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Alternative to Exclusionary Discipline: Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)—A Delphi Study of Riverside County School Districts' Directors of Student Services

James D. Pike
Brandman University, pike4401@mail.brandman.edu

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Alternative to Exclusionary Discipline: Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Positive

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County School Districts' Directors of Student Services

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James D. Pike

Brandman University

Irvine, California

School of Education

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Committee in charge:

Jonathan Greenberg, Ed.D., Committee Chair

Martinrex Kedziora, Ed.D.

Marilou Ryder, Ed.D.

BRANDMAN UNIVERSITY

Chapman University System

Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

The dissertation of James D. Pike is approved.

_____, Dissertation Chair

Jonathan Greenberg, Ed.D.

_____, Committee Member

Martinrex Kedziora, Ed.D.

_____, Committee Member

Marilou Ryder, Ed.D.

_____, Associate Dean

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Without the loving support of friends and family, this process would not have been possible. I would like to recognize these persons in this document and acknowledge their contributions throughout this process.

I am dedicating this dissertation to my wife and son for their love, support, and patience during the highs and lows of my experience throughout a challenging doctoral program. My wife, Rose, gave me confidence during key points of the program and never let me lose sight of what I have been striving for throughout my entire educational experience: graduation and fulfillment of our dreams. My son, Liam, is a wonderful young man who makes me want to be a better man. His love and support in having a partially stationary, writing, busy father is never ending. I love them both more than my own life.

Family, friends, and mentors have had roles in getting me to this point. My mother, Jane, has been a supporter of mine throughout life and deserves a thank you. I know she doesn't fully understand the process, but she loves me anyway. Friends Gary and Teri Carder gave me a safe place to run to when I was a child when things were tense at home. Teri passed in 2015, but while on hospice she told me how proud she was of me for pursuing my doctorate. It was truly touching that at the last part of her time, she thought about what I was trying to accomplish. Life could have been drastically different without the guidance that I received from my uncle Henry "Buddy" Lutes in my late teens and early 20s. Without my uncle, the great things in my life would have never manifested. It was threats like, "I will shoot you through the fat part of your rear" that got through to me how important it was to be an upstanding and honest man. To my

ABSTRACT

Alternative to Exclusionary Discipline: Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Positive

Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)—A Delphi Study of Riverside

County School Districts' Directors of Student Services

by James D. Pike

Purpose: The first purpose of this Delphi study was to identify the degree to which

Riverside County directors of student services or administrators who oversee student

discipline perceive that positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS)

components reduce exclusionary discipline and promote a positive school culture. The

second purpose of this study was to identify key facilitators and barriers to PBIS

implementation within the school districts of the experts who participated in this study.

Methodology: Using the Delphi method, the first questionnaire allowed participants to

give broad-based responses from which themes were derived to be coded, stratified, and

then presented through a Likert scale for participant rating with the second questionnaire.

The second questionnaire was provided to the participants with data from the themes

derived from their initial responses along with a Likert scale to rate the importance of the

themes. The third questionnaire required the participants to review the aggregated results

of the Round 2 questionnaire and categorize the results according to the importance of

each emergent theme using another Likert scale.

Findings: Expert consensus revealed that consistent communication of expectations and

common agreement of language, rules, and expectations for all school areas were

important to reducing exclusionary discipline; understanding and addressing student

needs was important to a positive school culture, as was praising students for their

strengths and expressing value for them; a lack of professional development (PBIS training) was important as a barrier to the implementation of PBIS within a school district; and a reduction of exclusionary discipline (suspensions and expulsions) was important as a facilitator to the implementation of PBIS within a school district.

Conclusions: Consistent communication and common agreement of language, rules, and expectations have the greatest impact on reducing behaviors that contribute to student discipline; understanding student needs has the greatest impact on enhancing behaviors that contribute to a positive school culture; a lack of professional development is important as a barrier to the implementation of PBIS within a school district; and reducing exclusionary discipline is important as a facilitator to the implementation of PBIS within a school district.

Recommendations: Research recommendations are a longitudinal case study of PBIS implementation in Riverside County, regional study of school culture, exclusionary discipline societal cost study (fiscal and criminal), regional zero-tolerance study, regional parental involvement study, regional behavioral student need study, and regional nutritional and basic needs study.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

It's not what happens to us, but our response to what happens to us that hurts us.

—Stephen R. Covey

U.S. schools are charged with educating students to enter society as productive members. Providing content-rich curriculum, teachers of mathematics, language arts, humanities, and science fill a student's day. Students enter classrooms with individual needs and differences in culture, gender, beliefs, and socioeconomic strata. Regardless of this diversity, students from different backgrounds are expected to learn and get along in small spaces. Furthermore, various learning difficulties can affect the students' ability to learn and interact. For example, students with learning disabilities, emotional disabilities, and different ambulatory needs are also integrated into the student body for the least restrictive environment (Giangreco, 2007). In addition, all students are expected to conform to school rules for the safety of the student population and staff. School rules scaffold expected behaviors that contribute to overall school culture.

School culture is a combination of beliefs, perceptions, attitudes, and both written and unwritten rules that shape how a school functions (Van Houtte, 2006). The school represents the best of society by recognizing individual achievement and celebrating students who conform to expected behaviors and meet academic expectations. Teachers, administrators, and staff model appropriate behavior by encouraging dialogue through productive discussions in class and during structured activities and free play. Relationships are also fostered, and students are encouraged to have positive interactions and to develop trust in others. In a positive school culture, mistakes the students make are not punished as failures but become opportunities for learning in a safe space.

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In a positive school culture, students must conform to a uniform set of rules and expectations that pertain to the entire school body and that are reinforced in the classroom by teachers enforcing established norms. Differences in values, beliefs, and diversity can make disagreements arise, and the learning must be halted to address behavioral issues (Schwab, Tucci, & Jolivette, 2013). Therefore, students' negative behaviors hamper learning by disrupting instructional time and causing possible injury to students or staff, while discipline-related absences keep students away from their studies (Scott, Hirn, & Alter, 2014). Furthermore, a disproportionate amount of attention is often focused on children exhibiting negative behaviors, leaving students who follow the rules in the lurch as educators and administrators focus on disruptions (Boyd, 2012).

Students who lack self-esteem, have substance abuse problems, are impoverished, are bullied, or are shuffled between foster families can be failed by even the best schools. No matter the effort extended to a student, the school cannot fix the home life of the student. Factors for disruptive behavior can be varied, but the school fails if the discipline levied does not dissuade negative behaviors. The typical responses to repeated negative behavior include suspensions and expulsions, known as exclusionary discipline (Perry & Morris, 2014; Wilson, 2014). In exclusionary discipline, students who break the rules are given a period of time away from the classroom or school, thereby ensuring excluded students cannot participate in learning opportunities (Wilson, 2014).

Of course, schools must react to ensure the safety of all students and staff (Greenberg et al., 2003). Historically, without an alternative, exclusionary discipline was the mainstay of discipline. However, recent studies have shown that suspensions do not curtail negative behaviors (Allman & Slate, 2011; Costenbader & Markson, 1998). In

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fact, negative outcomes include running afoul of societies' laws and incarceration. Studies by the U.S. Department of Justice have indicated that "68% of all males in state and federal prisons do not have a high school diploma" (Harlow, 2003, p. 1). Over the past decade, an emphasis on keeping students in schools, whether for testing or accountability, has precipitated the need to find alternatives to disciplinary absences (Skiba, Arredondo, & Williams, 2014).

In California, suspension rates triggered the need for legislation to be enacted to circumvent arbitrary disciplinary absences for nonviolent infractions (Shah, 2011b). Exclusionary discipline, or suspension, eliminated children from the classroom. California Education Code Section 48900 governs suspension and expulsion. Assembly Bill 1729, passed in 2012, amended Section 48900 of the California Education Code. Assembly Bill 1729 called for interventions of behavior supports prior to suspension and expulsion (Frey, 2014).

In 2014, Assembly Bill 420 was enacted, which amended California Education Code Section 48900 to prohibit expulsion prior to the implementation of criteria such as counseling interventions and in-school discipline that is productive in countering negative behaviors. The changes in the law allow students with disruptive behaviors to remain in school and continue to learn while educators attempt to apply treatment to curtail further negative behaviors (Frey, 2014).

Positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS) is the most popular form of treatment to curtail negative behaviors (Jovette & Nelson, 2010). PBIS promotes positive interactions within schools by identifying negative interactions, modeling positive interactions, and reinforcing positive behaviors by implementing systems in which

students are rewarded for constructive interactions (Horner & Sugai, 2006; Horner, Sugai, Todd, & Lewis-Palmer, 2005). Students benefit from PBIS by receiving and learning a defined set of behaviors that result in the progression on a chart with a reward for desired outcomes. The teachers benefit by being able to track student behavior over time and afford each child the ability to improve without disciplinary absence. Lastly, recent research has suggested that school culture benefits from an affirmative student body that engages in learning opportunities (Anderson & Spaulding, 2007; Bradshaw, Koth, Bevans, Ialongo, & Leaf, 2008; Lane, Oakes, Carter, & Messenger, 2015).

The directors of student services or administrators who oversee student discipline are tasked with the application of discipline that promotes a positive school culture in their respective districts. Weighing each case of negative behaviors versus the need for the removal of students who exhibit said behaviors, the directors of student services or administrators who oversee student discipline make final decisions concerning their districts' use of exclusionary discipline (School Attendance Review Board, 2012).

Currently, there are few empirical research studies concerning the recent application of PBIS in the state of California. Although touted for efficacy by California State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson, PBIS results for the years of 2014-2015 coincide with the changes in the laws governing exclusionary discipline (California Department of Education, 2014). Torlakson stated in a press release that during 2013 and 2014, expulsion had been reduced by 20% and suspensions were reduced by 15% as a direct result of the implementation of PBIS (California Department of Education, 2014).

Background

PBIS Incarnations

Truancy, fighting, and a lack of uniform discipline prompted the general public to make changes in schools to make them safe (Sugai & Horner, 2002). PBIS began at the University of Oregon in the 1980s in response to the need to address negative behaviors and foster student success. In 1997, the U.S. "Congress renewed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and secured funding to establish the national Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports" (B. Baker & Ryan, 2014, p. 8). Researchers throughout the world gathered their research on exclusionary discipline and alternative methodology, and the center became a repository. The states of Florida, Oregon, and Missouri became proving grounds for PBIS as schools tried new ways to deal with students' needs rather than excluding them from the classroom. Schools dealing with the students' individual needs in this experiment proved successful (Lane et al., 2015). Keeping students in a classroom environment and not excluding them from learning opportunities enhanced their academic achievement. In 2004, two researchers from the University of Oregon, Rob Horner and George Sugai, penned the plan, the *Blueprint for School-Wide Positive Behavior Support Training and Professional Development* (Lewis, Barrett, Sugai, & Horner, 2010). The success of the multitiered system of support prompted various school districts to adopt PBIS, and the practice was welcomed in the state of California.

PBIS Components

PBIS has had success in preventing unwanted behaviors by employing evidence-based practices to teach specific ways of interacting that result in positive, socially

acceptable behavior (B. Baker & Ryan, 2014). Appropriate social conventions yield positive interactions that establish productive learning environments in which inappropriate behaviors are discouraged (Taylor-Greene et al., 1997). Within PBIS, "support is a term that refers to the use of educational procedures to enhance personal competencies (skill development) and systems change procedures to create environments in which those competencies can be used to promote a good quality of life" (Carr, 2007, p. 5). Prosocial behaviors are the goal of PBIS in an effort to allow students to achieve in academia and later in society. Schools teach prosocial communication and interaction with staff and peers through formal and informal instructional activities. Because "children arrive at school with widely differing understandings of what is socially acceptable" (Lane et al., 2015, p. 39; see also Sugai, Sprauge, Horner, & Walker, 2000), PBIS recognizes that there is a need for intervention to address negative behaviors while still understanding that individual intervention is not possible with the offset numbers of students versus staff. PBIS also realizes that change does not occur in a vacuum; therefore, parents, students, and staff are in a partnership for student success. There is no universal solution, and PBIS does not purport to alleviate chronic problem behavior without the support of counselors as well (Horner & Sugai, 2006).

PBIS differs from traditional punishment in that social expectations are explicitly taught and not just expected. According to Coffey and Horner (2012), "A PBIS school is unified in its approach to supporting students both academically and behaviorally" (p. 410). Making students aware and providing direct instruction and modeling of desired behaviors can accomplish prevention of negative behaviors.

In PBIS, positive (pro) behaviors are acknowledged as the students are recognized with awards or progression on a chart toward awards. Depending on the research, the desired ratio for student interactions varies, but the average is four positive contacts for every negative contact (4:1; Sugai & Horner, 2002). Therefore, prosocial behaviors are incentivized. Consistency in acknowledgement of students for either positive or negative behaviors is another element of PBIS. Some students lack consistency in their home lives due to a number of circumstances beyond the control of the school (Sugai & Horner, 2002). In PBIS, continual reflection of the students' behavior is monitored through record keeping, which provides data to understand what is working and what needs to be refined. Specific interventions then depend on the students and their individual needs.

Based on a three-tiered model, PBIS is an intensity-stratified system. In the first tier of PBIS, studies have shown that 80% of students will conform to behavioral norms through general guidance and correction (Riffel, 2011). Tier 1, primary prevention, consists of implementing schoolwide systems for all staff, students, and settings. Thorough research into the exclusionary discipline that the school has metered coupled with an investigation into the root causes (poverty, instability, etc.) of disruptive behaviors provides a basis for intervention and support planning (Bevans, Bradshaw, Miech, & Leaf, 2007). In the first stage of implementation, staff identify, at the school site, negative behaviors and adopt countermeasures (disciplinary matrix). The primary prevention occurs across all school settings by teaching relevant prosocial skills and identifying areas of concern that can circumvent orderly discourse and behavior.

Within a school, 15% of students typically compose the second tier of PBIS, and they require a more specific treatment than what is prescribed in Tier 1 (Horner & Sugai,

2006). The second level of PBIS application focuses on the small population of students who continue negative behaviors by engaging them in specific function-based strategies to curtail negative (at-risk) behaviors (Anderson & Spaulding, 2007). At-risk behaviors range from disruptive and incorrigible behaviors, vandalism, and theft to violent interactions. Small-group counseling, at this stage, comprises the function-based interventions.

The third tier is reserved for the remaining 5% of students who require intensive individual focus for the best chance of acclimatizing to school culture (Bradshaw, Mitchell, & Leaf, 2010). The tertiary level of PBIS addresses high-risk behaviors with intensive function-based supports for those students who do not respond to the primary and secondary levels. Violent behaviors and behaviors that lack respectful interaction with staff and peers would be considered at-risk behaviors. The at-risk behaviors identified at this stage also include refusal to participate in group counseling. Individualized intensive interventions are provided for students at this level (Riffel, 2011). The counselors, teachers, and administrators make a collective effort toward student success.

Scaffolding the process of PBIS involves forming a leadership team within the school to define the purpose of modifying student behavior and delineating expectations for students (Bradshaw, Koth, Thornton, & Leaf, 2009). The leadership team integrates the expectations into lesson plans and acknowledges student achievements in academics and prosocial behavior, both inside and outside of the classroom. The leadership team must convey that compulsory participation is expected from all staff members. Materials

and equipment needed to implement the multitiered system of support must be provided to all staff members as well.

From the leadership team, responsible persons (training staff, counselors, and data processors) delegate responsibilities to staff members. Training follows after a matrix is developed to ensure staff members are apprised of their role in teaching positive behaviors. Coaches reinforce the process with teachers by providing encouragement to contribute and improve the processes for the teachers to perform effectively. As a cyclical process, data are gathered and counselors advise on changes for student behaviors (Irvin et al., 2006).

The teachers have the frontline responsibility of imparting expectations, which requires cooperative and productive interactions through polite language exchanges accomplished via various methods. PBIS positive behaviors are taught in incremental, step-by-step lessons and are modeled by teachers. Words and actions are explained and modeled through role play and situational dilemmas posed to students. Engaging the students further engrains the relevancy of prosocial behaviors internally. Expectations of words and actions are discussed, and rules with consequences are posted for the students to reference.

