methodology	26
Setting	26
Participants.....	27
Experimental Design.....	29
Research Phases	29
Independent Variables	31
Independent Control Variables	32
Dependent Variable Measures	32
Treatment	33
Data Analysis	35

CHAPTER	PAGE
IV. Results and Discussion	36
Presentation of the Findings.....	36
Discussion of the Findings.....	48
V. Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations.....	53
Summary	53
Conclusions.....	54
Recommendation	59
References.....	61

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE		PAGE
1.	Survey Participant Employment Classification	28
2.	Survey Participant Experience Demographics	28
3.	Survey Participant - Credentials Demographics	37
4.	Survey Participant Professional Development	38
5.	Survey Participant Program Knowledge.....	40
6.	Respondent Perceptions	42
7.	Respondent Buy-in	50

ABSTRACT

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Extensive research supports the implementation and maintenance of school-wide positive behavior interventions and supports (SW-PBIS). Research shows the effectiveness of SW-PBIS in reducing referrals, suspension rates, and problem behavior. In addition, research has identified that SW-PBIS strengthens school culture and community for staff, faculty, and students. Research has also demonstrated that staff buy-in greatly affects the effectiveness of SW-PBIS programs. Consequently, there is a limited amount of research that identifies methods to increase staff buy-in to an existing SW-PBIS program. The purpose of this study is to identify if professional development effects staff buy-in and support implementation fidelity. Additionally, the study seeks to identify if an offering incentive increases participation in a voluntary professional development session aimed at providing program knowledge and implementation support. This study utilized a mixed method design and collected data concurrently using

a single instrument. Results of the study show that professional development affected staff buy-in levels, however, it did not affect the participants' ability to represent program knowledge. Due to the limited sample size and treatment population, in addition to the limited literature, findings from the study cannot be generalized and more research is necessary to identify if the same results are transferable to other school settings.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background

Since its conception, the American education system has sought to serve the public by promoting citizenship, equitable access to economic opportunities, and the reduction of unlawful acts (Spring, 2010, p. 5). This mission is most commonly supported by expanding the number of school-based prevention and intervention programs that support youth development (Greenberg, O'Brien, Zins, Resnik, & Elias, 2003). However, as with any laudable goal, there are often obstacles that must be overcome to successfully meet the overall objective. For years, education practitioners have found that there is one particular obstacle that is ever-present and relevant regardless of the decade; this obstacle is student behavior. Particularly student behavior which impedes the learning environment of the student, and in some cases, their peers. In a national survey conducted by Public Agenda and referenced by Warren et al. (2006) 76% of educators asserted problematic student behavior impeded their ability to successfully deliver their lessons effectively, and over a third stated student behavior as the primary reason, they reconsider their profession, and position at a school. This assertion was further substantiated by Reinke, Herman, and Stormont (2013) whose research found that teacher surveys reported that classroom management and student behavior was the most challenging aspect of their job, and felt the least prepared to handle such obstacles after completion of a credentialing program. While problematic behavior is expected, generations of educators have sought to combat such behavior with

a series of individualized negative consequences and eventually, more progressively, school-wide interventions. One school-wide framework, school-wide positive behavioral interventions and supports (SW-PBIS) has been found to be highly effective. The SW-PBIS framework is continuously adapting and undergoing improvements to meet the needs of the educational community; additionally, research has found its adoption rate has continued to grow for the last twenty years (Filter, Sytsma, & McIntosh, 2016). Even though positive behavioral supports (PBS) was originally introduced and established to support students with the most extreme behavioral needs; forward-thinking educators realized that the strategies developed for extreme behaviors, could be modified and applied across campus-wide environments to support all students, in all learning environments, opposed to only those in the most restrictive (Warren et al., 2006).

SW-PBIS is a non-curricular framework what utilizes behavioral, social learning, and organizational behavioral principles and extends them across the entire student population in all educational contexts (Bradshaw, Koth, Thornton, & Leaf, 2009). At its core, SW-PBIS serves students through a three-tiered system of support that meets students who require varying degrees of behavioral scaffolding. The first tier, Tier I, is composed of universal strategies that scaffold and encourage social responsibility (Andreou, McIntosh, Ross, & Kahn, 2015). Under the three-tier model, students who are not successful with the universal supports are then provided with additional supports under the second and third tier. Accordingly, SW-PBIS is a comprehensive multitiered framework approach to prevention and intervention that utilizes evidence-based strategies and procedures to support academic performance, reduce problematic behaviors that affect learning environments, promote student welfare, and facilitate the establishment of

positive classroom and working environments for all persons at a school (Kincaid, Childs, Blase, & Wallace, 2007; Evanovich & Scott, 2016). Moreover, it is the comprehensive nature of SW-PBIS that draws the attention of administrators and teachers. However, it is important to note that because of the interconnectedness of the framework, implementing SW-PBIS programs with fidelity requires consistent communication and training opportunities for administrators and teachers. Handle et al. (2007) stated that the most effective SW-PBIS programs not only emphasize the use of effective daily practices, but also require and establish systems that support the dynamic environment that is a school, and ensure that leadership teams are making relevant data-driven decisions. Thus, for a school to implement SW-PBIS with fidelity, administrators and faculty must collaborate to ensure consistency throughout the programs multiple reward and disciplinary protocols. Furthermore, because implementing a SW-PBIS program is an intricate process that affects the factors both inside and outside of the school it is important to recognize that the programs implementation fidelity will greatly affect the program's results (Filter et al., 2016).

There is also, however, a further point to be considered; because of the interconnectedness required to establish effective SW-PBIS programs, research by Filter et al. (2016) and Kincaid et al. (2007) identified that one of the greatest implementation barriers and obstacles was establishing and maintaining staff-buy in to the program. This statement is further substantiated by Evanovich and Scott's (2016) research, which found administrators often face a series of challenges as they try to alter the attitudes of the teachers who may not fully understand the logic behind establishing multi-tiered supports and are reluctant to change their ways. Furthermore, additional obstacles often include

inefficacious communication between administrators, teachers, and paraprofessionals which often lead to misunderstandings and inconsistencies in expectations and the establishment of core systems that support SW-PBIS programs (Kennedy, Mimmack & Flannery, 2012). This ultimately puts additional pressure on the overall staff buy-in to the program, thus affecting the effectiveness of the program. Similarly, if a member of the staff or faculty isn't invested in the SW-PBIS program as a whole, they are unlikely to utilize effective classroom and behavior management techniques that mirror the established SW-PBIS principles (Reinke, Herman, & Stormont, 2013). Evanovich and Scott's (2016) work discuss this, and the obstacles that many principals face since components of SW-PBIS programs require the adults implementing the program to acknowledge and possibly, change their own behaviors and beliefs about discipline. This point is also sustained by the work of Kincaid et al. (2007) whose research identified that passively teaching SW-PBIS strategies, or promoting basic training isn't impactful to promote effective implementation strategies.

Understandably, it is important to recognize the great degree of professional development required to implement and maintain an SW-PBIS program with fidelity. As Kincaid et al. (2007) aforementioned, passively teaching SW-PBIS strategies is not an effective professional development practice to produce the proven effect of SW-PBIS programs that are explicitly taught and monitored. Furthermore, McClean and Grey's (2012) research identified seven key components of in-service training sessions that supported a faculty's ability to implement SW-PBIS effectively and with a greater degree of fidelity that takes continuous data collection into account. The broad question arises of how schools implement SW-PBIS programs. Due to the sheer level of collaboration

required, an administrator must understand the level of commitment that one must pledge to acquire the desired results. Although, this should not deter small schools with limited resources. And thus, is the challenge of implementation for small rural schools, such as the school which is the focus of this case study.

The school district of this study is located in a small northern California town with an approximate population of 7,500. The district, Shasta View School District (fictitious name), is an elementary school district serving the K-8 student population of the area. Shasta View Elementary is the focus and largest K-6 school in the district and which serves approximately 680 students each school year. Shasta View's student population is considerably diverse with respect to the surrounding school districts within a fifteen-mile radius. Nearly half of the student population is designated as English language learners. Teachers employed by Shasta View understand the additional supports required to scaffold instruction for a diverse set of students with varying degrees of English proficiency.

Shasta View School District is currently in the process of implementing SW-PBIS programs at six of its eight local schools. The 2018-2019 school year will be its sixth year of the SW-PBIS program implementation. Five years ago, Shasta View Elementary established a PBIS team. Currently, the team is composed of seven team members, the site principal and vice principal, one special education teacher, and four general education teachers. Recently, the team decided that in order to promote greater transparency, the PBIS meeting would be open and available to all interested parties who wish to join. The team meets once a month to discuss the monthly PBIS assembly, faculty/staff acknowledgments, and concerns regarding school discipline. Currently, the

most immediate challenge to programs implementation and sustainability is the lack of staff buy-in. The administrative members of the team report that staff buy-in has been a persistent concern throughout the program implementation. Additionally, they have also noted that veteran teachers are more likely to reject and dispute SW-PBIS principles than newly hired or retained faculty. While the PBIS team has attempted to bolster staff buy-in, both of the administrator members state their efforts have not produced significant support for the program.

