TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF A POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION SUPPORT

PROGRAM AT A SMALL RURAL SCHOOL

By

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CERTIFICATION OF PROJECT WORK

We, the undersigned, certify that this project entitled TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF A

POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION SUPPORT PROGRAM AT A SMALL RURAL

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Science in Education, Curriculum and Instruction, is acceptable in form and content and

demonstrates a satisfactory knowledge of the field covered by this project.
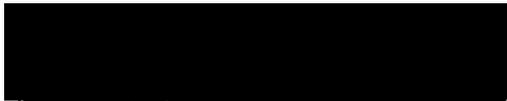
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Abstract

This study focuses on Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) and a particular implementation at a rural school district in Western New York. This study explores teachers' perceptions of the PBIS system being implemented in the district. It focuses on time spent on PBIS duties, teachers' opinions of the current implementation, and teachers' views of changes in behavior due to the PBIS system. The participants in this survey were all faculty and staff at the school district, which includes grades pre-kindergarten through grade twelve, and support staff including specialty areas area teachers. The findings show teacher buy-in to the program, and opinions of success of the PBIS system.

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Introduction

In today's ever changing educational world, it is more important than ever to have effective classroom management in order to have the most success with your students when it comes to learning and safety. Every classroom in the world has classroom management of some sort. There are classrooms with good classroom management and classrooms with bad classroom management. Every teacher has a different view on its importance and strategies to use. Some strategies include behavior charts, raffle ticket systems, points, internet sites or apps, notes home, etc. Classroom management is a problem for a few reasons. One reason is that having a lack of classroom management can create stressful situations for students, parents, and the teachers that work in the classroom throughout the day. When nobody knows what is expected of them chaos can ensue. This leads to my second reason which is safety. A main part of managing a class is having clear rules that are followed consistently. The rules that have been created are there for a reason; to protect everybody in the school. Another reason that there is a big push for successful classroom management is the fact that students learn better when there is a system in place. They are able to learn better when they know what is expected of them. The teacher spends more time dealing with issues after they happen than what she would have spent creating a system and teaching it to the students in her classroom.

Every classroom is going to have a different physical makeup of students that range in abilities and behaviors so it is important to find a system that will appeal to each student and be able to be replicated by other schools. Once an effective system is in place the results will show if it is in fact effective and able to be replicated. This is something that every school has to address and choose what actions will be taken. Having been in a classroom it would be simpler to use a school-wide system rather than introduce a new classroom system each year for students

to learn and become familiar with. If it is the same design for the entire duration of their

schooling it would be easier to abide by and function with, for both the teacher and the students.

Researchers have found that the most successful way to have a positive learning

environment is to take into consideration the value of student perceptions (Cosmovici, et al.,

(2009), Meltzer, et al., (2004), Gillen, et al., (2011), and Meltzer, et al., (2004). Few studies have

examined the effects of using a school-wide PBIS (positive behavior intervention support)

system. Also, previous research hasn't included using this unique system that this school district

has created and implemented. School discipline continues to be one of the greatest challenges in

education as both educators and the public at large continue to identify problem behavior as one

of the most persistent problems schools face (Muscott et. al., 2004).

Review of the Literature

A review of the literature was conducted to inform research on a specific implementation

of PBIS (positive behavior intervention support) and its effectiveness in a local school district.

The literature was also reviewed to find recurring themes and gaps in research done on PBIS.

Although there was sufficient research on PBIS as a research-based practice, there was no

research done on adapted PBIS. Schools that are looking to implement PBIS look at the needs of

the school, community, and students in order to adapt to these unique individual needs. The

themes researched in depth were teacher training, teacher fidelity, learning environment,

procedures, academics, behaviors, self-concept, and key features of PBIS.

Sugai and Lewis (1999) said "Public education is in transition. Pressure is mounting to establish and maintain safe and effective schools; schools that produce positive educational outcomes for all students. Recent federal legislation has prompted the redefinition of roles and responsibilities of many school personnel, especially those working with students who have disabilities or are at risk." Sugai and Lewis (1999) also stated that, "Positive behavioral support refers to the application of behavior analysis to produce socially important outcomes with procedures that are socially and culturally appropriate" (p.22). The emphasis that Sugai and Lewis placed on procedures being socially and culturally appropriate stood out because education today is vastly different than in previous decades. Especially in the United States where we have many different cultures embedded in our schools. Things have changed drastically in terms of social aspects as well. Students respond differently today than they would have thirty years ago. The changes of society that have reflected the changing times have made students more likely to be disrespectful and not be as afraid of consequences as they previously have been. That is why it is important that we are responding appropriately.