Teachers are also encouraged to teach prosocial discourse in areas other than the classroom (common play areas and lunch areas) to connect areas with behaviors (Stormont, Lewis, Beckner, & Johnson, 2008). Because different contexts require different rules (behavioral expectations) to be followed, a definition of appropriate context-specific behavior is printed on charts around the school to inform the students of the expectations. An affirmation comes through verbal reinforcement, and a check for

understanding is performed with the students by the teachers repeating appropriate behavior for specific areas. Another tactic is to teach inappropriate behaviors so the students become aware of the offense to the sensibilities of others. Teachers cannot simply ignore problem behavior, because attention seeking can escalate and problem behavior can be contagious. Furthermore, instruction is disrupted and the safe area of the classroom is compromised if problem behavior is not addressed. Teachers form responses to address major and minor issues, and the responses are practiced for consistency. Rewards for students can include beginning-of-class recognition, raffles, open gym, and social acknowledgement (assembly awards).

For all of the aforementioned to work, additional resources are required, and the allocation of funding must be requisitioned. Infrastructure may involve the hiring of additional staff members, training days, professional development, and the provision of behavioral statistics resources and materials pertaining to PBIS (Anderson & Kincaid, 2005). Approval at the district level is a must, as the funding will have to be sought before it can be allocated.

School Culture

In the PBIS model, language in the school culture is nondefamatory and allows for the positive interactions between students and staff. The school presents a common experience to students, and the ability to succeed is attainable for those who try. The aim of PBIS is to foster social competence by developing a system, putting the system into practice, and continually reflecting on the data gathered from the implementation. School culture, with some exception, is about universal language, vision, and values (Boynton & Boynton, 2005; Bradshaw et al., 2008).

Rules exist in the school environment to create a positive experience for the students, and safety is a primary consideration. Students follow societal trends, which can conflict with school norms. Maturation at the time of middle school introduces variables (hormones, social expectations, and peer influence) that can have an influence on behavior. By trying to fit in with school subgroups, students can be challenged to violate school norms.

Exclusionary Discipline

The aim of correction is to foster desired behaviors while denouncing behaviors that are counterproductive. To varying degrees, discipline can alienate students from the learning process (Sugai et al., 2000). Traditionally, there has been a "get tough" or "zero tolerance" stance for students who go against the inclusionary nature that the school establishes (Walker, Ramsey, & Gresham, 2005). Wilson (2014) noted, "By definition, zero tolerance refers to strict, uncompromising, automatic punishment to eliminate undesirable behavior" (p. 50). Exclusionary discipline comprises suspension and expulsion. Suspension is the short-term disciplinary absence levied upon an individual student for breaking the established rules of the school. Rule infractions can include but are not limited to violence, theft, or incorrigible behavior. Expulsion is the permanent removal of a student from a school for the aforementioned behaviors. However, recent research has shown that exclusionary discipline has a progressive antisocial effect. For example, "the very policies that schools adopted to manage behavior and increase achievement are fostering failure and feeding the school-to-prison pipeline" (Wilson, 2014, p. 50).

However, exclusionary discipline must exist to maintain the safety of the school. For instance, the Gun Free Schools Act of 1994 ensured that students who bring weapons to school would be subject to exclusionary discipline for the good of the student body (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Guns, knives, and explosives carried by students have no place in a school. It is for this reason that zero tolerance still exists.

Director of Student Services and Discipline

Directors of student services or administrators who oversee student discipline in California are tasked with the delegation of exclusionary discipline for their districts. With the incorporation of PBIS in California schools, exclusionary discipline is only employed after interventions. Within the PBIS model, students with disciplinary referrals are sent to the office to review their antisocial behavior with the administrator, speak about the interventions that have been applied, and receive disciplinary action. On-site administrators then review the discipline with the staff members who originated the referrals and contact the students' families about matters relating to the discipline. While on-site administrators have the discretion to dispense discipline, they are also obligated to adhere to the laws of the state and the vision of the principal, be cognizant of public perception, and satisfy the teachers' need for safe classrooms. The director of student services has the final say on whether exclusionary discipline is warranted and can be contested by the parents of the students disciplined.

PBIS is not a universal solution to problem behavior. However, a recent press release touted a 15% reduction in the suspension rates of students over the last 2 years in the state of California and cited the primary cause as restorative justice systems like PBIS (California Department of Education, 2014). The reduction of exclusionary discipline

coincides with two assembly bills that allow and mandate that additional PBIS interventions occur prior to most exclusionary discipline (Netzel & Eber, 2003). During the additional interventions, students are afforded avenues to comply with prosocial behavioral norms in an effort to curtail antisocial behaviors.

Studies have shown that office referrals for discipline do not change negative behavior (Sugai et al., 2000). For teachers, office referrals are a way to exclude the student exhibiting negative behaviors from a setting. Conversely, the behavior has to be addressed. Office referrals are used to prevent problem behavior from escalating, addressing a situation to illustrate disapproval of negative behavior, and as a tool to stop classroom disruption (Sugai et al., 2000). Being the responsible party for the impartation or dissemination of the rules governing said discipline, the director of student services tracks offending incidents and serves as an arbiter in suspensions and expulsions that constitute exclusionary discipline.

<center>**Statement of the Research Problem**</center>

Even with the best schools, latest technology, and effective teachers, students cannot be educated if they are not in class (California Department of Education, 2014). Discipline-related absences due to behavioral problems exhibited by students keep them out of class. PBIS purports to keep students in class, limit behavioral issues, and increase academic achievement (Horner & Sugai, 2006). Guided by these three tenets, PBIS aims to prevent negative behaviors through a theoretically evidence-based systems implementation (Horner & Sugai, 2006; Sugai et al., 2000). Through the implementation of the three phases of PBIS, primary, secondary, and tertiary components can have a positive influence over school culture.

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School culture is considered favorable if student and staff outcomes are met (Bevans et al., 2007). For the students, favorable outcomes would involve improved attendance and high academic achievement. Favorable outcomes for staff would include the reduction of work absenteeism and creating an environment that is conducive to discourse and learning. Educational research has suggested that a favorable school culture yields student success and safety (Carr, 2007).

The job of overseeing school discipline at public schools is the responsibility of the director of student services. Directors of student services or administrators who oversee student discipline in California have been tasked with the implementation of action plans and the tracking of discipline-related absences including suspensions and expulsions. Directly influencing school culture, the directors of student services or administrators who oversee student discipline limit negative behavior exposure to both staff and students.

Currently, there is little literature related to how the directors of student services or administrators who oversee student discipline using PBIS perceive the effectiveness of the multitiered system of support. As they are the administrative disciplinarians who must satisfy all requirements for the law, their opinion should be recorded in conjunction with the purported successes reported with PBIS. Additionally, there is little regional research about PBIS in California.

Purpose Statement

The first purpose of this Delphi study was to identify the degree to which Riverside County directors of student services or administrators who oversee student discipline perceive that positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS)

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components reduce exclusionary discipline and promote a positive school culture. The

second purpose of this study was to identify key facilitators and barriers to PBIS

implementation within the school districts of the experts who participated in this study.

Research Questions

The research questions that guided this study were as follows:

1. What elements of PBIS have the greatest impact on reducing behaviors that contribute

   to student discipline?

2. What elements of PBIS have the greatest impact on enhancing behaviors that

   contribute to a positive school culture?

3. What do the directors of student services or administrators who oversee student

   discipline identify as barriers to the implementation of PBIS within the school district?

4. What do the directors of student services or administrators who oversee student

   discipline identify as facilitators to the implementation of PBIS within the school

   district?

Significance of the Problem

PBIS purports to reduce office discipline referrals, suspensions, and expulsions.

While increasing student engagement, PBIS has been shown to minimize at-risk

behaviors and provide a safe and supportive environment (Bradshaw et al., 2010).

Academic improvements have been measured in students who have practiced the

prosocial behaviors of PBIS. Lastly, family participation and interaction is a pleasant

byproduct of PBIS (Horner & Sugai, 2006).

The outcomes of PBIS have been deemed beneficial for faculty and staff as well

(Coffey & Horner, 2012). Consistency enables staff members to share information and

develop universal supports for large groups of students. Improved classroom management and preempting problem behavior increases teacher effectiveness. Furthermore, faculty absenteeism has been reduced with the implementation of PBIS (Bradshaw et al., 2010).