Statement of Problem

Establishing and maintaining school-wide positive behavioral interventions and support programs with fidelity positively affect student attendance and are associated with the reduction of office discipline referrals (ODR) rates (Freeman et al., 2016). Even though research supports the implementation and continued maintenance of school-wide positive behavioral interventions and support, there is a multitude of factors that influence the program's effectiveness; one of the most notable being staff and administrative buy-in (Handler et al., 2006). While the benefits of the SWPBIS program are reiterated to the staff during the yearly professional development training prior to each school year beginning, staff buy-in to the program has always remained low throughout Shasta View School District, and a Shasta View Elementary.

Previously, the school administrators expressed frustrations in the faculty's and staff's inconsistent enforcement of reward and violation systems. The PBIS team then conducted a series of informal surveys and meetings, which identified that lack of staff-buy in was a systematic problem throughout Shasta View's campus. This study will attempt to establish an effective incentive program that can increase staff buy-in to the

SW-PBIS program in a K-6 rural elementary school. This research will further study the reason staff buy-in is lacking at the subject school and examine if a cause is the staff unfamiliarity with SW-PBIS and/or misunderstandings of the school's SW-PBIS principles. This study was designed to investigate whether a new, voluntary, professional development program can produce improvements in staff buy-in.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate whether a voluntary educational training program could improve in staff buy-in to a preexisting school-wide positive behavioral interventions and supports (SWPBIS) program. Furthermore, it examines if an incentive would increase participation in a voluntary training held after the instructional day and contract outlined work day.

The study sought to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent, if any, does professional development support the implementation of SW-PBIS programs?
2. To what extent, if any, do PBIS professional development opportunities increase staff buy-in to previously established SW-PBIS program?
3. To what extent, if any, can an incentive induce participation in a professional development program aimed at bolstering staff buy-in to a previously established SW-PBIS program?

This study's primary goal was to introduce an incentive program with the goal of increasing staff buy-in to the established previously SW-PBIS program and identifying if increased professional development can strengthen staff-buy in. While a series of literature discusses the multiple factors that server as facilitators and barriers to the

implementation of PBIS programs (Filter et al., 2016; Kincaid et al., 2007) which identify staff buy-in as a barrier to implementation, there is little to no identifiable literature which addresses methods to increase staff buy-in.

Limitations of the Study

In order to understand the perspectives of the staff and faculty throughout Shasta View School District, a mixed-method design was used for this research. However, because this study is centered on emailed surveys, and a limited number of staff had access or knowledge of their email capabilities and availability to the survey, the perspectives of the surveyed population varied and were more heavily weighted toward teacher responses. Furthermore, It is possible that teachers and staff may have feared punitive action if they express their displeasure with a program that is greatly supported by the administrative staff. Additional limitations included the validity of the survey responses due to the small population sample. Other theoretical limitations included the lack of literature on similar incentive frameworks geared toward increasing buy-in for PBIS programs.

Definition of Terms

Buy-In

The level of engagement and commitment that staff and faculty exercise toward a particular program.

Incentive

A concession or reward offered to stimulate greater output or investment.

Positive Behavior Supports (PBS)

PBS is a non-curricular framework what utilizes behavioral management strategies and systems to understand and prevent problem behavior.

School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (SW-PBIS)

SW-PBIS is a non-curricular framework what utilizes behavioral, social learning, and organizational behavioral principles and extends them across the entire student population in all educational contexts (Bradshaw et al., 2009).

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Historically, public schools have struggled to find a holistic system that emphasizes the health and happiness of its staff and faculty, supports making data-driven decisions and focus on improving a student's behavior, attendance, and academic performance. Accordingly, while unable to manage all of the needs, they divided their priorities. Believing that students and parents are responsible for their own success, the teacher's responsibility is to educate their students and leave behaviorally at-risk students at the mercy of administrators. Today, a framework has arisen which aims to support the student and their guardians, the teachers, school administrators, and the educational system as a whole.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is a multi-tiered framework

used to improve the integration and implementation of behavioral practices, data-driven decision making systems, professional development opportunities, school leadership, supportive state educational agency (SEA) and local education agency (LEA) policies, and evidence-based instructional strategies. (OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, 2015, p. 4)

School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SW-PBIS) utilizes the same framework as PBIS and extends the scope of the program campus-wide. Once implemented, SW-PBIS becomes fully integrated into the school's atmosphere and the framework can be identified through every facet of the school's educational philosophy, operations and procedural protocols, and management hierarchies.

SW-PBIS is a non-curricular framework and there is no existing curriculum approved by the Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) for distribution. However, OSEP established PBIS.org, which provides resources and supports schools and districts as they implement a PBIS program in their school, or choose to implement the program campus-wide (SW-PBIS). In short, regardless of the scope of implementation, all PBIS programs should have a minimum of seven distinguishable components.

The literature herein examines the factors that enable or impede the effectiveness of SW-PBIS programs across the nation, components of SW-PBIS, staff buy-in towards SW-PBIS programs, and the unique needs of schools in rural settings; with data ranging from 2005-2015. Due to the variation of the studies, the sample populations range from small research pilots to national studies with sample populations as high as 27,698. The populations examined include primary, secondary, and alternative educational settings (alternative schools, residential programs, and juvenile justice facilities).

Research has indicated that SW-PBIS programs are effective in positively affecting school climate, student behaviors, and attendance. However, more research is necessary to identify methods to improve key elements such as staff buy-in, which enable schools to implement SW-PBIS with fidelity or impede the way schools implement the framework with fidelity and the overall program's sustainability. Factors that schools' face when they try to implement an SW-PBIS program, include: 1) Assessing which components of an SW-PBIS program serve as enablers to implementation and sustainability and which components are identified as barriers to implementation and

program sustainability, 2) Components of SW-PBIS programs, 3) Incentive programs, and how they can increase staff buy-in toward programs, and 4) Specific professional development needs of individuals in rural settings. Throughout the duration of this review, the literature highlighted will provide a holistic view of an SW-PBIS program, while illustrating each of the seven components. Additionally, literature will review incentivized programs and highlight the specific professional development needs of rural populations with the goal of identifying ways to increase staff buy-in which can impede or enable the implementation of an SW-PBIS program. Furthermore, considerations will identify which factors support or impede the sustainability of an SW-PBIS program.

Background Information

The concept of positive behavior supports (PBS) was first legislatively addressed when the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was amended in 1997 making it the first, and currently only, approach to dealing with behavioral concerns in the existing educational legislation. Nevertheless, according to Sugai et al. (2000) PBS was

not a new intervention package or a new theory of behavior, but an application of a behaviorally based systems approach to enhance the capacity of schools, families, and communities to design effective environments that improved the fit or link between research-validated practices and the environments in which teaching and learning occur. p. 7

The introduction of PBS into IDEA represented an important step as it would require districts and schools “to improve the quality of behavioral interventions and behavior support planning” (Sugai et al., 2000, p. 4). Consequently, in response to the amended legislation, districts were required to define and place a greater emphasis on their positive behavior intervention strategies and support in place at their school sites to ensure that

they were supporting their students, particularly those with exceptionalities. As a result, in 1998 the OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports was established to provide the necessary resources and support for schools to implement PBIS programs. Consequently, as resources became available, schools began to adopt PBIS for their students with exceptional needs. Since its introduction to the educational community, PBIS programs have been praised as an effective and efficient framework to support students with specific behavioral and other special needs. At this time, the OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (2015) has reported that over 22,000 schools across the United States have implemented a PBIS program. Due to the overwhelming success in supporting small populations with specific needs, guidelines for SW-PBIS were created to support schools who wanted to expand the scope of their PBIS program campus-wide across multiple student populations. In a case study by Cressey, Whitcomb, McGilvray-Rivet, Morrison, & Shander-Reynolds (2014, p. 91), SW-PBIS is defined as a “prevention-oriented framework that focuses on creating environments that reflect safety, social competence, and healthy school climates.” Furthermore, research by Bradshaw, Koth, Bevans, Ialongo, and Leaf (2008) identified the framework also improved the overall organizational health of schools implementing SW-PBIS programs.

Today, PBIS.org is managed by a series of educational authorities, including George Sugai, Ph.D. and Robert Horner, Ph.D. who pioneered the framework since its conception. As with many programs, the success of the framework is often dependent upon the fidelity of implementation. At this time, evidence strongly demonstrates that the rate of fidelity maintained during implementation and while sustaining an SW-PBIS

program greatly affects the effectiveness of the program (Cressey et al., 2014). It is for this reason that OSEP has published a series of research-based assessments to assess the fidelity of the program. According to the current framework, a school or district must receive a minimum score of eighty percent, across all measures to follow the framework with fidelity.

Components of School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports Programs

While SW-PBIS is a non-curricular program, the framework is composed of seven modules that must be present to fulfill and serve the programs core purpose in its entirety. In order to establish a PBIS program with fidelity, the following components must be established and sustained throughout the duration of the program: 1) Expectations Defined, 2) Expectations Taught, 3) Reward Systems, 4) Violations Systems, 5) Monitoring and Decision Making, 6) Management and 7) District-level support.