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports

Positive Behavior Support (PBS) is a broad range of systemic and individualized strategies for achieving important social and learning outcomes while preventing problem behavior. PBS involves the assessment and reengineering of environments so that reductions in problem behaviors are evident and children experience an increase in the social, personal, and professional quality of their lives. PBS targets a broad set of variables as a base for changing a person's behavior (Scott, White, & Algozzine, 2009). PBIS can be implemented by using raffle tickets or something similar to reward students for positive behaviors. The point of PBIS is rather

than worrying about fixing negative behaviors, instead you work to prevent those behaviors and encourage positive behaviors. Many schools have unique ways of implementing PBIS based on their environment and culture. You need a lot more here for the average reader to understand what PBIS is all about.

Features/Procedures

PBIS is relatively low cost; given that many of the training and implementation materials are free through the National PBIS Technical Assistance Center (cite). PBIS framework is flexible, and therefore compatible with the culture and climate of each implementing school (Bradshaw and Pas 2011). Although it is relatively low cost, the district should have a budget to support it as well as a coordinator who is dedicated to PBIS and the training involved. According to Landers, Courtade and Ryndak (2012), PBIS can be applied by typical individuals who associate everyday with the individual in typical situations, rather than requiring specialized experts in behavior disorders and separate contexts. Landers, Courtade and Ryndak (2012) also stated that PBIS generally employs the use of a proactive discipline model with emphasis on prevention and the use of effective instructional practices with decision guided by ongoing data collection. The developers of PBIS created the School-wide Evaluation Tool (SET) which states that the seven key features of PBIS are: Expectations Defined, Behavioral Expectations Taught, System for Rewarding Behavioral Expectations, Systems for Responding to Behavioral Violations, Monitoring and Evaluation, Management, and District-Level Support (Bradshaw, Reinke, Brown, Bevans, & Leaf, 2008).

PBIS offers a consistent research based approach for promoting pro-social behavior of students without chronic problems (primary prevention), those students at risk for problem

behavior (secondary prevention) and students with intensive behavioral needs (tertiary prevention) (Eber, Sugai, Scott & Smith, 2002). PBIS represents an important effort to improve the quality of behavioral interventions and behavioral support planning (Sugai & Lewis, 1999). There are also three levels of where PBIS will be implemented; school wide (tier 1), specific settings like a classroom or playground (tier 2), and individual students (tier 3) (Pugh, & Chitiyo, 2012). It is the overall goal that with this preventative system that there will not be students in either the secondary or tertiary prevention categories. Reactive systems are discipline systems have been showing very little positive results, which has created the need for a positive and preventative system to be put into place. With an effective PBIS system in place, all students should remain in the first primary prevention category. PBIS is tailored to each unique need of the school, which should assist in making this more possible. According to Muscott et al. (2004), PBIS systems require (a) positive approaches to intervention such as teaching appropriate behaviors rather than relying on punishment alone, (b) matching the level of intervention resources to the level of behavioral challenge presented by students, and (c) designing and integrating multiple systems that deal with the full range of discipline challenges schools face. These researchers bring up a few valid points. It is critical that any type of intervention matches the level of the misconduct. It cannot be a one-punishment–fits-all system because those simply do not work. The evidence suggests that the adoption of district- wide, zero-tolerance policies resulting in suspensions and expulsions from school do not improve student behavior or make a positive contribution to school safety (Muscott et al., 2004). The PBIS team should be prepared to deal with whatever behavior issues could arise at a school and have the proper plan in place before it happens.

Carter and Pool (2012) stated the importance of teaching expectations to children in the form of telling, showing, creating opportunities, and then providing feedback. Just like teachers need, students also need to be trained and given the chance to reflect upon their choices and decisions. We cannot assume that all children know how to behave as expected. When teaching expectations, Carter and Pool (2012) suggested using positive language. Instead of saying "don't", you could say "Please_____". PBIS provides behavioral support for students along a continuum, following the same model used to provide intervention in academics. This continuum extends to all students, with increased support for students who need it (Sinnott, 2009)

Pugh and Chitiyo (2012) stated that PBIS is one system that is being used to prevent and address bullying which is a nation-wide issue. Pugh and Chitiyo (2012) have a developed a PBIS program that combines bullying prevention as well. They called it bully prevention in positive behavior support (BP-PBIS), which still has the three-tier model, but it focuses on antecedents and consequences more in depth. In a study done by Scott, Park, Swain-Bradway, & Landers, (2007), the researchers found that the first step is predicting problems that will occur and what it will look like when it happens. Step two consists of planning on how to prevent the problem through strategic planning. Step three is when participants actually implement the strategies that were planned. The last step is to collect the data and analyze to see if what was planned is working, and then to reconsider and rearrange instruction and routines as necessary. The researchers call this prediction and prevention, development of rules, routines and physical arrangements, consistent implementations, and evaluation.