As a benefit for the district, the cost of on-campus detention is mitigated. The cost in the way of dollars that are relinquished when a student is absent is mitigated. Districts are classified by the results of graduation rates, and students cannot graduate if they are not in school (Whitted, 2011).

While research on the overall multitiered system of support has indicated that PBIS is ultimately a success if implemented correctly (Coffey & Horner, 2012; Horner & Sugai, 2006), no research to date exists on how directors of student services or administrators who oversee student discipline perceive their experiences with the components of PBIS and how the practice has influenced school culture. Furthermore, regional studies of PBIS are warranted as populations differ in culture and socioeconomic conditions, and the evidence-based practices differ in other states (Horner & Sugai, 2006).

There was a need for this study as PBIS is new to the local districts in Riverside County, California. It was the researcher's intention to add to the body of knowledge on PBIS by interviewing Riverside County directors of student services or administrators who oversee student discipline about the perceived effectiveness of the components of PBIS in curtailing negative behaviors. The feedback from the directors of student services or administrators who oversee student discipline is important as they occupy a leadership role tasked with tracking student discipline, implementing student behavior

systems, and making certain that enacted laws pertaining to special education and exclusionary discipline are followed.

Definitions

Theoretical Definitions

Barriers. "Anything used or acting to block someone from going somewhere or from doing something, or to block something from happening" ("Barrier," n.d., para. 1).

Exclusionary discipline. Tardieu (2010) stated that this "applies to any means of discipline that requires offenders to be removed from their regularly scheduled classes" (p. 8). Exclusionary discipline removes a student from normal instructional time, including in-school suspension (detention), out-of-school suspension, and expulsion.

Facilitator. "Helps to bring about an outcome (as learning, productivity, or communication)" ("Facilitator," n.d., para. 1).

Positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS). Sinnott (2009) defined PBIS as "a nationwide effort to develop school-wide systems of support that include proactive strategies for defining, teaching, and supporting appropriate student behaviors to create positive school environments" (p. 23).

School culture. For the purpose of this study, school culture is defined as the "values and symbols that affect organizational climate" (Wren, 1999, p. 594).

Operational Definitions

For the purpose of this study, the definitions of commonly used terms are listed below for reference.

Curriculum. State-established learning standards of subjects like mathematics, science, and language arts.

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Director of student services. Also known as a director for people services, the title is given to the person who oversees exclusionary discipline and ensures special education laws are followed within a school district. For the purpose of this study, the title extends to administrators who oversee student discipline.

Disruptive behavior. Student-exhibited negative actions or language that disrupt the orderly learning environments and a positive school culture.

Expulsion. Permanent removal from the student's normal classroom and school.

Suspension. Short-term removal from the student's normal classroom. This can be removal from school or an on-campus change to a more restrictive environment.

Delimitations

This study was delimited to directors of student services or administrators who oversee student discipline employed within Riverside County in the state of California. The study was further delimited by sampling only those directors of student services or administrators who oversee student discipline employed in the capacity of overseeing discipline in K-12 districts.

Organization of the Study

The remainder of the study is organized into four chapters, references, and appendices. Chapter II presents a review of the literature on (a) incarnations and elements of PBIS, (b) school culture, (c) exclusionary discipline, and (d) the responsibilities of directors of student services, which include administrators who oversee student discipline. Chapter III explains the research design and methodology of the study. This chapter includes an explanation of the population, sample, and data-gathering procedures as well as the procedures used to analyze the data collected. Chapter IV

presents, analyzes, and provides a discussion of the findings of the study. Chapter V

contains the summary, findings, conclusions, and recommendations for action and further

research.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

PBIS is defined as a framework for enhancing the adoption and implementation of

a continuum of evidence-based interventions to achieve academically and

behaviorally important outcomes for all students. (Sugai et al., 2000, p. 2)

The second chapter of this study is a review of the literature that addresses the

need for positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS), its relevancy, and the

societal consequences of exclusionary discipline. The review begins with the history of

laws relating to children with special needs. Transitioning to the use of exclusionary

discipline, the review examines the ramifications of overuse, as politicians, parents, and

teachers have called for reform of disciplinary practices within school settings (The

White House, Office of the Press Secretary, 2014). This chapter then addresses

suspension and expulsion, the current practice of exclusionary discipline that excludes the

student from established routines of the normal school day. The impacts of exclusionary

discipline are then discussed, including children being left home alone, the psychological

aspects of absenteeism, criminal activity, and learning deficits and retention.

An overview of the school-to-prison pipeline (Perry & Morris, 2014), a name

given to a process that begins with exclusionary discipline relating to students' ever-

increasing difficulty to conform to norms, rules, and laws and leads to incarceration,

follows. Studies by both the Advancement Project (2005) and the National Association

for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP, 2005) have shown that the school-to-

prison pipeline results in an increased cost to society.

Transitioning to the PBIS incarnations, the chapter then describes the evolution of

PBIS from an institutional idea to a federally funded multitiered system of support. The

components of the three tiers are covered within this section as an ever-increasing escalation of interventions to service the needs of a diverse student population. Chapter II then covers the premise of a unifying school culture that allows for the academic aspirations of students from diverse backgrounds. According to Sugai and Simonsen (2012), implementing the PBIS framework is designed to

enhance academic and social behavior outcomes for all students by

(a) emphasizing the use of data for informing decisions about the selection,

implementation, and progress monitoring of evidence based behavioral practices;

and (b) organizing resources and systems to improve durable implementation

fidelity. (p. 2)

Finally, because directors of student services or administrators who oversee student discipline were the experts chosen for this study, the position and job expectations are covered in this chapter.

Review of the Literature

According to Davis and Jordan (1994), "Typically, schools have been conceived as having two primary functions: (1) promoting and structuring the intellectual development of students; and (2) socializing young people for their roles and responsibilities in society" (p. 571). To understand the students who exhibit negative behaviors and the instructional disruptions that they cause, researchers have endeavored to explore mitigating factors identified as causes of such behaviors (Dupper & Bosch, 1996; Raffaele-Mendez, Knoff, & Ferron, 2002; Rausch & Skiba, 2004; Richart, Brooks, & Soler, 2003; Skiba & Peterson, 1999; Skinner, 1953). These explorations resulted in studies that have served to initiate required changes in laws and federal mandates. What

follows is an overview of the evolution in mandates that have led to an ever-increasing need for student inclusion and intervention rather than exclusion as well as a detailed description of one multitiered system of support designed to meet this need, PBIS.

Children With Special Needs (Disruptive Behaviors)

Prior to 1970, students with special needs were relegated to restrictive environments that did not allow for integration into mainstream classrooms, thus denying them socialization with the mainstream student body. Recent advocacy for children with special needs only transpired through litigation. Beginning in 1971, the Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children (PARC) sued the state of Pennsylvania for equal access to meaningful participation in mainstream classes for children with mental retardation (Martin, Martin, & Terman, 1996). Allegations relating to unconstitutionality of established Pennsylvania statutes precipitated legal intervention on behalf of students with special needs. The lawsuit addressed the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. Furthermore, documentation produced subsequent to the proceedings of *PARC v. Pennsylvania* defined the term *exceptional children* as students with special needs. Exceptional children came to mean "children of school age who deviate from the average in physical, mental, emotional or social characteristics to such an extent that they require special education facilities or services and shall include all children in detention homes" (*Centennial School District v. Commonwealth Department of Education*, 1988, para. 10). These exceptional children were entitled to a free and public education despite their special needs.

Therefore, a three-judge court made the determination that the automatic relegation of children with mental retardation was an affront to freedoms guaranteed

them by their citizenship (*Centennial School District v. Commonwealth Department of Education*, 1988). Provisions for expert testimony allowed for a discussion about education leading toward self-sufficiency. The ruling in the *PARC v. Pennsylvania* decision set "the standard of appropriateness that is, that each child be offered an education appropriate to his or her learning capacities and established a clear preference for the least restrictive placement for each child" (Martin et al., 1996, p. 25).