Expectations Defined

When a school decides to implement an SW-PBIS program, it must clearly define behavioral expectations that are expected in the classroom and non-classroom settings (Cressey et al., 2014). Accordingly, the expectations defined component is one of the first modules introduced in the PBIS framework and is considered a foundational piece which will predict the program's success. This is primarily because research conducted by Molloy, Moore, Trail, Epps, and Hopfer (2013) found that schools which implemented Expectations Taught, another component, with high fidelity had the lowest record of office discipline referrals (ODRs). Notwithstanding the undeniable fact that it is

impossible to teach specific rules if the rules have yet to be established. So by nature of the component, Expectations Defined is a key component of all PBIS programs.

Because expectations defined creates a system that outlines rules of the school, it is important that expectations are equitable for all populations. Accordingly, rules are often simple and age appropriate such as Be Respectful, Be Responsible, and Be Safe. Since these rules become the cornerstone of the project, it is important to choose a limited series of rules that are applicable across multiple settings. According to Cressey et al. (2014), universal practices surrounding the SW-PBIS framework recommend choosing between three to five behavioral expectations that are relevant across all school settings. Once expectations are defined the school is then able to establish guidelines, which allow the students to understand the ways they should behave in the classroom, during free-time (lunch, recess, library or computer lab visits, etc.), and after school, while on the school campus. Accordingly, evidence suggests that establishing clear and observable goals that are consistent across all settings is paramount to the success of SW-PBIS programs, as it allows the students the greatest opportunity to succeed at school (Pinkelman et al., 2015). A case study by Swain Bradway, Swoszowski, Boden, and Sprague (2015), further substantiated the research by Pinkelman et al. (2015), when the participants noted that inconsistently defining and enforcing the rules resulted in the ineffectiveness of the SW-PBIS program.

Expectations Taught

Once the school-wide guidelines for success are established, the next step is explicitly teaching the rules to the students. This is achieved in a variety of ways. Due to the large scale of SW-PBIS programs, rules and guidelines must be taught explicitly in

the classroom and outside of the classroom. This is most commonly achieved by homeroom teachers, teaching the classroom/school rules with examples and non-examples. In addition, the school atmosphere must lend itself to educational opportunities for behavioral success. This is most commonly achieved by whole school assemblies or communal school engagements, where rules and expectations are explicitly mentioned and taught.

In a case study conducted by Cressey et al. (2014), the teachers and administrators of the schools found it highly effective to create and distribute lesson plans, instructing teachers how to explicitly teach the newly established school rules. This was further corroborated by the research conducted by Andreou et al. (2015), whose participants noted that continuously reteaching was helpful for both the students and staff alike, as they were able to reconnect with the guiding principles of their SW-PBIS program.

At this time, there is not a substantial set of data to imply that teaching expectations would impede the implementation or the sustainability of an SW-PBIS program. As a result, the only negative consequence research could identify is the opportunity cost of explicitly teaching, and reteaching the students and staff the behavioral expectations (Pinkelman et al., 2015).

Reward Systems

After the guidelines are established, and behavioral expectations are explicitly taught, the next stage of the framework is to institute a school-wide reward system. This is most commonly achieved by establishing a campus-wide token reward economy, where students in each grade are rewarded for behavior following the agreed upon

guidelines. An example of a school-wide token economy would be instances where students get a ticket for observable good behavior that follows the school's established expectations, and they can redeem the ticket for a chance at the weekly prize lottery, held during a good behavior assembly. In a national study that collected data from 166 primary and secondary schools, researchers Molloy et al. (2013), suggested that schools which implemented reward and violation systems with high fidelity rates had the lowest amount of ODRs. However, from another perspective, the study conducted by Pinkelman et al. (2015) identified some possible barriers to implementing a reward system with fidelity; participants in the study noted that maintaining a reward system can become potentially difficult, depending upon the budget and priorities of the school.

Violation Systems

Consequently, once there is a reward system, schools must also establish a violation system with consistent consequences to manage students who have violated the school's rules. In PBIS programs, violation systems and their effectiveness are tracked by ODRs which are entered into a School Wide Information System (SWIS). Effective violation systems are those which consistently report incidences of inappropriate behaviors and have complete staff buy-in to the system. However, due to human nature, this is often impossible, if not difficult to achieve. In agreement with Molloy et al. (2013), Freeman et al. (2016) research suggested that schools at or approaching fidelity in this component had significantly fewer ODRs than schools who were not implementing SW-PBIS. However, Reinke et al. (2013) data strongly cautioned violations systems, and the methods of enforcement, this was primarily because if implemented incorrectly or inconsistently, it can greatly impede the success and sustainability of the program.

Monitoring and Decision Making

One of the greatest components of PBIS is the reflective nature of the framework. SW-PBIS require the leadership team to continuously collect various data which measures the fidelity of the program, identifies trends in ODRs, detects weakness in the framework and leadership, and provides a method to measure the school's climate. As a result, leadership is able to address weaknesses in the program and ensure the framework is relevant and beneficial toward the school. Appropriately, this component is known as monitoring and data collection. Swain Bradway et al. (2015) research identified that when participants gathered data from multiple sources, such as interviews, researched validated assessments, ODRs, and surveys it supported the sustainability of the SW-PBIS program as it allowed the management team relevant data to measure the effectiveness of the program.

Management

The management component of an SW-PBIS directly refers to the administrative leadership of the SW-PBIS program. This management team includes the sites administrators (principal, vice principal) and the leadership team or PBIS team; which is often composed of a general education teacher, special education teacher, and school counselor or psychologist.

District Level Support

District level support refers to the extent to which the district supports and promotes SW-PBIS programs. Andreou et al. (2015), Cressey et al. (2014), Freeman et al. (2016), Molloy et al. (2013), and Pinkelman et al. (2015), each suggested that maintaining staff buy-in, and establishing an effective PBIS team on site is crucial to the

implementation and sustainability of a SW-PBIS program. However, in contrast, only Swain Bradway et al. (2015) research suggested that district support or lack thereof could impede an SW-PBIS program.

Due to the multiple components of SW-PBIS programs, it takes more than one person to ensure the program is implemented effectively. However, as with any complex program, monitoring the multiple parties involved to ensure it is being implemented correctly would require an omnipresent administrator. Moreover, Andreou et al. (2015) and McIntosh et al. (2016) found that administrative support is a critical component of SW-PBIS program sustainability. Therefore, if an administrator is able to increase the staff's buy-in to the program, then less administrative oversight would be necessary to ensure the PBIS principles are being followed with fidelity; if the staff intrinsically believes in the positive effects of SW-PBIS programs, they would be more likely to follow the principles that if they were just told to.

Staff Buy-In

As with any change, change in curriculum or protocol is rarely met without resistance. Nonetheless, multiple studies (Cressey et al., 2014; Filter et al., 2016; Kincaid et al. 2007; Turnbull, 2002;) discuss the importance of a critical threshold of buy-in, 80% should be achieved to ensure the effective implementation of an SW-PBIS program. As Filter et al. (2016), Kincaid et al. (2007), and Evanovich and Scott (2016) aforementioned, one of the greatest obstacles that impede the implementation and/or sustainability of SW-PBIS programs is staff buy-in. Research has suggested low staff buy-in can be for a variety of reasons; however, the literature mentioned herein discusses

how teacher motivations and attitudes that affect buy-in, how administrative support can attract and sustain program buy-in, and lastly, strategies to support teacher buy-in.

In a case study by Cressey et al. (2014) teacher interviews reported varying degrees of buy-in, ranging from neutral to satisfied with the program during the first year of implementing. In the second year of implementation the school's PBIS team participated in fifteen hours of PBIS training and learned how to systematically understand the implementation and data collection process which resulted increased the staff buy-in and program management from 38% to nearly 75%, and it resulted in the districts support being doubled from 25% to 50% in the second year. The teacher participants in their study further noted teachers who were not part of the program rollout began to express interest in the program when they heard the positive effects on the target classes. This would suggest that as the program was seen to be a success by some teachers, the staff buy-in of other teachers can be influenced in a positive direction. This assertion is also further validated by Filter et al. (2016) and Lohrman, Martin, and Patil (2013), whose research found that staff-buy in improved when the evidence presented favorable outcomes were the result of the SW-PBIS program. Conversely, it could also be assumed that if their case study negatively affected ODRs the staff and faculty attitudes toward would SW-PBIS programs would likely be negative. And while the case study presented by Cressey et al. (2014), outlined a school that was able to increase their staff-buy it is important to note that their PBIS team was intrinsically motivated by PBIS and reported that the team voluntarily spent many hours after school and during the summer as they prepared to roll out the program campus-wide.

The majority of education practitioners, parents, and society support an educational agenda that includes not only the expected acquirement of general knowledge, but also expands to include social-emotional health, and civic engagement (Greenberg et al., 2003). However, for some educators, “the link between achieving academic outcomes for students and fostering their socio-emotional skills was not part of their initial teacher training” (Swain Bradway et al., 2015). Even though research has found that a significant amount of teachers reported that disruptive behavior interfered with their ability to deliver a lesson (Warren et al., 2006). Accordingly, Swain Bradway et al. (2015) suggest that making the link between behavior and achievement more apparent may help some reluctant teachers buy-in to an SW-PBIS program. Additional quantitative research by Lohrman et al. (2013), identified five additional themes that often affected teachers attitudes and buy-in to SW-PBIS programs, according to their research teachers reported that “lack of administrative support, staff skepticism toward implementing the universal intervention, hopelessness about the possibility of change, philosophical differences with universal intervention components, and staff feeling disenfranchised” impacted their ability to be fully bought into the program.