Learning Environment

While a single agreed-upon definition does not exist, "classroom climate" has been described as the perceived quality of the classroom setting, and is seen as a major determinate of behavior and learning (Gillen, Wright, & Spink, 2011). Yeung, Mooney, Barker, & Dobia (2009) stated that quality learning environments should provide an environment free from disruption, intimidation, harassment and discrimination. An improved school environment would lead to an improved focus on academic work and subsequently better academic achievement. The assumption is that given an improved school environment, students will have increased time on task and higher levels of engagement such that innovative teaching strategies can be applied in the classroom (Yeung, Mooney, Barker, & Dobia 2009). The learning environment can be divided into many categories ranging from the physical environment of the classroom itself, to the entire school which includes the lunch room, hallways, bathroom, and special areas. DiCarlo & Peirce et al. found that results showed that one teacher leading the whole-group activity while another teacher supervised was beneficial. They also found that providing enough space for children to sit together created a positive atmosphere. The last result discussed was importance of the use of modeling materials during whole-group instruction for students to learn while observing. Having enough space in the learning environment is important for success.

Mink and Fraser (2002) evaluated a mathematics program which was said to improve classroom environment by improving the attitudes of the students and staff in an elementary classroom. They found that by improving attitudes of students and staff, it resulted in a more positive environment. There are many programs available to schools, which makes it even more important to evaluate the ones being used to see if others out there could be more productive.

All too often, novice teachers arrive at busy, urban schools lacking the techniques they need to create positive learning environments that can best meet the diverse needs of elementary level learners (Polirstok & Gottlieb, 2006). Teachers new and old can either get stuck in management strategies that are either outdated or not research-based. Effective, research based strategies are important for the success of students. The language and attitude of the teacher also impact the learning environment. When the teaching in classrooms is "high disapproval" (extremely negative and critical), student responses to this teaching are typically characterized by increased verbal/physical aggression, often escalating in severity in response to the frequency and magnitude of teacher disapproval (Polirstok & Gottlieb, 2006). Positive language is also a factor in creating positive learning environments. Instead of using negative words, expectations should be positively worded and focus on what children should be doing, as opposed to what they should stop doing (Carter, Pool, 2012). PBIS uses positively-stated school-wide behavioral expectations (Carter, Pool, 2012). Many people think of classroom management and positive environments as limited to each individual classroom. Through PBIS, classroom and school management strategies are overlapped. Clearly, having positive classroom environments is a valuable goal of education, but past research also provides compelling evidence that the classroom environment so strongly influences student outcomes that it should not be ignored by those wishing to improve the effectiveness of schools. It is highly desirable to include learning environment dimensions among the criteria of effectiveness (Houston, Fraser, &Ledbetter, 2008)

Gillen, Wright and Spink (2006) identified relationships, systems maintenance and change, and goal-orientation as the three sets of variables that influenced the climate in a classroom. Relationships between peers as well as the relationships between students and their teachers have been a widely researched and controversial topic for many years you need to cite

this. Some believe that teachers are there to teach and should do just that. Others believe that teachers should focus on academic *and* social needs of students to promote a positive learning *and* social climate. Cosmovici, Idsoe, Bru, & Munthe, (2009) stated that a learning environment that promotes success is characterized by positive relationships. They also said that in ideal learning environments, teachers should be adapting their teaching to the diverse needs of learners and using multiple strategies with these students. In a study done by Cosmovici, Idsoe, Bru, & Munthe, (2009) the results showed that students' perceptions of learning environments and on-task orientation differed according to their level of achievement. This is important for teachers to consider when arranging the physical environment and planning for the structure of the lessons. Just as with content materials needing to be differentiated, the physical learning environment should be differentiated as well. Under a PBIS system, specially designed rules, routines, and physical arrangements are used to effectively decrease the number of problem behaviors that occur due to inadequate or poorly designed environments (Scott, Park, Swain-Bradway, & Landers, 2007). Another possible step of the PBIS process includes rearranging the physical landscape in terms of where desks are placed and in what groups, as well as where teachers will be. Teachers are asked to determine and evaluate the placement of physical objects throughout the room.