Mills v. the Board of Education. *Mills v. the Board of Education in the District of Columbia* (1972) involved seven students who had been denied a free and appropriate education because they had been labeled as behavioral problems, mentally retarded, emotionally disturbed, or hyperactive (Martin et al., 1996). As part of the relief of the lawsuit, the plaintiffs sought immediate and adequate education. Despite the fact that plaintiffs in this case were African American, the case was used to defend the rights of exceptional children regardless of race or gender. Exceptional students were removed from mainstream classrooms without due process of law in the District of Columbia at this time. So, as a part of immediate and adequate education, the students then sought supports to facilitate a meaningful education while joining peers in a mainstream classroom. After 30 states had put provisions in place for the education of exceptional children, the U.S. Congress voted to approve the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (1975). The federal government, after realizing the need, interceded. Martin et al. (1996) stated,

> Once state laws and federal court decisions made clear the states' responsibility
> for providing a free, appropriate, public education to all children, regardless of
> disability, states joined advocates in seeking the passage of federal legislation to

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provide consistency, federal leadership, and federal subsidy of the costs of special

education. (p. 29)

By allocating funding to school districts, the federal government could mandate

restrictions for the dispersion of funding. A promise to give funding for such programs

was the impetus for many states to adopt the Education for All Handicapped Children

Act. To receive federal funding, states must provide free, appropriate public education to

all disabled students at public expense. Oversight for public education is under public

supervision and input (U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 2010).

IDEA. The Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), initiated in 1975,

was a four-part act that aligned individual students' disabilities with their right to have

free and appropriate public education (FAPE; American Psychological Association, n.d.).

The first part (Part A) of the legislation covered the general provisions of the law. The

second component, Part B, listed the assistance provided to students with all disabilities.

Part C, the third component of IDEA, covered children with disabilities from birth to age

3. Lastly, Part D was the fourth component and covered national support for programs

administered at the federal level (American Psychological Association, n.d.).

Not to interfere with the state standards, IDEA funding is meant to augment the

funding necessary to facilitate access to the least restrictive educational environment.

Beginning with preschool, the funding is meant to provide every opportunity for students

to thrive through elementary and secondary school. Each student is different, and

Congress acknowledged that difference by requiring that each exceptional needs student

have an individual plan for success. The plan for success is known as the individual

education program (IEP) and involves a meeting with parents, teachers, administrators,

and specialists like speech language pathologists, psychologists, and special education teachers. The meeting is also open to any faculty or administrator who could have input for the success of the student. The goal of the meeting is to develop a plan that details the academic, social, and/or medical accommodations, modifications, and other related services that will provide support necessary to maximize the child's academic potential (Smithey, n.d.).

In 1997, IDEA was renewed and amended by Congress. While reaffirming the previously mentioned advocacy of exceptional children, more was needed to ensure student success. Through the amendments of 1997, Congress made provisions for exceptional children to transition into society for employment or postschool objectives. The transition planning was recommended to begin when the exceptional children turn 14 years of age. Student IEPs were refined after the 1997 amendments to include assignment to appropriate community agencies and adult living facilities (American Foundation for the Blind, n.d.).

In 2004, IDEA was updated again to acknowledge that discipline and disability could be interrelated. Failure to implement recommendations outlined in an IEP could result in behaviors requiring disciplinary intervention such as exclusionary discipline (American Foundation for the Blind, n.d.).

Exclusionary Discipline

Exclusionary discipline refers to the physical removal of a student from his or her normal classroom environment. Previous practices have held that the preservation of productive instruction in the classroom comes in the way of suspension and expulsion, hinging on the notion that students cannot be disruptive to the rest of the class if they are

sent away. Students can be referred to a separate classroom, assigned on-campus

detention, or excluded from the school campus. Continual disruptive behaviors then

result in progressive disciplinary processes designed to maintain instructional integrity.

Exclusions from classrooms have to be progressive to illustrate to the students that

discipline increases in severity with multiple acts of defiance or disruption. Special

classrooms and schools have also been established for students who consistently fail to

comply with behavioral rules and norms (*Honig v. Doe*, 1988).

The literature indicates that there are proponents of exclusionary discipline who

insist that disruptive students need to be removed from classrooms to maintain orderly

instruction, but there are also detractors of the practice (Rossow, 1984). Considered to be

antiquated thinking, the proponents of exclusionary discipline see the removal of students

who display disruptive behaviors as necessary for a smooth-running classroom and

effective instructional process (Yell, 1990). Opposed to the exclusion of students, critics

of exclusionary discipline are proponents of PBIS and see that inclusion of such students

provides opportunities to implement interventions that promote the utilization of

prosocial interactions and discourse. As explained by Skiba and Sprauge (2008), "It is

hard to justify interventions that rely on excluding a student from school when we know

that time spent in learning is the single best predictor of positive academic outcomes"

(p. 39).

Suspension and expulsion. Suspension is one form of exclusionary discipline.

Depending on the infraction of stated rules, students may be subject to disciplinary action

such as suspension and short-term removal from their respective classrooms.

Suspensions can be carried out on campus (in-school suspension), out of school, after

school, during parent conferences, on the weekend (Saturday school), and through alternative programs. Typically, a suspension is for fewer than 10 days. By design, suspension is meant to allow students to reflect on their behavior and understand the negative impact of their choices. The idea of accountability for inappropriate behavior is ancillary to the removal of students to restore an orderly environment conducive to instruction. According to research conducted by Bowditch (1993); Costenbader and Markson (1998); Raffaele-Mendez (2003); and Tobin, Sugai, and Colvin (1996), "Rather than reducing the likelihood of disruption, however, school suspension in general appears to predict higher future rates of misbehavior and suspension among those students who are suspended" (as cited in American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, 2008, p. 854).

It is a common misconception that suspension or expulsion will improve a student's behavior (Vincent & Tobin, 2010). Research conducted by Davis and Jordan (1994) showed that there is a correlation between suspension and poorer grades on cognitive tests for math, science, and history. There is a concern that a student who displays disruptive behaviors becomes a model for other students who will emulate the behaviors. To some extent, the opposite is true. As Perry and Morris (2014) explained, "When highly punitive, an educational environment can breed anxiety, distrust, and uncertainty, even for students who do nothing wrong" (p. 1071). However, students who are actively engaged can have a normalizing effect, coercing the disruptive child to acclimate back to participation and attention.

Suspension reinforces that students can control their exclusion through their actions. According to Cameron (2006), "A paradoxical effect of suspension is that it

rewards students who do not enjoy school with a vacation when they are disruptive or violent" (p. 220). A prevailing opinion is that suspension will involve a parent, who then will intervene in the child's exhibition of negative behavior simply by sending the child away from the normal classroom. Expulsion is a more permanent removal of a student for an indefinite term from a particular school district.

The idea of exclusionary discipline depends heavily on cooperative and active parental involvement. However, studies have concluded that this involvement is often lacking, resulting in negative outcomes for students. For example, "research links suspensions with a higher risk for retention in grade, dropping out, and involvement with the juvenile justice system, even after controlling for race, poverty, and school characteristics" (Losen & Gillespie, 2012, p. 11). A recent study in Texas found that of all students who were suspended, 31% repeated their grade at least once (Shah, 2011a). In contrast, only 5% of students with no disciplinary involvement were held back. Ten percent of students suspended between the seventh and 12th grade dropped out. Furthermore, about 59% of those students disciplined 11 times or more did not graduate high school during the study period (Fabelo et al., 2011; Shah, 2011a).

Impacts of exclusionary discipline. Exclusionary discipline has an impact on society as well as students. Depriving students of classroom experiences has far-reaching impacts including mental health issues, which affect society in the care and custody of individuals. The workforce is also impacted when parents must take work leave to monitor their suspended or expelled children. Impoverished persons lose wages, and this creates undue hardship on families. Outside of the school environment, unmonitored students engage in criminal activity and fall behind classmates due to absence, which

leads to inadequacy and nonparticipation. McNeely, Nonnemaker, and Blum (2002) found, "When adolescents feel cared for by people at their school and feel like a part of their school, they are less likely to use substances, engage in violence, or initiate sexual activity at an early age" (p. 138).

There are gaps in achievement due to student exclusion in a normal classroom setting. According to Balfanz and Byrnes (2012), "Academic achievement from kindergarten forward, high school graduation, and post secondary enrollment are all highly sensitive to absenteeism" (p. 7). With consequences of depression, criminal activity, and learning deficits affecting retention and hampering academic achievement, there are costs to the larger society.