Tillery, Varjas, Meyers, and Collins (2010) asserted that understanding teachers’ perspectives about behavior are vital to ensure preventative programs are implemented effectively because personal perspectives often influence their choice of behavioral management strategies. Moreover, if an administrator understands their faculty’s position on behavior management, they will be in a better position to identify components of the program that may require extra support to ensure the personal investment is sufficient to implement the program. This is also sustained by the research

of McIntosh et al. (2016), findings suggest that implementation of intervention programs is significantly influenced by principals' actions, even more so than the teachers' ability to implement the framework. Although conversely, in the instance that an administrator is lacking buy-in, research by Scott and Barrett (2004), found that administrators spent the time equivalent to nearly sixteen days dealing with disciplinary matters such as referrals and suspensions.

As research has identified that achieving a substantial level of buy-in is important for the sustained health of an SW-PBIS program, the next step PBIS teams or administrators would search for is strategies to increase staff buy-in (Filter et al., 2016). One strategy that Swain Bradway et al. (2015) found to be affected was staggered implementation of an SW-PBIS program; in their research, they found that schools that reflectively implemented the program within one department, and used their pilot experience to build a lessons that could be implemented school-wide significantly helped the teachers link academic success to behavior health. Additionally, this practice greatly mirrors the practices of Cressey et al. (2013) since their case study focused on a school that implemented SW-PBIS in the same manner, starting with a pilot grade and eventually rolling out the program school-wide. Furthermore, Swain Bradway et al. (2015) found that explicitly inviting the administrative team to participate in PBIS activities and emphasizing the connections between academic success and social behaviors during professional development opportunities and PBIS training helped reach teachers who were solely motivated by academic outcomes (Swain Bradway et al., 2015).

Professional Development Needs of Teachers in Rural Settings

As the research above suggested, passively teaching SW-PBIS practices is not enough to support the sustainable implementation of a program; instead, successful case studies and research suggested that PBIS practices should be explicitly taught, and having a dedicated team of teachers to reinforce these strategies in the capacity of a coach or mentor, greatly strengthens the sustainability of the program (Cressey et al. 2013; Kincaid et al. 2007; McClean & Grey, 2012; Swain Bradway et al., 2015). However, with the understanding that implementing SW-PBIS programs requires a lot of support to initiate the change and sustain the program, rural schools can find themselves in a particularly unfortunate position as they try to effect change at their campuses.

Many rural teachers will find that they feel professionally isolated at some point in their career. This is common due to the fact that rural teachers, particularly those who specialize in a particular subject, lack the critical mass that urban teachers have to collaborate amongst colleagues (Howley & Howley, 2005). This statement was further substantiated by Lyons (2008), whose research found that specialized teachers reported that they had fewer opportunities to collaborate and attend professional development opportunities than their urban counterparts. Research by Glover et al. (2016) found that geographic isolation was a large obstacle for rural schools to receive professional development opportunities because few opportunities were available locally, and it is often expensive to send a team out of the region for training. So it is important to have a holistic view of a school when an administrator or district is thinking about implementing an SW-PBIS because rural schools and teachers will face additional obstacles, such as

funding and training opportunities, as they attempt to find meaningful professional development opportunities that support their own development and the initiative as a whole (Cavanuagh & Swan, 2015; Glover at al., 2016; Howley & Howley, 2005; Lyons; 2008).

So while it is understood that rural schools and teachers have unique needs with respect to all professional development, some literature has suggested that rurality can make it exceptionally difficult to implement evidence-based practices, such as SW-PBIS because of the lack of specialized staff and training opportunities available (Cavanuagh & Swan, 2015). And so the question remains; how can rural teachers meet the professional development requirements to sustain an SW-PBIS program? One case study found that district based coaching provided to be an effective and efficient model for SW-PBIS professional development (Cavanuagh & Swan, 2015). Under this model, the district identified a few select members of the PBIS team to receive additional professional training and support. Then upon their return, they were responsible for training the members at the school sites and providing follow up training sessions. By providing a select handful of invested members with meaningful opportunities they were able to become the site expert and support not only their schools but each other. Other studies have shown at those professional learning communities (PLCs) have proven to be effective opportunities that provide time for professional development and collaboration (Howley & Howley, 2005; Kelly & Cherkowski, 2015).

Summation

In conclusion, research suggests each of the seven components build upon themselves to create a comprehensive program and the fidelity of implementation greatly

affects the programs effectiveness; however, at this time five of the seven components are considered irreplaceable to ensure the program's success: 1) Expectations Defined, 2) Expectations Taught, 3) Reward System, 4) Violations Systems, 5) Management (Molloy et al., 2013). Additionally, because rural schools face unique challenges when implementing evidence-based practices such as SW-PBIS, administrators should be prepared to holistically evaluate their school as whole to understand their teachers' perspectives surrounding behavior and punishment and furthermore; invest in additional training opportunities to ensure that staff and faculty are provided with training opportunities to sustain the program (Cavanuagh & Swan, 2015; Tillery et al., 2010).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Setting

This study was conducted in a largely rural school district located in Northern California. The school district educates approximately 2,112 students per year in eight schools, 4 of which elementary (ranging from prekindergarten to sixth grade), 1 STEM-oriented school (serving grades six through eight), 2 community day schools, and 1 middle school (serving grades seven through eight). The district's population is composed of approximately, 43% English Language Learners, and a free or reduced-price meal rate of 85.3% (Ed Data, 2019). Upon further examination of the students 2017-2018 CAASPP (California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress) ELA scores, 43.2% of the students did not meet the standard, 28.8% nearly met the standard, 20.8% met the standard, and 7.3% exceeded the standard. When reviewing the 2017-2018 CAASPP mathematics scores, 48.8% of the students did not meet the standard, 27.7% nearly met the standard, 15.5% met the standard, and 8.0% exceeded the standard. While the CAASPP data was pulled from the 2017-2018 school year, and assessment of the schools' test results over the last four year show no great variance amongst scores with an average fluctuation of zero to three percentage points in either direction. Each of the schools within Shasta View School District implemented a SWPBIS program six years ago; however, the individual schools within the district became responsible for implementation fidelity following the district's initial rollout.

Participants

Of the eight elementary schools within the Shasta View District, six schools and approximately ninety-five teachers, twelve office staff, and forty-five paraprofessionals were offered to participate in the research study. The two Community Day Schools were omitted from participation due to their lack of an established PBIS program. Meetings with administrators were held to discuss the study in greater depth, preview the study's instruments, and then answer any remaining questions regarding the study. Each of the administrators approved the study and allowed the researcher to extend an invitation of participation to their staff. After sanctioning the proposed study, and allowing their teachers the opportunity to participate, the administrators of the schools were no longer consulted or involved in the data collection process. Thirty-six people participated in the survey, and two people participated in voluntary professional development sessions.

Survey Participants Demographics

Approximately 72% of survey participants identified themselves as teachers, 22% as paraprofessionals, 3% as office staff, and 3% as counselors. Table 1 further illustrates how the respondents identified their employment classification. Approximately 69% of the contributors identified as having a Multiple Subject teaching credential, 3% as holding an Education Specialist teaching credential, 11% holding a Single Subject teaching credential, and 8% reported holding an "other" credential; 19% reported having none or any applicable credential. Three of the survey participants identified as having two or more credentials.

The participants of the study demonstrated a varied amount of experience working with children. Table 2 demonstrates the varied work experience amongst each of

Table 1

Survey Participant Employment Classification

Participant	# of Responses	Percent of all Participants
Teacher	26	72.20%
Paraprofessional	8	22.20%
Office Staff	1	2.80%
Counselor	1	2.80%

Table 2

Survey Participant Experience Demographics

Participant	0-2		3-5		5-10		10+	
	# of Responses	Percent of Participants						
Teacher					5	19.20%	21	81%
Paraprofessional	3	37.50%	1	2.8%	1	2.8%	3	37.50%
Office Staff							1	100%
Counselor					1	100%		

the respondent’s employment classification. Teachers were more likely to five or more years experience, whereas the paraprofessionals experience varied from zero to ten years experience. The lowest amounts of experience recorded were persons with zero to two years; with the greatest amount of experience recorded exceeding 10 or more years.

Approximately 69% of the participants noted that they have worked with children for ten or more years, 19% recorded five to ten years, 8% listed three to five years, and 8% had zero to two years experience.

In addition to a varied amount of experience working with children, a wide range of grades served was reported amongst the participants. Approximately 22%

reported working with students in kindergarten through third grade, 28% worked with students in fourth through sixth grade, 14% worked with students in middle school (grades seventh and eighth), 11% explicitly worked with students who have individualized education plans (IEPs), and 25% reported working with multiple grades in a single workday.