Training

While many schools have stated implementing PBIS, some schools have overlooked one of the most important steps in the PBIS process - training. Ideally, all school staff and support staff should be trained on how to implement PBIS correctly. This helps everybody be on the same page and be part of the school and its successes. Each school should have a PBIS team which is in charge of handling the day-to-day business and training the staff. This team works to

develop rules and procedures that are clearly communicated to each staff member. In some

instances faculty, staff, and students have input on the decision of rules. These rules are

implemented consistently on a school-wide basis by using raffle tickets or other reinforcers. Each

teacher and staff member should be a part of this process. A school is considered trained in PBIS

if there was a team of at least 4 people which had to include an administrator that attended the

state's initial training which takes place once a year at a conference setting. After this training,

these 4 individuals would go back to their school and train the rest of the staff (Bradshaw and

Pas 2011). Bradshaw and Pas (2011) found that the number of years since a school was trained in

PBIS was positively associated with fidelity of implementation. Benner, Beaudoin, Chen, Davis,

& Ralston, N. C stated that the need for effective staff training has also been highlighted as a

potential barrier to successful implementation of PBIS. Benner, Beaudoin, Chen, Davis, &

Ralston, (2010) suggested that for teachers with emotionally disturbed students, additional

training and support should be provided so that teachers would have more strategies to use

because of the different circumstances they encounter with their specialized education settings..

Training can be done through professional development workshops with the teachers and then by

asking teachers to implement the strategies learned and collect data to report on any findings.

Teachers can be trained to try to get discipline referrals down. Once an effective strategy is in

place these behaviors should also gradually decrease. Training should be completed for

administrators, clinical personnel, teachers, and paraprofessionals. Research has indicated that

follow-up trainings were also beneficial. According to Polirstok and Gottlieb (2006), when

teachers were provided with the skills to manage disruptive behavior, they referred few students

for special education.

Pre-service teacher education programs especially in the elementary grades must recognize the importance of training teachers in positive behavior intervention techniques as a way to maximize student social and academic learning (Polirstok, Gottlieb 2006). Research has noted that beginning teachers consistently enter the field feeling unprepared for managing a classroom. In fact, it is reported that most teachers learn what behavior management skills they do have as part of in-service rather than pre-service training (Scott, Park, Swain-Bradway, & Landers, 2007). Teacher training is not the only training that should occur. Students should be trained on how to behave, and what is expected of them. Telling students should only be the first step in implementing PBIS. The expectations should be clearly displayed around the school and should be reviewed more frequently at first, but later on only as a refresher or when needed. After reviewing and discussing the rules with students, teachers should model what the appropriate behaviors look like and can have students participate as well. This should also be reviewed and discussed periodically. In a research study done by Sherrod, Getch, and Ziome-Daigle (2009), the students were taught eight lessons to help them gain the knowledge and skills they lacked in order to be better decision makers. These lessons focused on understanding rules, managing anger, establishing relationships, and learning communication skills.

Landers, Courtade and Ryndak (2012) suggested that during training sessions the team could find ways to make the school-wide rules universal to include students with disabilities. Landers and colleagues had found that the PBIS rules include the students with severe disabilities at the schools they worked with. Meltzer, Reddy, Pollica, Roditi, Sayer, & Theokas (2004) conducted a research study which involved the teachers having monthly training sessions as a large group and weekly session independently, to focus on the needs of each classroom. The staff on the training team visited each classroom for one hour a week to observe and comment on

the effectiveness of instruction. Many programs lack the individual attention to each room and teacher. According to Muscott et al. (2004), educators interested in taking PBIS to scale should invest in creating systems that include both training and on-site technical assistance by trained and experienced PBIS facilitators and a data-based evaluation component such as SWIS that informs decision-making. According to Losen (2011), teaching staff in all schools and districts, especially those with high exclusion rates, should receive technical assistance on classroom and behavioral management and positive behavior supports. Training in classroom and behavior management can be added to state teacher certification requirements. Not only should teachers be trained just in PBIS, but in behavioral management across the board.

Participants/Buy-In

The first phase of PBIS focuses on the importance of community support or "buy-in" (Bradshaw and Pas 2011). Bradshaw and Pas (2011) describe this as preparing the environment for change. This is important because another key feature of PBIS is the sustainability of the program, which can only happen if all parties involved are supporting it. PBIS requires the buy-in of at least 80% of the staff and the participation of all staff in program implementation (Bradshaw, Koth et al 2008). One of the starting phases of PBIS implementation is having a PBIS team, which is designated for various tasks. The PBIS team generally has six to eight members and includes an administrator. The PBIS team meets monthly and does things like training other staff members.

Cregor (2008) interviewed teachers during his research and one thing that was said was, "PBIS gives our students, teachers, and staff a common language for discussing students' actions" (p.31). The school posted rules and reminders throughout the buildings to remind both students and staff what was expected of them. For PBIS to be effective, everybody needs to be

involved and on the same page. Research suggests that a school cannot implement PBIS successfully without the commitment of key administrators and 80% of the school's teachers (Cregor 2008).