Home alone. In theory, the deprivation of the usual classroom experience is punitive; however, without supervision, students become free from the formal structure of school. At-home supervision is accomplished if there is a parent or guardian to monitor the suspended or expelled student. However, high rates of divorce have single parents competing in the job market to provide for their families (Brown, 1980). Even in the traditional nuclear family, oftentimes both parents must work to provide for living expenses. Without supervision and a formal structure, adolescents are free to make decisions that are not in keeping with social expectations. At home, the students, especially those whose families are impoverished, do not receive mental health or welfare services or nutritional needs that are required (Bruns, Moore, Stephan, Pruitt, & Weist, 2005).

Psychological aspects of absenteeism. Removal from daily routines and the social interactions of school has ramifications for the socialization of a student. Truancy,

exclusionary discipline, or illnesses cause students to have dissociative feelings.

McNeely et al. (2002) stated, "Adolescent health may also be promoted by fostering a

school environment that meets adolescents' developmental need to feel like they belong

and are cared for at school" (p. 145). A study conducted by the University of Exeter

found that a likely association exists "between being excluded, suspended, or expelled

from school and having ADHD or severe depression, and to some extent clinically

relevant difficulties with behavior, peer relationships, and prosocial skills" (Whear et al.,

2013, p. 535).

Criminal activity. Compulsory school laws were first enacted in 1852 as a

response to lethargy in adolescents of the time. Massachusetts was the first state to enact

the mandatory laws, led by Horace Mann, to create a more educated and moral electorate.

Adolescent crime in Chicago was rampant, and

> in 1889, the Chicago Board of Education argued, "We should rightfully have the
>
> power to arrest all of these little beggars, loafers, and vagabonds that infest our
>
> cities, take them from the streets and place them in schools where they are
>
> compelled to receive an education and learn moral principles." (Goldstein, 2015,
>
> para. 8)

The language, arcane by today's standards, denoted the frustrations of the Chicago Board

of Education regarding the criminal activity by adolescents. Compulsory education

provided an alternative for poor children who were relegated to child labor, abuse, or

criminal activity. Moreover, the successes of compulsory education in reducing

adolescent crime and recidivism made other states take notice. By 1918, every state had

mandatory school attendance laws (Goldstein, 2015).

A study by the U.S. Department of Justice found that the financial impacts to society could be measured in a less educated workforce. These impacts could include business losses because of youth who shoplift during the day, higher daytime crime rates, and the costs for social services for students who miss school (M. L. Baker, Sigmon, & Nugent, 2001).

Learning deficits and retention. According to Balfanz and Byrnes (2012), "Chronic absenteeism increases achievement gaps at the elementary, middle school, and high school levels" (p. 4). Delinquency, truancy, absenteeism, and exclusionary discipline all keep students from their normal classrooms. When children are not in school learning, opportunities are lost. Ordway (2016) noted a finding in one study that "students who had been suspended earned significantly lower scores in math and reading on end-of-year exams" (para. 5).

School-to-Prison Pipeline

The school-to-prison pipeline is a term used to describe the frequency with which educational institutions employ practices that exclude students from their normal classrooms by means of zero-tolerance policies and campus police. The term draws a correlation between a school climate that permits exclusionary discipline and the criminalization of students to an introduction to the juvenile justice system. Precipitated by fears of violence, ever more stringent policies that lack pedagogical underpinning make the scholastic environment more akin to that of a correctional institution.

According to Rausch and Skiba (2005), students exposed to exclusionary discipline have a greater proclivity to enter into the criminal justice system. At issue is the mirroring of society's tough stances on criminal activity that have slowly assimilated

into the school culture. Law enforcement models of policing introduced onto campuses set predetermined consequences or punishments for specific offenses. Once the label of *defiant* is placed on a student, the title is almost inescapable. Redemption is afforded in many cases with a wary forgiveness in waiting for a student who exhibits problem behaviors to reoffend. Policies designed to curtail negative behaviors have continually depended on the fear of the propensity for negative behaviors rather than the actual offense. Acts of violence justify the policies, while a universal application ensures that nonviolent infractions are treated with the same matrices. Hastening to exclude children exhibiting negative behaviors, policies relegate nonconforming children to the juvenile justice system where prison becomes the natural progression (Rausch & Skiba, 2005).

Zero Tolerance

First introduced in the 1980s, zero tolerance was a policy intended to reduce the drug trade and use in schools. Adopted as a national model in 1988, it was effective in curtailing trafficking by seizing vehicles that transported drugs. Skiba and Knesting (2001) stated, "Zero tolerance first received national attention as the title of a program developed in 1986 by Peter Nunez, the U.S. attorney in San Diego, impounding seagoing vessels carrying any amount of drugs" (p. 18). The words *zero tolerance* became part of the prohibitive lexicon in conversational language for an absolute punitive measure to correlate with negative repercussions. The absolute connotation of the phrase zero tolerance implies that hope for reconciliation is lost. In 1994, the Gun Free Schools Act ushered zero tolerance into the educational vocabulary (Skiba & Knesting, 2001). Initially, the law dealt with firearms and weapons but was then expanded through amendments. States expanded the use of zero tolerance and applied it to the educational

setting in cases involving swearing, threats, and simple altercations. This expansion of the law meant an increase in expulsions. The philosophy of zero tolerance then was meant to send a message to the populace that behavior choices could limit access to an education, property ownership, and ultimately freedom (Skiba & Knesting, 2001).

As it is an absolute philosophy, zero tolerance does not allow for second chances. According to the seminal work in behaviorism by B. F. Skinner (1953), "The notion of deterring future misbehavior is central to the philosophy of zero tolerance, and the impact of any consequence on future behavior is the defining characteristic of effective punishment" (as cited in American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, 2008, p. 854). Therefore, zero-tolerance exclusion eliminates the ability for the misbehaving students to correct their behavior through inclusion.

Clearly, the deprivation of the usual classroom experience is punitive in theory; however, without supervision, the students become free from the formal structure of school. At home, supervision is accomplished only if there is a parent or guardian to monitor the suspended student. Furthermore, suspensions can result in learning deficits, retention, and criminal activity.

PBIS Incarnations—Seminal Work

Beginning in the 1980s, faculty at the University of Oregon began to study behavioral interventions for students who displayed defiant or disruptive behaviors. The study was conducted to improve school attendance, improve academic performance, and promote prosocial behaviors (Schaps, 2005). During the decade of the 1990s, the reauthorization of IDEA was bolstered by the notion that students would one day enter into society and that prosocial behaviors were necessary to a curriculum, furthering the

aim of the University of Oregon researchers to better understand negative behavior escalation and intervention. It came to the forefront that students acclimated to a school culture would transition to society with the problem-solving abilities that they developed in school (Schaps, 2005).

During the first years of the new millennium, the formation of a national forum for behavioral interventions was established to address the need for supports and interventions as an alternative to exclusionary discipline. The National Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports created the framework for schoolwide positive behavior supports (SWPBS; Sugai & Horner, 2002). The framework operated from a simplified blueprint that first implemented, next evaluated, and lastly provided continuing support necessary for adopters to succeed. Professional development prepared teachers, administrators, and other staff to approach and intervene in negative exchanges with positive responses and create rules and boundaries that are fair and impartial. PBIS coaches provided adopters of the framework with strategies for implementation at the state, district, and school levels. Data collection and data teams were established to track incidents of office referrals, interventions, and exclusionary discipline for changes in the multitiered system of support. Publications such as journals, articles, and papers followed, documenting the successes and areas for improvement during the actual implementation of PBIS. A central web-based repository for the collection, dissemination, and collaboration of the implementation of evidence-based behavior practices and systems was launched to augment professional development (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012).

Two national PBIS leadership conferences began in the first decade of the 2000s. The October Leadership Forum and the March Partnership with the Association for Positive Behavior Supports allowed stakeholders to confer and learn about ever-emergent intervention strategies (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012). The continuing discourse allowed for improvement of data collection practices and interaction for stakeholders nationwide. Continually changing and adapting to students' needs and the schooling requirement to impart information that is retained is an aim of the conferences. Another aim of the conferences is to provide solutions to disruptions to instruction (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012).