Experimental Design

A concurrent mixed method research design was used to collect and analyze data. In this design, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected concurrently through a survey with the goal of creating a comprehensive analysis of the surveyed population and their knowledge/buy-in to the SWPBIS program (Creswell, 2009). The study was conducted to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent, if any, does professional development support the implementation of SW-PBIS programs?
2. To what extent, if any, do PBIS professional development opportunities increase staff buy-in to previously established SW-PBIS program?
3. To what extent, if any, can an incentive induce participation in a professional development program aimed at bolstering staff buy-in to a previously established SW-PBIS program?

Research Phases

The research had four major phases, one preliminary phase, and three research phases. The preliminary phase allowed the researcher to identify a target research population, and establish a preliminary window for the sessions with administrators that

would not interfere with other required professional development or the general contracted work day. During this time, the researcher presented and discussed the proposed research with the potential schools, and the research participants, who included, but were not limited to: teachers, administrators, paraprofessional staff, and other classified staff members. At the conclusion of the preliminary exploratory period, the research instruments were approved by the administrative team and then forwarded to the committee for final approval and submission with Human Subjects.

Phase one, the researcher circulated the initial PBIS survey through the school's primary email system. During this phase, the researcher collected baseline data in the form of an anonymous survey created via Google Forms. Aside from the broad demographic questions embedded in the survey, the recipients were informed no other identifying data would be collected. All emails were sent using the researcher's main school email account since the district email firewalls were known to reject or identify unknown Gmail accounts as possible spam. In addition to being provided the informed consent to the research project, participants were informed explicitly in the email that the survey is voluntary and in no way endorsed or sponsored by the district. Participants were emailed multiple times throughout the districts email system requesting recipients to complete the survey.

Phase two, the researcher emailed out the prospective participants, all persons connected to the districts primary email subscription, a schedule of six educational PBIS training sessions. The emailed noted that each session the research will cover a different aspect of the district's SWPBIS program, and the research will provide information on the topic and strategies to support implementation with greater fidelity. Each educational

session was marketed to come with a varying incentive. The initial incentive for attendance in session 1-3 was light snacks, refreshments and a single drawing per session for school supplies. One winner was chosen per session for sessions one through three. Prior to the start of session four, the researcher sent another notice advertising the educational sessions and stated the incentive for sessions four through six in electronic correspondence. Sessions four through six advertised the following incentive, light snacks, refreshments and a single drawing per session to win a five dollar Starbucks gift cards, to be drawn at the conclusion of each session. Session winners were drawn and announced immediately. During phase two, the researcher tracked the attendance per session and characteristics of the attendees (grades taught or worked with). The anonymity of the attendees remained confidential as the only unique identifier collected was the grade taught by the attendee on the sign in sheet.

Phase three, the researcher conducted the final educational session and sent out a final request to parties who participated in the sessions to complete the summative survey. The initial survey remained open to all eligible participants until the closing period. Participants in the voluntary professional development sessions were given access to the same survey available at a different link to ensure that the initial survey results and the summative surveys could be compared.

Independent Variables

Voluntary Professional Development Opportunities

Six thirty minute professional development sessions were offered to employees of the district. Attendance was explicitly stated to be voluntary and incentives were offered as a reward for attending the session.

Incentives

Incentives varied based on the educational session. Sessions one through three will provided a material incentive in the form of school supplies. Sessions four through six advertised a quantifiable monetary incentive, in the form of a five dollar gift card.

Independent Control Variables

Respondent Employment Experience

Survey participants were asked to list their teaching or working experience with children. This was identified and measured as reported by the participant in the survey.

Respondent Descriptor

Survey participants were asked to list their employment category to better understand the context to which they, the respondent, worked with children at their school.

Dependent Variable Measures

Staff Buy-in

Staff Buy-In was defined as the respondent's commitment to the principles and philosophy behind the schools SW-PBIS program. This was primarily measured on the survey as a Likert scale rating, with additional qualitative short answer questions providing greater insight into the respondents rating.

Implementation Fidelity

Respondent implementation fidelity refers to the participation in their SWPBIS program and the likelihood that the participant is upholding and maintaining the

principles and philosophies of the program that guides the SWPBIS program. This was measured by a quantitative survey question.

Staff PBIS Program Knowledge

PBIS program knowledge was defined as the respondent's ability to identify and describe key components of their SWPBIS program. Program knowledge was measured through quantitative and qualitative survey questions.

Treatment

Surveys

Surveys were used to measure faculty and staff knowledge, and buy-in to their SWPBIS program. Furthermore, surveys were used to identify key demographic characteristics of the respondent population. Respondents were asked a series of quantitative demographic, and PBIS specific questions, in addition to broad qualitative questions. Due to the lack of existing relevant research, the surveys were not adopted, nor based upon any preexisting survey or questionnaire.

Threats to Validity

Creswell (2009) addresses various types of threats to both internal and external validity. Threats to internal validity identified throughout research included selection and mortality. Each of the threats was addressed to researcher's best ability. Due to the distribution of the survey, via district-wide email, some participants notably paraprofessionals, custodial, and cafeteria staff, had limited access to the survey because they lacked the knowledge or access to the email survey invitation. Threats to selection were addressed by providing the survey on a local computer and having colleagues and staff orally share information regarding the survey because the affected populations did

not have access to email. Participant mortality affected the study as not all members of the professional development completed the summative comparison survey. The researcher attempted to recruit the largest sample size possible to account for mortality. Threats to external validity included the interaction of selection and treatment. In consideration of the nominal group size of who responded to the treatment, it is impossible to generalize further individuals who do not have the characteristics of the intervention participants. In response, the researcher will need to conduct additional experiments with a larger population and more varied characteristics (Creswell, 2009). Furthermore, the interaction of history and treatment pose a threat to the external validity of the research. As a result, the research needs to replicate the study at a later time to identify if the same results occur as in the first study (Creswell, 2009).

Justification for the Limited Voluntary Training Sessions

When establishing and monitoring a SWPBIS program, teachers and administrators should be able to identify the following aspect of a SWPBIS program: Expectations Defined, Behavioral Expectations Taught, On-going System for Rewarding Behavioral Expectations, System for Responding to Behavioral Violations, Monitoring & Decision-Making, Management, and District-Level Support. Of the seven key program features, all of the categories provide opportunities for participation from the teaching or classified staff, except for management. Although it should be noted that it is unlikely that the general teaching or classified staff would participate in the monitoring and decision-making feature unless they were part of a PBIS Leadership Team. As a result, the researcher chose to hold six limited training sessions, focusing on the six features that

teachers and classified staff can participate in, which could increase their knowledge of their school's SWPBIS program and bolster program buy-in.

Justification for the Use of Anonymous Surveys

Knowing that staff buy-in throughout the Shasta View's district is low, the researcher chose to administer an anonymous online survey in an attempt to collect data that was representative of the participant's knowledge and confidence of their SWPBIS program. The administration of an online survey was chosen over a paper survey because it allowed the participants to complete the survey without concerns that their handwriting or presence while completing would identify them during the survey process. The survey provided the researcher with the opportunity to collect qualitative data that measured staff buy-in and perceived benefits and challenges brought on following the implementation of a SWPBIS program.

Data Analysis

A descriptive data analysis was used to evaluate the data. Data was concurrently collected and examined upon multiple levels to assess the quantitative and qualitative features. Using data transformation, qualitative data was coded to identify themes amongst the respondents. In an effort to triangulate data, a matrix was created as a visual representation of the data. Initially, baseline data was collected when the research commenced with the intention of comparing it to the summative data; however, only two individuals participated in the intervention. With such a nominal treatment population, baseline data was interpreted as the primary data source in lieu of the summative data set.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Thirty-six surveys were collected and calibrated as baseline data during Phase One. Following the six incentivized educational sessions, a single post-intervention survey was collected. Baseline data was assessed as the primary data source and the post-treatment data as a supplemental. Due to the limited treatment data, the post-intervention survey was analyzed as a single case study, analyzed using descriptive data analysis.

Presentation of the Findings

Fourteen questions were presented to the survey participants in the mixed-method survey which concurrently collected qualitative and quantitative data. Of the fourteen questions, four (28%), allowed the researcher to collect demographic information about the respondents.

Respondent Demographics

Table 1 provides a graphic of the respondent's employment classification. The majority of the respondents reported being teachers within the district. The second greatest respondent population was paraprofessionals, and the third was tied between office staff and counseling staff. All of the teacher respondents reported working with children in excess of five years. Moreover, sixty-two percent of the paraprofessional staff reported working with children for three or more years.

The majority of the teacher respondents reported possessing one credential, as seen in Table 3. However, twelve percent, of the teacher respondents reported having two

Table 3

Survey Participant - Credentials Demographics

Credentials	# of Responses	Percent of all Participants
Education Specialist	1	2.80%
Multiple Subjects	25	69.40%
Single Subject	4	11.10%
Other	3	8.30%
None	7	19.40%
Multiple Credentials	3	8.30%

or more credentials. Furthermore, seventy-five percent of the paraprofessional respondents identified that they did not hold a credential, while twenty-five percent stated held an other, or multiple subject credential.