According to Miramontes, Marchant, Heath, & Fischer, (2011), research-based interventions that address both student needs and teacher satisfaction and buy-in will likely be successful due to their focus on key consumers. Miramontes, Marchant, Heath, & Fischer, (2011) also stated that the daily effort and commitment created a greater burden for the teachers than the other participants, which should be carefully considered when carrying out interventions. If all teachers are not buying in, fidelity could be compromised and inaccurate results could occur.

Behaviors/Self-Concept

Research studies to date have related academic self-perceptions directly to achievement, although recent investigations have begun to examine the impact of mediating motivational behaviors in greater depth (Meltzer, Katzir, Miller, Reddy, & Roditi, 2004). According to Meltzer, Katzir, Miller, Reddy, & Roditi,(2004) it is important to investigate the complex interactions among self-concept, self-efficacy, motivation and meta-cognition and the extent to which they influence and are influenced by success or failure in different learning situations. Experience has proven that students who are rewarded for positive behavior have a better chance at wanting that feeling of reward again and will work harder for it in the future. The more students perceived themselves as using strategies in their daily schoolwork, the more likely they were to perceive themselves as being good students (Meltzer, Reddy, Pollica, Roditi, Sayer, & Theokas, 2004). Students, like most people, respond better when they have something

motivating them to do better. LePine, J., LePine, M. & Jackson, (2004) stated that motivation to

learn has been defined as the direction, intensity, and persistence of learning-directed behavior

and has been found to be positively related to learning performance in a recent meta-analysis. In

basic terms this researcher stated that with motivation to learn, performance results have shown

positive results.

 According to Scott, Park Swain-Bradway, & Landers, (2007), students are

disciplined for avoiding class, and are then being punished by being removed from the class,

which is what the problem was to begin with. Challenging student behavior is one of the most

stressful issues that teachers face. Without effective management, negative behaviors and

outcomes will occur. Benner, Beaudoin, Chen, Davis, & Ralston, (2010), found that PBIS was

correlated with the behavioral functioning of students in self-contained settings. The behaviors

that were affected positively were thought problems, attention problems, and aggression.

Polirstok and Gottlieb (2006) stated that a key feature of PBIS is the ability to have whole class

and individual interventions which help increase behaviors that should be seen more and

decrease the less desirable behaviors. The researchers also concluded that teachers have their

own behaviors that contribute to the misbehaviors of their students which negatively affects the

learning. With half of behavior referrals being based on misbehavior, it is important to find the

proper way to handle these situations. Yeung, Mooney, Barker, & Dobia (2009) found that when

behavior problems were not managed correctly at school they were found to escalate further.

They emphasized the importance of proactive discipline by reinforcing positive behaviors rather

than waiting for misbehavior to occur. Yell (2013) states that before misbehavior occurs you

should be taking steps to prevent it. Once it happens you should respond and after that you

should intervene. These steps are critical to implementation of PBIS. Yell (2013) also suggested

that high levels of student engagement and evidence based procedures would affect the climate of the classroom. According to Clonan, Clark and Davison (2007), about 5-10% of students will need second level (tier 2) PBIS, and 1-5% of students will fall into the top category (tier 3), which is the tertiary level of intervention. These students have chronic and persistent challenging behaviors.

Cregor (2008) stated, "PBIS schools rely on data, tracked most easily in the form of office referrals, to develop and modify their PBIS implementation plan."The researchers asked questions that focused on when and where office referrals typically occur, and what types of behaviors are not common. They also focused on the teachers and students and their interactions, and if there were racial and gender disparities.

Based upon the research conducted, there are various themes that continue to be addressed in regards to the procedures and outcomes involved when PBIS is properly implemented. In the following research, these themes will be included as well as others that occur.

Methodology

The study was conducted in a small rural school district in Western New York. There are approximately 750 students in the district. Within the district, 199 students (27%) are eligible for free lunch and 89 students (12%) are eligible for reduced lunch. The average class size is 17 students. There are no Limited English Proficient students and 95% of students are Caucasian. Nine students are Latino or Hispanic, 1 student is Alaskan, and 16 students are multi-racial. Of these students, 39% are economically disadvantaged. Ten percent of students are classified as having a disability. There were 12 suspensions recorded during the 2013-2015 school year.