PBIS Components (Tiers I-III)

Student attendance has much to do with achievement as well as performance expectations of teachers, administrators, and the entire school. In school, children have access to instruction and learning tools that otherwise would not be available. For a teacher to instruct, the students must be present and ready to learn. With aims to create an environment that is conducive to teaching and learning, PBIS couples misbehavior with interventions that allow for confluence for social forgiveness (Massar, McIntosh, & Eliason 2015).

Aside from academic rigor, the social interactions of the school day provide a primer for integration into society. Societal acclimation success begins with the school day in the navigation of individual and small-group instruction. PBIS uses, via disciplinary matrices, a roadmap for persons interacting with students who display negative or disruptive behaviors (Sugai et al., 2000). Initially, the practice is reactionary in identifying students who exhibit negative behaviors, but there is a preemptive aspect to

modeling appropriate behaviors and posting rules for different areas including classrooms, lunch areas, areas of physical education, and auditoriums. Evidence-based practices and credible research make up the manuals that serve to guide stakeholders in practices for continuous professional development (Sugai et al., 2000).

PBIS is a three-tiered system that was modeled after an infectious disease program from a public health agency (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012). In this model, "80 percent of the people will respond to general guidance or correction, about 15 percent will need a bit more treatment, and maybe the top 5 percent will need specialized treatment" (B. Baker & Ryan, 2014, p. 10).

Tier I. Establishing a universal prevention strategy through a commitment from staff, students, faculty, and parents is the first step in implementing PBIS. The formation of a PBIS team is required to oversee a schoolwide, culturally relevant, and diverse system of support (Sugai et al., 2000). The PBIS team is tasked with establishing a social-emotional curriculum that will allow students to develop socially and academically. Positive behavior expectations are established through the modeling of specified lessons delivered by teachers and staff. Acknowledgement of students exhibiting prosocial behaviors serves to reinforce the aims of PBIS for a positive school culture. The acknowledgement can come in the way of a rewards ceremony for students making the greatest changes to their interactions or a simple rewards system in place for homework forgiveness. Negative behaviors exhibited by students are countered with positive responses from the teachers (Sugai et al., 2000).

Teachers are expected to establish a disproportionate ratio of positive reactions to negative behavior. According to Sugai and Horner (2002), a suggested ratio of 4:1, with

four negative interactions exhibited by a student resulting in one intervention by the teacher or staff member, is to be used. Under the established ratio, a teacher should respond positively to a student who exhibits disruptive and negative behaviors four times, with the fifth offense resulting in an office referral. Perry and Morris (2014) suggested that a predictable consequence system for behavior infractions can be imposed to make exclusionary discipline a last resort. Data collection is a vital reporting tool for documenting negative interactions and can be used to identify students in need of interventions and supports. Data collection ensures that accurate records of the exchanges are reported so that when a student is subject to exclusionary discipline, all available supports and interventions have been exhausted. Data collection also serves as evidence-based classroom management for effective and ineffective behavioral interventions (Sugai et al., 2000).

Tier II. There is a consensus of studies that have indicated that 15% of the student population in a given school will not respond to Tier I methods and will require a greater level of supports offered within the second tier (Cheney et al., 2009; McIntosh, Campbell, Carter, & Dickey, 2009; Walker et al., 2009). Continual reviews and enhancements of Tier I strategies apply to the students in Tier II while the additional interventions and supports are applied. Tier II offers additional interventions that are designed for students who have received two to five office disciplinary referrals for behavioral issues. Such interventions include social skills groups and check-in/check-out accountability. Additionally, behavioral contracts and mentoring allow for student accountability (The PBIS Compendium, 2015). Modifications to support are tailored for children who need additional resources and are determined through progress monitoring.

Tier III. The remaining 5% percent of students who cannot conform to Tier I and II interventions are at risk of exclusion and comprise the smallest demographic in the student populace (Horner et al., 2005). Continued review and enhancement of strategies from the previous tiers accompany team assignment roles to develop interventions and supports while monitoring progress. Tier III students require an individual behavioral support plan (BSP). The BSP protocols are determined after a functional behavior assessment (FBA) has been implemented to determine how best to aid the students (National Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, n.d.). Interventions are continually modified to allow the students the greatest opportunity for success. Needs assessments vary between students, as they are succinct in the supports that they may require and resources that are needed.

School Culture—Universal Language, Vision, and Values

Also known as school climate, school culture is a barometer of the precursors for highly effective academic achievement, a safe and caring environment, and unifying a school ethos in the way of rules and understandings for the fair and equitable treatment of all. Scholars have defined school climate loosely as "atmosphere, feelings, tone, setting, or milieu of the school" (Cohen, McCabe, Michelli, & Pickeral, 2009, p. 181). While there are feelings associated with the concept of school climate, experts state that there is not a universal definition (Marx & Byrnes, 2012). An individual experiences school culture as it permeates attitudes, behaviors, and group norms. A school must develop and sustain a comprehensive school culture that unifies parents, students, and faculty in a common goal of improving safety, learning standards, assessment, staff development, and parental involvement in an integrated fashion.

There are various components to school culture. There is a physical dimension to school culture that is represented by the appearances of the buildings and classrooms (Loukas, 2007). The school's size and student population in relation to class size can be a precursor to issues impacting school culture negatively. Availability of resources is also a physical characteristic of school culture. Buildings and amenities order the students' day, as access to restrooms, eating areas, and places to congregate allow for the normal daily routines. Physical characteristics of school culture contribute to the safety and comfort of students (Loukas, 2007). Loukas (2007) noted, "Schools that feels safe, for instance, foster high-quality relationships among students and teachers while decreasing the probability of violence" (p. 1).

Social dimensions of school culture can be identified through the quality of interpersonal communications that take place between students, teachers, and staff (Loukas, 2007). The exchange of respectful dialogue facilitates fair treatment of the aforementioned persons. An environment where individuals feel as if they are heard and understood leads to effective decision making to include students, teachers, and staff. Students are able to write and speak about their experiences, and the experiences are shared with student groups, parents, staff, and teachers as a part of a continuing dialogue. Comfort in communication is a component of a positive school culture. The development of moral character and the display of kindness, honesty, and respect make students better communicators with peers and their teachers (Loukas, 2007). According to Lickona, Schaps, and Lewis (2007),

Character education holds that widely shared, pivotally important, core ethical values such as caring, honesty, fairness, responsibility, and respect for self and

others along with supportive performance values such as diligence, a strong work

ethic, and perseverance form the basis of good character. (p. 1)

Frustrations are diminished as inroads can be created through mutual understanding.

Lastly, an academic component of school culture is metered by the quality of

instruction and the teacher expectations for students and their achievement (Loukas,

2007). Monitoring for student progress can open a dialogue with individuals and student

groups to make group decisions for improved instruction and shared expectations.

Known as the performance characteristic, the academic component of school culture is

demonstrated by perseverance, critical thinking, and a commitment to quality (Loukas,

2007). According to Loukas (2007), "A great deal of research shows that student

perceptions of school climate affect academic motivation and achievement" (p. 2). PBIS

influences achievement by allowing students to conform to school culture, which

promotes achievement.

Agencies like the U.S. Department of Education and National School Climate

Council seek to assign accountability for school climate to districts that receive federal

funding (National School Climate Center, n.d.). According to the Character Education

Partnership (2010), school climate has more influence over student achievement than the

principal, school superintendent, or school board. Evidenced by the Character Education

Partnership studies, improved school culture has yielded increased attendance rates,

improved graduation rates, elevated college acceptance rates, and a lowered dropout rate.

Furthermore, Cohen et al. (2009) stated, "Positive school climate promotes student

learning, academic achievement, school success, and healthy development, as well as

effective risk prevention, positive youth development efforts, and increased teacher retention" (p. 187).

PBIS seeks to enhance the cultural factors that enable individuals to enter into society and interact with success. A recent study (Huskin, 2016) illustrated that progression is not created in a vacuum. Teachers must be supported in the way of continued professional development in what is described as lifelong learning. Student leadership is essential as a community is established through both intergrade and across-grade groupings to establish democratic governance. More than age differences, students learn about constituency in serving as representatives for diverse peers in student government (Huskin, 2016). Days begin in a PBIS school with "Pick Me Ups," which are daily starters to impart good feelings for positive interactions, and illustrating the rewards for complying with the established rules (Oare, 2017). Staff members are encouraged as lifelong learners through their professional development. The continued incentive to learn and capitalize on the data collected on successful behavioral modification illustrates the teachers' respect, caring, and dedication to the profession and students. The successful teachers learn to enhance inclusion of school culture in embracing diversity and celebrating differences (Quinton, 2013).