Respondent PBIS Program Training

The majority of the respondents, eighty-nine percent, stated that they knew what a PBIS program was though only sixty-four percent of the participants reported having received PBIS training through the through or district. Respondents were asked to disclose how many PBIS professional development hours they had obtained prior to the educational session, in addition to how many PBIS specific training sessions they have received. The researcher did not set a specified time frame to qualify a PBIS professional development session, so respondents were to take into account what constituted a professional development session at their own discretion. Of the respondents who stated that they had obtained PBIS training, sixty-five percent identified receiving one to five hours of PBIS professional development, and thirty-five percent reported six or more hours of PBIS professional development. Survey respondents were more likely to report

having received PBIS professional development hours than having specific PBIS professional development sessions. Accordingly, three percent of the respondents stated having zero PBIS professional development sessions, sixty-five percent stated that they received one to five professional development sessions, and twenty-two percent reported having obtained six or more sessions. Table 4 further breaks down how each respondent reported their professional development as broken down by PBIS specific sessions and PBIS professional development hours.

Table 4

Survey Participant Professional Development

Participant	0 hours		1-5 hours		6 or more hours	
	# of Responses	Percent of all Participants	# of Responses	Percent of all Participants	# of Responses	Percent of all Participants
Teacher			11	48%	8	35%
Paraprofessional			3	13%		
Counselor			1	4%		

Participant	0 PD Sessions		1-5 PD Sessions		6 or more PD Sessions	
	# of Responses	Percent of all Participants	# of Responses	Percent of all Participants	# of Responses	Percent of all Participants
Teacher	1	4%	13	56%	5	22%
Paraprofessional	2	8%	1	4%		
Counselor			1	4%		

Respondent PBIS Program Knowledge

While research suggests that schools implementing PBIS with high fidelity had significantly fewer ODRs than schools who were not implementing SW-PBIS; fifty-eight percent of the respondents were unaware of an increase or decrease in their school's ODRs since its PBIS implementation (Freeman et al., 2016). Eighty-nine percent of the

respondents reported knowing what a PBIS program is, and sixty-four percent stated they have received some form of PBIS training or professional development. Forty-two percent of the participants knew if their PBIS program had affected office disciplinary referrals (ODR).

Being that SW-PBIS programs have seven primary components, 1) Expectations Defined, 2) Expectations Taught, 3) Reward Systems, 4) Violations Systems, 5) Monitoring & Decision Making, 6) Management, and 7) District-level support, participant program knowledge was measured by assessing how many components were discussed their PBIS program description. When asked to define their schools PBIS program, the majority of the respondents failed to produce descriptions of their program that represented all seven categories. Forty-two percent of the respondents' short answers could be coded into one or more of the seven components. Of the respondents who were coded and sorted, twenty-two percent defined only one component of an SW-PBIS program, fourteen percent stated two facets, and six percent stated three or more components. When asked, respondents were most likely to state or describe their program in three sentences or less. Furthermore, respondents were most likely to depict a reward system at their school when describing their PBIS program. Table 5 illustrates components described by respondents. None of the respondents mentioned any form of management when describing their program. Twenty-five percent of respondents described their SW-PBIS as a program that positively affected school climate and culture and while SW-PBIS programs are known to positively affect the general school climate and culture, this occurs as a consequence of the seven core components being implemented with fidelity.

Table 5

Survey Participant Program Knowledge

SWPBIS Component	# of Respondents	% of Respondents
Expectations Defined	5	14%
Expectations Taught	7	19%
Reward Systems	9	25%
Violation Systems	3	8%
Monitoring & Decision Making	1	3%
Management	0	0%
District Level Support	1	3%
Vague / Unable Label	9	25%
Referenced School Climate/Culture*	9	25%

Respondent Program Implementation Fidelity

As noted above, a nominal number of the respondents were able to effectively illustrate each component of their school’s SW-PBIS program. Three percent were able to identify five aspects of their SW-PBIS program. However, regardless of the respondents’ PBIS program knowledge, as measured by their short response, each of the schools has at minimum, some aspects of each category. Program specifics were identified by the researcher during administrator interviews during the preliminary phase of research. While fifty-six percent of the respondents stated that they actively implement their school’s PBIS program with fidelity, twenty-eight percent were unsure of their implementation fidelity program because they were unaware of the details and specifics of their SW-PBIS program. Finally, seventeen percent of the respondents disclosed that they do not actively implement their PBIS program with fidelity. Similarly, eleven percent of the respondents stated that implementation fidelity did not correlate with achieving the desired results of a program. While eighty-nine percent of the respondents

believed that implementing programs with fidelity increased the probability of achieving the desired results. When asked to rate their commitment to the principles and philosophies that ground their SW-PBIS program on a Likert scale, respondents displayed a variety of buy-in to their sites existing programs. Respondents Likert ratings were dividing into three categories, low (rating buy-in between 1-4), intermediate(rating buy-in between 5-7), and high (rating buy-in between 8-10) buy-in. Expectedly, twelve percent identified low buy-in to their existing program. This corresponds with the other data measuring the rate of implementation fidelity, and whether implementing programs with fidelity affects the outcomes of the program's success. Fifty-eight percent of respondents reported high buy-in ratings, which correlates with the fifty-seven percent who reported to actively implement their SW-PBIS with fidelity. Consequently, thirty percent of the respondents fell in the intermediate buy-in range.

Respondent's SW-PBIS Program Perception

Respondents were asked to disclose their perceptions of their existing SW-PBIS program by stating the pros and cons. Afterward the short answers were coded and organized into the respective PBIS component. Respondents were asked to identify challenges that they have faced while implementing their school's SW-PBIS program, in an attempt for the researcher to identify implementation barriers. Furthermore, respondents were asked to reveal how their PBIS program has positively affected their school. Some of the answers were vague and unable to be coded and were counted and sorted as unable to label. Other responses heavily referenced school climate and culture but did not specifically fall into any category, so a separate but equally weighted category was created to account for those replies. Pros and cons were identified for each

component except District Level Support and Expectations Defined. Table 6 further illustrates which components were perceived as positively affecting their school and those, which brought about challenges. Upon reviewing each of the responses, general themes were identified in each category.

Table 6

Respondent Perceptions

SWPBIS Component	Challenges Faced		Positively Affected	
	<i># of Respondents</i>	<i>% of Respondents</i>	<i># of Respondents</i>	<i>% of Respondents</i>
Expectations Defined	0	0%	7	19%
Expectations Taught	4	11%	1	3%
Reward Systems	6	17%	6	17%
Violation Systems	8	22%	2	6%
Monitoring & Decision Making Management	1	3%	0	0%
District Level Support	7	19%	2	6%
Vague / Unable Label	9	25%	0	0%
Referenced School Climate/Culture*	3	8%	3	8%
	1	3%	10	28%

Expectations Defined. When a school decides to implement an SW-PBIS program, it must clearly define and post behavioral expectations which are expected in the classroom and non-classroom settings (Cressey et al., 2014). Of the seven facets of a PBIS program, Expectations Defined was the only category to have zero challenges associated with it. Respondents acknowledged that their school’s defined behavior expectations explicitly and the students know what is expected of them. Additionally, respondents appreciated that they use the same language and behavior norms varied

depending upon the school area. After surveying each school site, the researcher was not surprised to learn that many of the respondents assessed their ability to define expectations as a strength as each of the schools throughout Shasta View District have prominently displayed behavioral expectations and use a common language throughout the site.

Expectations Taught. Once the foundational expectations are identified and defined, schools must explicitly teach the expected behavior. This appeared to be an area of further growth as respondents disclosed that many of their PBIS programs are “too focused on the “reward” versus the desired behavior” (Respondent #3) and that there is “too much positive reinforcement and not enough skill building” (Respondent #17). Additional implementation barriers included a lack of resources to teach the expected behaviors and inappropriate lessons that were not sensitive to varying age populations. Conversely, thirty-eight percent of the respondents felt as though the defined expectations were taught effectively and it led to a reduction of referrals. Though it is important to note that a very limited number of respondents, three percent, were able to identify a rise in ODRs after the implementation of their SW-PBIS program.

Reward Systems. Reward systems vary greatly amongst PBIS programs and there is no correct way to establish a reward system when implementing an SW-PBIS program. Most commonly, students and staff are rewarded both verbally and with some incentive, be it a tradable commodity or earned privileges. And while offering tangible rewards are great motivators for students and staff, the critical component of reward systems is the social acknowledgment of the preferred behavior (Warren et al., 2006). A common incentive identified throughout the responses was the establishment of a student

store. Half of the respondents who discussed reward systems, explicitly stated that the student store positively affected their school. Respondents also referenced varying award assemblies each month which both bolstered staff appreciation for their program and served as a challenge for other respondents. For those who found the assemblies to be a barrier to implementation, the negative perception appeared to be tied to a limited number of monthly recipients, and not the establishment of the assembly. Some challenges that respondents found when implementing reward systems included: remembering to pass out their tokens, the inconsistencies between teachers passing out the tokens, and twelve percent echoed that too much emphasis was placed on the reward while failing to teach the expected behavior.