Participants

For this study, teachers in all grades in the district were asked to answer a short, 10-question survey. In this district, the teachers have various years of experience. There is also a wide range of specialty area teachers and service providers. All teachers were urged by administration and the PBIS team to implement the PBIS system by rewarding tickets for positive behaviors. Some teachers were more committed than others due to various reasons. The elementary and high school teachers were included, in an effort to evaluate how well PBIS works over the entire district. See Appendix B for consent to be surveyed. The school adopted a PBIS implementation unique to their school mascot, the T-Bird. All students in the district are asked to follow the same T-Bird traits, or characteristics, when in various areas of the school. The students as a whole do not struggle with behaviors frequently, but are asked to follow the same expectations. The parents were notified of the PBIS plan the previous school year, when the district first began to implement it. That year, changes had been made to the previous system. At the time the survey was conducted, T-Bird raffle tickets were handed out to students displaying proper behaviors. Each teacher was urged to deliver at least three tickets per day to students in their classroom. Specialty area teachers were encouraged to distribute more than three per day. Tickets could not be taken away once they were earned. The students were responsible for keeping their tickets safe. Once a month the students brought their raffle tickets to lunch and visited the PBIS Cart, which featured many items ranging from perishables to school supplies, and even time to use the Nintendo Wii® or to have lunch with a teacher. Students could combine their tickets with other students to enjoy the reward with friends.

Instrument

The researcher created a survey consisting of ten questions, each of which was multiple-choice format. In order to compile the data, an online assessment tool that provides free data analysis for survey responses called Survey Monkey®. See Appendix A for survey questions.

Results

According to the research, all 52 of the participants were familiar with PBIS at the school that was studied. They were asked if they were familiar with the PBIS at the school. Possible survey answer choices were; yes, no, or somewhat. This question was included to determine whether the data that could be skewed because of unfamiliarity. The next question asked the participants how often they used PBIS in their classroom. With PBIS, the frequency that it is used can sometimes determine the end results. At CLCS, teachers are encouraged to hand out three tickets a day. For frequency results, I found that 48.1% (25 members) of staff used PBIS more than 5 times a week. This would be following the schools plan. Forty-four point two percent (23 members) of the staff used PBIS fewer than 5 times a week, and 7.7% (4 members) of staff did not use the PBIS tickets at all during the week.

The next question that participants answered related to their training on PBIS. Seventy-three point one percent of the participants answered that they felt they had been adequately trained to uphold their PBIS duties. Twenty-one point two percent did not feel that they had been adequately prepared to carry out PBIS correctly, and 5.8% of participants were unsure about their training. The fourth question asked the respondents to identify the grade level with which they mainly worked. The results were very evenly distributed between high school and

elementary school, with results showing that 44.2% of the respondents taught at the high school level and 44.2% taught at the elementary level. The remaining 11.5% of participants fell into the "both" category, meaning that they worked at both levels.

Next, the participants were asked about PBIS and its effects on student behavior. Participants were given choices of: it definitely improved behavior, it did not improve behavior, or somewhat or sometimes it did improve behavior. Twenty one point two percent of respondents answered that they felt it definitely improved behavior. Fifteen point four percent answered that they did not feel that it improved behavior, and 63.5% answered that it sometimes or somewhat improved behavior. The sixth question addressed the participants' views of their ability of implement PBIS successfully. Eighty four point six percent of the respondents answered that they were comfortable with their abilities. Three point eight percent of participants answered that they did not feel comfortable with their ability to implement PBIS successfully, and 11.5% answered that they were unsure of their abilities.

Question number seven addressed the strength of implementation of PBIS at the school. Only 34.6% of respondents felt that PBIS was being implemented strongly. Sixty one point five percent answered that they felt PBIS was only being implemented partially, and 3.8% were unsure of the strength of implementation. Question number eight analyzed the participants' views of student motivation. The participants were asked if they felt that the current implementation of PBIS was keeping students motivated to make the right choices. Nineteen point two percent of participants felt that the current implementation was in fact keeping the students motivated. Fifteen point seven percent of participants felt that it was not keeping them motivated, and 63.5% of participants felt that it only sometimes kept them motivated.

The last two questions focused on teacher buy-in and participation. Question number 9 focused on the time spent on PBIS duties. Only 3.8% of participants reported that they spent more than sixty minutes a week on it. Nine point six percent of participants spent thirty to sixty minutes a week on it, and 84.6% spent zero to thirty minutes a week on it. The last question asked participants if they felt that there was too much of a burden on them to honor PBIS duties and rewards. Thirteen point five percent of respondents felt that there was in fact too much of a burden. Seventy-one point two percent of participants did not feel like they were burdened by their responsibilities, and 15.4% were unsure if they had too much of a burden on them to honor their duties.

Discussion

I was not surprised at the results of the familiarity with PBIS. Each month there are assemblies at both elementary and high school levels to review the targeted PBIS traits. Each grade level is responsible for presenting a video or a skit at least one month during the school year. PBIS includes all staff and personnel in the district, so this was an expected result. In terms of frequency of usage, I was slightly surprised at the results which showed that less than half of the staff members at the school were using PBIS as asked by administration and the PBIS team. There were also four staff members that did not use PBIS at all. This greatly affects the productivity of PBIS because one key feature of PBIS is that it is used in all areas of school to provide continuity of a system that everybody follows, with the same expectations. For students in higher grades that go to different teachers for each subject, the behaviors are likely to be different in separate settings because expectations are not the same.