Violation Systems. Violation systems are present in all schools even those without SW-PBIS programs. However, schools with SW-PBIS programs that implement this facet with fidelity have drastically ODRs than schools not implementing SW-PBIS programs (Freeman et al., 2016). However, in order for a violation system to be effective, it needs to be consistent. When reviewing the respondents' grievances, fourteen percent of the respondents stated that consequences should be stricter and eight percent stated that referrals do not hold enough weight with the children and staff. Furthermore, eight percent felt as though there was not enough administrative support when a consequence is established. As a result, it was not surprising to identify violation systems were the second highest facet when identifying challenges to implementation. This is consistent with research by Reinke et al. (2013) whose data strongly cautioned violations systems, and the methods of enforcement because the failure to be consistent can greatly impede the success and sustainability of the program. While it was not noted in the participants'

responses, the researcher identified a PBIS violation system matrix when reviewing one of the school's PBIS program protocols. When asked if the matrix was followed, the questioned parties did not know of the existence of the matrix and the matrix was not being followed as written. Lastly, three percent of the respondents positively acknowledged their school's violation systems as it allowed them to have a "positive approach to discipline, which actually put[s] the onus on the student rather than us as "disciplinarians" (Respondent #5).

Monitoring and Decision Making. Traditionally monitoring and decision making is the responsibility of the administrative team or a PBIS team. However, there is no single method to collect and use data. Swain Bradway et al. (2015) research identified that when participants gathered data from multiple sources it supported the sustainability of the SW-PBIS program as it allowed the management team relevant data to measure the effectiveness of the program. Common data that is used when monitoring an SW-PBIS program include analyzing ODRs to identify trends with students and schools regions, and surveying staff buy-in. Only three percent of the respondents discussed matters that could be sorted into the monitoring and decision section. That individuals concerns stated that one challenge they faced was supporting students who struggle with behavior. Ideally, frequent offender students who require another tier of support such as level two, or level three, are identified by monitoring ODRs.

Management. The management component of an SW-PBIS directly refers to the administrative leadership of the SW-PBIS program. SW-PBIS programs can be managed by a PBIS team, or by the administrative team of the school. Ideally, management teams or individuals are responsible for training staff and faculty,

monitoring data, and making decisions to support their SW-PBIS program. A large percentage of the respondents identified that a barrier to implementation was the lack of PBIS training. This was further substantiated by the data collected in the surveys which identified that thirty-five percent of the respondents have not received PBIS training. Furthermore, of those who had, the half stated that they had received up to five hours of PBIS in their experience, or 1-5 training sessions. Being that sixty-eight percent of the surveyed population identified having taught or worked with children for ten or more years, having received only up to five hours, or five sessions of training is a minimal amount of training for a program that should affect each aspect of the school.

District Level Support. The management component and district level support are heavily interconnected. As such, respondents identified a general lack of training and administrative support as the primary challenge they faced with their SW-PBIS program.

Thematic Analysis. After coding the participants' responses, three general themes were identified. First, many of the participants felt as though they were not supported by their administrative team or the district. Lack of support primarily manifested in four ways. First, participants felt as though the district's primary form of disciplining students, the referral, was not effective and was not impactful enough to change problem behavior. Second, respondents stated they did not feel as though the administrative team was administering reasonable consequences when a student received a referral. Furthermore, Respondents stated that they required more support for students not being supported by their school's tier one interventions. Lastly, respondents repeatedly discussed a lack of training and support to implement their PBIS program.

Next, respondents felt as though their program focused too greatly on rewarding students without addressing problem behavior. Respondents felt as though students were rewarded but not taught the expected behavior, so the behaviors continued to occur. Respondents replies appeared to place the burden of expectations taught upon the administrative team and not on the person who identified or reported the problem behavior.

Lastly, regardless of the challenges associated with their program, a large percentage of respondents felt as though PBIS has improved their school's climate and culture as it pushed faculty and staff to actively focus and acknowledge positive behavior.

Voluntary Incentivized Professional Development

As part of the study, respondents were invited to attend six voluntary PBIS professional development sessions. Sessions were advertised to be thirty-minutes long and cover a different PBIS category each day. In addition, respondents were notified that each session would have snacks, beverages, and a prize drawing at the conclusion. The first three sessions offered a token incentive, while the final three offered a monetary incentive. In the end, two people attended professional development sessions. One attendee, a kindergarten teacher, came to the professional development session during the scheduled time. While the other attendee, a paraprofessional, was unable to attend during the scheduled time because of their job duties. In an effort to accommodate the second attendee, the researcher scheduled a later session in the evening on a school day to hold a compressed two-hour session covering the content of sessions one through five. Each of the respondents appeared to leave the session satisfied and each asked for additional materials to be emailed at a later time.

Post-Treatment Survey Analysis

Of the two attendees, only one completed the post-session survey. The respondent identified as a paraprofessional with three to five years of experience working with children. The respondent identified as having acquired three to five hours of PBIS training and having attended three to five professional development sessions. When asked to describe their school's PBIS program, they stated it was a "positive reward system for students" (Respondent #P1). The respondent reported being intermediately bought into the existing PBIS program and that they actively implement their PBIS program with fidelity. When asked to identify challenges associated with their program, the respondent listed employee involvement was the greatest challenge when implementing PBIS. The respondent felt as though their PBIS program had positively affected their school because it rewarded children for positive behavior, which was similar to many respondents replies in the baseline data.

Discussion of the Findings

Due to the mixed method experimental design, a mixed method survey was used to concurrently collect data.

Research Question 1

Research question one sought to identify if professional development supported implementation fidelity. Sixty-four percent of the survey participants stated that they received PBIS training at their school or within the district. Of the respondents, who received formal PBIS training, seventeen percent disclosed that they do not implement their program with fidelity, four percent were unsure because they didn't know the specifics of their program, and seventy-eight percent stated they implement

their program with fidelity. While each component builds upon itself to create a comprehensive framework, faculty and staff directly affect three core components, expectations taught, reward systems, and violation systems. In order for an SW-PBIS program to be effective, faculty and staff must teach behavioral expectations (expectations taught), reward positive behavior (reward systems), and have consistent consequence systems (violation systems) for those who do not conform to the defined expectations.

Respondent Program Knowledge. Even though the majority of respondents stated that they had high implementation fidelity, when asked to define their PBIS program, sixty-five percent failed to identify core program features that must be implemented daily for the program to succeed. In fact, of the thirty-five percent who identified one or more of the three core components, seventeen percent stated one feature, thirteen percent discussed two features, and four percent explained all three core components. Respondents were more likely to discuss or allude to a reward system than the other two components. Surprisingly, after assessing program knowledge for the respondents who have not received PBIS training, the research identified that thirty-eight percent of the untrained respondents identified one or more of the core components, which surpassed the percentage of trained respondents. Leading to the conclusion that professional development does not affect one's ability to describe components of their PBIS program, so long as they are aware their school has one. However, implementation fidelity could not be assessed as the instrument was not designed to measure implementation fidelity rates.

Research Question 2

While research question one seeks to identify how professional development effects implementation, question two addressed if professional development increased staff buy-in. Survey respondents were sorted into two categories, trained and untrained respondents. Using the Likert scale aforementioned, respondents were asked to rate their commitment to the principles and philosophies behind their SW-PBIS program.

Responses were broken down and coded into three categories, low buy-in (Likert rating between 1 and 4), intermediate buy-in (Likert rating between 5 and 7), and high buy-in (Likert rating between 8 and 10). Table 7 illustrates how the trained and untrained

Table 7

Respondent Buy-in

Staff Buy-In	Percentage of Untrained Respondents	Staff Buy-In	Percentage of Trained Respondents
Low	23%	Low	13%
Intermediate	31%	Intermediate	22%
High	46%	High	65%

respondents reported their commitment to their PBIS program. Untrained faculty and staff were more likely to report low buy-in rates than those who were trained.

Additionally, they were also more likely to report intermediate buy-in than those trained.

Staff and faculty who received one to three professional development sessions or hours were significantly more likely to report high buy-in to an existing PBIS program, than those with no training. Expectedly, it should be noted that regardless of training, respondents who reported a high buy-in rating were more likely to describe components

of their SW-PBIS program than those who reported intermediate or low buy-in. It is for this reason the researcher concludes it is of the utmost importance to train all staff and faculty even minimally because trained individuals are more likely to report high buy-in than those untrained.

Research Question 3

Lastly, the third question sought to identify if offering an incentive would increase participation in a series of professional development sessions focused on increasing staff buy-in and program knowledge. A total of six, thirty-minute professional development sessions were offered to staff and faculty of Shasta View School District. All sessions were held after the school day and after the contract time had concluded. Each session was advertised to include a selection of light snacks and beverages, in addition to a giveaway, that was drawn at the conclusion of each session. Sessions one through three offered a token based incentive and participants were entered into a drawing for a selection of school supplies. And sessions four through six advertised a monetary incentive with participants being entered into a drawing for a five dollar gift card. After advertising the sessions via an electronic correspondence, two persons participated in the workshops. One of the participants attended session two during the first phase, the second participant required accommodation from the researcher to attend a compressed session series during the second phase of professional development. Due to the small treatment population generalizations of the participant demographic cannot be made. In the end, six percent of the respondents came to one of the advertised professional development sessions. Even though a large percentage of respondents stated the lack of training to be a barrier to implementation, the incentivized professional

sessions were not appealing to those who identified the training or lack thereof as a challenge. Because feedback regarding the sessions was not sought after or provided, reasons for the low participation rate can only be speculated. Possible barriers that could have prevented participation include the timing of the sessions, other professional development or meetings required by the district or the administrative team, and lack of buy-in and interest in the subject matter. Further research is necessary to identify if a greater incentive could increase participation.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Schools will continue to face challenges while they attempt to educate students. Regardless of the school's size, be it in a large bustling urban community or small rural township, no school is full of perfect well behaved children at all times. And children act out for a number of reasons, for some students, their basic needs aren't met, they can be tired, hungry, scared. Others are testing limits, they may have conflicts with peers, or have poor behavioral models. Regardless of the reason, problematic behavior exists in classrooms across the country, and it affects learning outcomes and the classroom's culture. In fact, research by Warren et al. (2006) identified that seventy-six percent of teachers stated that problem behavior affected their ability to effectively educate their students, and over a third of the teachers experienced behaviors that made them question their career choices. While some teachers are experienced and competent with the ability to deescalate situations before they are a problem, not all faculty and staff are equipped to deal with problem behavior effectively or efficiently, and this is why adopting an SW-PBIS program is critical. SW-PBIS programs are not a cure-all. Schools who implement SW-PBIS programs still have problem behavior present, but they explicitly define and teach behavior expectations, in addition to having a conscious plan to acknowledge positive behavior, and being consistent and predictable when dealing with student consequences. Schools with SW-PBIS actively assess the student's success

around them and make decisions to support students who require additional behavioral supports through tier two and tier three services. They manage their efforts in the form of a PBIS or leadership team, and they have support from their district when teachers need the time and training necessary to implement their program effectively. Surely, establishing and maintaining an SW-PBIS program takes a lot of time and effort and no single person can do it on their own. However, for school's that carry the weight and implement with high fidelity rates, they are rewarded with measurable success. Indeed, a multitude of research has studied the effectiveness of SW-PBIS, and schools who implement SW-PBIS have seen a decrease in ODRs and suspensions, students time on task rose, and academic performances improved (Schaper, McIntosh, & Hoselton, 2016).

Conclusions

In the end, the researcher collected a variety of qualitative and quantitative data from the anonymous survey distributed via Google Forms. Roughly a quarter of the data allowed the researcher to collect demographic statistics on the surveyed respondents. Qualitative features of the survey allowed the respondents to share their perceptions of their SW-PBIS program. This allowed the researcher to identify key facets of the program that were being perceived as challenges to the faculty and staff of Shasta View School District. In addition, in an effort to provide a balanced response, respondents were asked to identify the ways that their SW-PBIS program has positively affected their school. Respondents were invited to attend six voluntary professional development sessions held after school, each presenting information on a different a topic and offering support to implementing the attendees SW-PBIS program. Each of the professional

development sessions offered the attendees light snacks and beverages, in addition to the opportunity to win a prize at the conclusion of each session.

Survey Respondents

Survey respondents were more likely to be teachers than paraprofessionals, office staff, or other persons employed by the district. Survey respondents worked with a variety of student populations and grades ranging from kindergarten to eighth grade. Respondents had varying work experience with some having zero to two years experience, and others exceeding ten or more. Additionally, respondents were more likely to some varying experience with PBIS training than to have had none. The majority of the survey participants held a multiple subject teaching credential and worked with grades ranging from kindergarten to sixth grade. Leading the researcher to conclude that K-6 teachers were more likely to respond to an anonymous survey than teachers in upper grades. Due to the lack of existing research, this information cannot be generalized and additional research needs to assess if the results occur in additional studies and different settings. Lastly, it is important to note the limitation of this research. The researcher's data is heavily biased toward teachers because teachers are required to access their email, while other staff and paraprofessional may have limited access to checking their work email during the day. Additionally, the respondent population is a small percent of the staff and faculty employed by Shasta View District and therefore cannot be generalized.

Respondent SW-PBIS Program Knowledge and Professional Development

Respondent's program was assessed by analyzing and coding their short responses when prompted to describe their existing SW-PBIS program. While research by Molloy et al. (2013), stated five of the seven components are considered irreplaceable

to ensure the program's success: 1) Expectations Defined, 2) Expectations Taught, 3) Reward System, 4) Violations Systems, 5) Management. For the purpose of this study, the researcher decided to focus on three subcategories: Expectations Taught, Reward System, Violations Systems, instead of all five because while all of the components are vital to the success of an SW-PBIS, teachers, and staff always affect the effectiveness of reward systems, violation systems, and teaching expectations. Expectations defined was excluded because in order for schools to implement SW-PBIS the expectations must be defined, before implementation and once the expectations are chosen they generally do not change. Furthermore, management was excluded because even though SW-PBIS programs should be managed by a PBIS or leadership team, these teams are often composed of a small varied population of staff and faculty and not every teacher is expected to participate in the global management of an SW-PBIS program. Research question one sought to identify if professional development supported implementation. Respondent program knowledge was compared between participants who received PBIS training and those who were untrained. The majority of the respondents identified as having some amount received training. Of the trained respondents, a small portion was unable to disclose if they implemented their program with fidelity because they were not aware of their program's protocols, a small portion stated that they did not implement their program with fidelity and the majority, seventy-eight percent, stated they implement their program with fidelity. When asked to describe their programs specifics, training and untrained respondents were equally as likely to name the three core components as chosen by the researcher. Leading to the conclusion that professional development did not affect the sample populations ability to describe their SW-PBIS. However, due to the

small sample size, and lack of literature on the subject, further research is necessary to see if additional studies come to the same conclusion.

Professional Development and Staff Buy-In

In this particular study, the researcher identified that respondents who received even a diminutive amount of PBIS training were more likely to report high buy-in when compared to respondents who received no training. Respondents who reported as little as one to three hours or sessions of PBIS professional development were more likely to report high buy-in, while untrained respondents were more likely to report intermediate buy-in compared to those with training. Even though a large percentage of respondents identified a lack of training and support as a challenge associated with their SW-PBIS program, only two respondents participated in the voluntary professional development sessions. Because of the lack of research, the researcher's data cannot be generalized and further research is necessary to conclude the low participation rates would occur again within a similar population. Additionally, because the voluntary professional development sessions were held after school, further research is necessary to conclude if participation rates could be affected by the time of day and availability of the sessions.

Untrained Populations. A total of thirteen respondents stated that they have not received PBIS training. Five of the thirteen identified themselves as paraprofessionals, seven identified as teachers, one as an office staff member, and one counselor. While this study was limited to the small respondent sample, it is important to state that sixty-two percent of the paraprofessional staff reported being untrained. While PBIS professional development appears to have no effect on one's ability to describe their

PBIS program, further research is necessary to identify if it affects implementation fidelity. Being that paraprofessionals are indispensable members of many school communities who work with students in the classroom and during unstructured time, such as lunch and recess it is likely that their implementation fidelity directly affects PBIS program effectiveness. And further research should seek to identify how paraprofessionals affect SW-PBIS programs.

Voluntary Incentivized Professional Development Sessions

The final piece of the researcher's experiment was to hold voluntary professional development sessions. All sessions were held after school and were thirty minutes in length. The researcher advertised the sessions via email through the researcher's district email address. The professional development sessions were offered to each of the respondents and all staff and faculty of the district. Even though the lack of training and support was a consistent challenge identified in the respondent's surveys a limited number of people participated in the sessions. In the end, two people attended professional development sessions. Due to the small population size, generalizations can not be made about the attendees and further research is necessary to identify if participation rates would be low if replicated again and with a more diverse population. In addition, further research is required to identify if having a greater incentive would affect participation rates.

Treatment Population

Two people participated in the professional development intervention. Of those two, only one completed the post-treatment survey. As a result, the treatment population cannot be generalized or compared due to the lack of data. However, it can be

noted that the treated person was able to identify one core component (reward systems) when asked to describe their SW-PBIS program. Further research is necessary to determine if asking the probing the participant in a different way would elicit a more comprehensive response from participants. Lastly, the treated person identified intermediate buy-in to their existing SW-PBIS program. It is also important to note that the person who completed the post-treatment survey, required accommodation to attend the professional development session and received a compressed session over two hours at the end of the normal workday. Further research is necessary to identify if compressed professional development sessions are as effective as those which run during a designated predetermined time.

Recommendations

The intent of this research was to identify if professional development affected staff buy-in and implementation of SW-PBIS programs. Ultimately, the study identified that professional development positively affected the respondents reported buy-in levels. While further research is necessary to measure the effectiveness of continued professional development on buy-in levels, the researcher encourages schools implementing SW-PBIS to emphasize and offer PBIS professional development opportunities. Furthermore, the study sought to identify if participation in professional development activities could be induced by offering an incentive for participation. Prior to this study, a finite amount of research existed on the effects of professional development on staff buy-in and implementation fidelity. The researcher was unable to identify any research that centered on increasing participation in voluntary professional development by offering an incentive in school settings. Moreover, limited research

discusses ways to increase staff buy-in to existing SW-PBIS programs. This study provides preliminary research on the matters aforementioned and can be used to replicate the study or build upon the existing literature. Additional research is recommended and necessary to identify if the conclusions are the same and to increase the literature available on staff buy-in and the importance of continued professional development within SW-PBIS programs.

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