Regarding whether the staff members felt that they had been trained properly to use the PBIS system correctly, around 73% of them answered that they had been. This was not surprising because at the monthly faculty meetings, they are reminded by the PBIS team about different ways to be effective with their ticket dispersal. They are also told stories of the positives and negatives that they have observed to that point. The 21.2% indicated that they had not received proper training might have been non-classroom teachers, such as teacher assistants, that do not attend faculty meetings, or they may have been those that felt like they could be doing more than what they were if they received more formal training. I was very pleased to see equal response rates from the elementary and high school.   The main point of PBIS is to improve behaviors in school settings. The results showed that most of the participants (63.5%) felt that it only improved behaviors somewhat or sometimes. However, some of these results could be related to higher grade levels where the incentives may not be as appreciated by the older students. It also could relate to the teacher's frequency of use, and their general classroom management practices. Next, participants were asked to indicate their own ability to implement PBIS successfully in their classroom. Eighty-five percent reported that they were comfortable. PBIS is designed to be easy to implement by all members in the school district. This did make me wonder why, if so many staff members reported that they were comfortable with using it, more of them were not using it correctly. Future research might address this question. For those that did not feel comfortable or were unsure of their abilities, it might be related to the results that they had seen. They could feel unsure if they were not seeing the good results that others had been seeing, or their results could be different if they did not use it at the frequency that was suggested.

I was very surprised to see that that majority of participants (61.5%) felt that PBIS was only being implemented partially. Teachers and staff are encouraged frequently to be using the tickets and reminding students of the traits that they should be displaying. All throughout the school are PBIS trait reminders, and monthly assemblies address individual traits also. However, the results showed that many teachers are not using PBIS as suggested, which would likely impact the level of implementation and outcomes. Combined with the results that showed that not everybody was implementing PBIS correctly, I am not surprised that it was not always working as planned. One of the main aspects of PBIS is the student motivation that it entails. The PBIS team is in charge of making sure that the correct motivators are in place so that the system works correctly.

The results of question number nine showed that only 3.8% (n=2) of participants spent more than sixty minutes a week on their PBIS duties. It is very possible that these two people are on the PBIS team, which requires more time-investment than most of the teachers. The majority of the participants indicated that they spent zero to thirty minutes implementing PBIS. I observed that handing out tickets, praising students, reviewing rules, and honoring rewards does not typically take more than thirty minutes a week. There are certain rewards that do take longer to administer, but most of the time the teachers are not required to honor that reward (the PBIS team will designate volunteers to do so). The last question showed that most teachers did not feel that the PBIS system was a burden on them. In any school/district, it is probably that there will be people that do not want to do any extra work, which, in this case, was illustrated in the results.

Implications for Future Research

This research has opportunities to be continued further. First, examining the impacts of PBIS implementation on office discipline referrals would yield more information about the effectiveness of the program. Also, comparing student perceptions with information gathered from the teachers would provide additional information about PBIS implementation and effectiveness. One limitation that I found was because the survey was anonymous matching responses to grade levels was not possible.

Overall, the results were very informative and will be shared with the school's PBIS team.

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Appendix A

Consent Letter to Teachers (received via e-mail)

Melanie Brushaber-Goulding, a Graduate student under the supervision of Dr. Carrie Fitzgerald at SUNY Fredonia invites you to participate in a study as a part of the Master's Thesis Project. The study is being conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of a particular PBIS implementation. Any data collected from this study will be used as a part of the Master's Thesis Project, and the results will be used only as data support for the Master's Thesis Project.

  If you choose to participate, you will complete a VOLUNTARY survey that will take approximately 20 minutes. No names or email addresses are required to participate. Participation in the study is independent of your teaching assignments and evaluations. If you VOLUNTARILY choose to participate in the study being conducted by Melanie Brushaber-Goulding, please complete the following survey on SurveyMonkey.com™ by clicking the link below.

- By participating in this survey I give consent to participate in this study done by Melanie Brushaber-Goulding. I understand that I am completing a voluntary survey and that my name will not be used.

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/S6JFCG2

If you should have any questions, please contact:

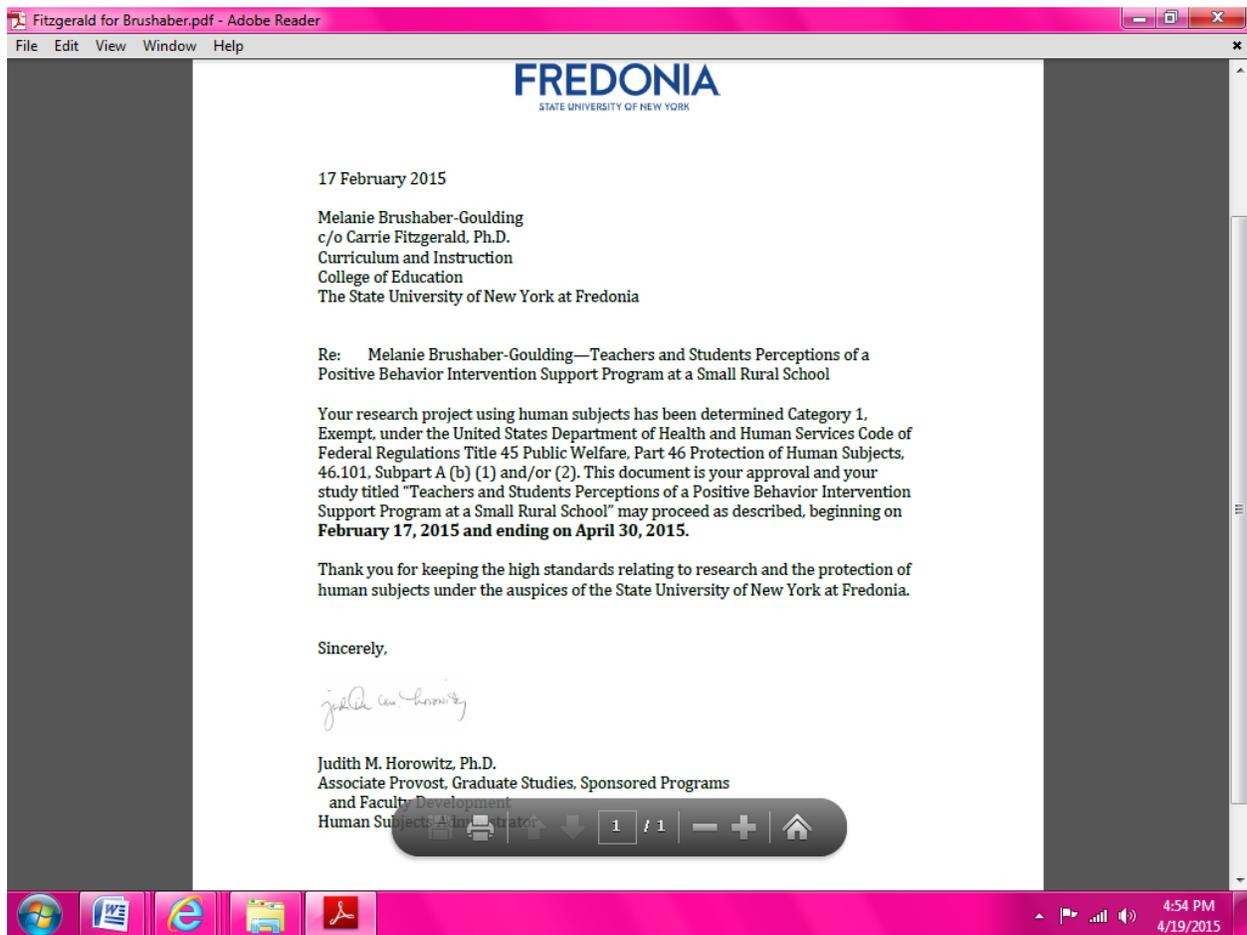Melanie Brushaber-Goulding

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or

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Appendix B

Human Subjects Review Approval (Print Screen of e-mail)

***Thesis title changed to "Teachers' Perceptions of a Positive Behavior Intervention Support

Program at a Small Rural School"

Appendix C

Survey Questions from Survey Monkey

1. Are you familiar with the PBIS implementation at CLCs?

- Yes

- No

- Somewhat

2. How often do you use PBIS in your classroom? (or other area)

- More than 5 times a week

- Fewer than 5 times a week

- Not at all

3. Do you feel that you have been trained enough to implement PBIS to its fullest potential?

- Yes

- No

- Unsure

4. What grade level do you teach primarily?

- Elementary

- High School

- Both

5. Do you feel that PBIS improves the behaviors and attitudes of students at CLCS?

- Definitely

- No

- Somewhat or sometimes

6. Are you comfortable with your ability to implement PBIS successfully?

- Yes

- No

- Unsure

7. How strongly do you feel that PBIS is being implemented?

- Strongly

- Partially

- Not sure

8. Do you think that the current implementation is keeping students motivated to make good choices?

- Yes

- No

- Sometimes

9. How much time do you spend a week on PBIS duties?

- 60+ minutes

- 30-60 minutes

- 0-30 minutes

10. Do you feel that there is too much of a burden on the teachers to honor rewards?

- Yes

- No

- Unsure