School culture is enhanced when students understand what is expected of them. The Character Education Partnership (2010) defined a positive school culture as including a schoolwide ethos for high expectations for learning and achievement and maintained that powerful pedagogy and curriculum includes partnerships with parents and communities through established norms. School policies must be clear, and expectations for behavior must be understood. Reflection on behavior and interactions

emphasizes society's expectations for its citizenry. The ability to have respectful

discourse and interact courteously makes a person socially intelligent and able to interact,

introduce, and form alliances that are advantageous for social mobility (Battistella, 2009).

PBIS provides students with established interactions through polite conversation and

considerations for others that provide for the common dialogue expected in a positive

school culture. Off days and mistakes can be forgiven when a person's positive

interactions outweigh incidents of negative behaviors.

Directors of Student Services and Discipline

Serving as the administrators of student discipline, directors of student services or

administrators who oversee student discipline have numerous responsibility and

accountability facets to their vocation. Sometimes known as directors of people services,

these administrators are responsible for state, federal, and special programs, including

PBIS, involving the students within their respective districts. School curriculum and

finance are responsibilities of the position as well. Developing instrumentation, group

assessment guidelines, methods of evaluation, student profiles, and student selection

criteria for programs are key functions for the directors (Treasure Valley Community

College, 2001).

Programs are developed based on need and the utilization of the latest research

that will enable the least restrictive environment for students. Additionally, the director's

responsibilities include development and review of annual program applications.

Communicating the programs and policies to parents, teachers, staff, and administrators

is a task under the purview of the director of student services. Serving as the liaison

between the state department of education and board of education, the director aligns the

law and the district's aims in educating children. Special education professional

development training is coordinated through the director's office as well. Serving as a

central repository of data, the director of student services prepares annual reports about

special program evaluations (Hillsboro School District, 2013).

The assignment of students to programs or placement requires addressing

transportation needs, transferring records and data, and coordinating communication

between parents and schools. Finally, the office of the director of student services is the

central repository for the discipline statistics and data for the district; these include

referrals, suspensions, and expulsions (Hillsboro School District, 2013).

Summary

The literature review presented in this chapter provided a broad understanding of

PBIS and the success that it has had with other student populations. Historical programs

emanating from case law regulating children with special needs, such as *Mills v. the*

Board of Education and IDEA, established the need for PBIS to aid students with diverse

needs. Exclusionary discipline was explained and the components of suspension and

expulsion thoroughly detailed. The school-to-prison pipeline philosophy and its

methodology, the zero-tolerance mandate, allowed for disproportionate student exclusion

for the smallest infraction. PBIS was covered from its inception at the University of

Oregon to its recorded successes with its three tiers of assistance that improve school

culture. As an amalgam of norms and the movement of a student population, student

culture determines student happiness and achievement. Concluding the chapter was the

description of the target sample for this study, directors of student services or

administrators who oversee student discipline. The significance of this study is that it

addressed why, with the successes of PBIS, it is not universally adopted by those charged with the implementation of federal programs and mandates.

Chapter III of this study details the method used to conduct this study. By providing a description of the Delphi method, the researcher reiterates the purpose statement and research questions for this study. The population and sampling methods as well as the target sample are discussed in detail. Provisions for data collection and analysis are thoroughly detailed.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Overview

This study adds to the body of knowledge regarding PBIS and moreover adds to the understanding of its effectiveness in improving school culture in Riverside County schools. This chapter provides a narrative structure for how this study was conducted and includes the purpose statement, research questions, and research design. It further comprises a description of the population, the sample derived from the population, the instrument used, data collection and analysis procedures, and the study limitations. The Brandman University Institutional Review Board (BUIRB) granted approval to conduct this study.

Purpose Statement

The first purpose of this Delphi study was to identify the degree to which Riverside County directors of student services or administrators who oversee student discipline perceive that positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) components reduce exclusionary discipline and promote a positive school culture. The second purpose of this study was to identify key facilitators and barriers to PBIS implementation within the school districts of the experts who participated in this study.

Research Questions

The research questions that guided this study were as follows:

1. What elements of PBIS have the greatest impact on reducing behaviors that contribute to student discipline?

2. What elements of PBIS have the greatest impact on enhancing behaviors that contribute to a positive school culture?

3. What do the directors of student services or administrators who oversee student discipline identify as barriers to the implementation of PBIS within the school district?

4. What do the directors of student services or administrators who oversee student discipline identify as facilitators to the implementation of PBIS within the school district?

Research Design

In this study, the researcher employed descriptive research due to the study being nonexperimental, as it provides a summary of the existing phenomenon. The Delphi method was the chosen research design for this study. According to Cantrill, Sibbald, and Buetow (1996), "The Delphi technique was developed in the 1950s by the Rand Corporation as a forecasting tool to predict the effects of atomic warfare in the USA" (p. 67). The Delphi method requires that experts answer questions that align with their expertise. Cantrill et al. added, "The Delphi process is a survey technique for decision making among isolated, anonymous respondents" (p. 67).

In a Delphi study, the facilitator identifies the experts in the field of the topic he or she wishes to study. This study was concerned with surveying directors of student services or administrators who oversee student discipline about the use of PBIS within their respective districts. Once the experts were identified, the researcher, or facilitator, obtained their consent to participate in rounds of surveys. Participants were anonymous in their responses since "anonymity allows the experts to express their opinions freely, encourages openness and avoids admitting errors by revising earlier forecasts" (Haughey, n.d., para. 4). For the purpose of this study, the researcher used three rounds of questions in an attempt to allow the experts to come to some consensus. The first questionnaire

contained general questions to gain a broad understanding of the experts' views on the implementation of PBIS within their districts. From the initial questionnaire, themes were derived from the answers that were given. The first-round questionnaire employed qualitative methods to derive the themes that were consolidated into a quantitative list of questions that the experts rated utilizing a Likert scale. A Likert scale presents a numeric valuation to either the affirmation of a concept or negating the importance of a statement regarding the study. After the receipt of the responses to the second questionnaire, the researcher compiled data from the Likert-scale scoring to provide the participants with results for their group of peers. The third and final round of questions followed the same methodology of rating the answers while also providing the participants with the rated results from the previous questionnaire. After receipt of the responses to the third questionnaire, the researcher determined the final result and was able to formulate a conclusion. The process is illustrated in Figure 1.

Establish the Facilitator

Determine the Experts

Define the Problem

Round 1 Questions

Round 2 Questions

Round 3 Questions

Act on the Findings

Conclusion (Consensus)

Figure 1. Delphi method overview.

The design was chosen for this study based on the researcher's mission to poll experts in positions of leadership about the implementation of a multitiered system of support that has had dramatic impacts on student achievement and behavior in different regions. PBIS has not received universal application throughout Riverside County, and the researcher studied individual beliefs about PBIS and the facilitators and barriers to PBIS implementation in schools.

Population

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), "A population is a group of elements or cases, whether individuals, objects, or events, that conform to specific criteria and to which we intend to generalize the results of the research" (p. 129). Schools are abundant throughout the world. Each school is a microcosm of society, and as such, schools have governing bodies that ensure that pedagogic, transportation, logistic, and nutritional needs of the students are met or the best effort extended. In the state of California, where the researcher resides, there are 58 counties, each with several school districts. Information retrieved from the California Department of Education (2015) website indicated that there are 1,022 school districts within the state. Table 1 provides a breakdown of schools within the state.

Directors of student services or administrators who oversee student discipline, the leaders responsible for the application of federal programs including implementation of PBIS, in Riverside County, California, were the target population of this study. The findings of this study are representative of both larger and smaller counties throughout the state of California. It was not within the scope of the research to extend the study

Table 1

Schools in the State of California

School type	Number of schools
Elementary schools	5,825
K-12 schools	242
Middle/junior high schools	1,347
High schools	1,337
Alternative/continuation/community day schools	923

Note. Middle schools and junior high schools were combined. Also, continuation, community day, and alternative school sites were combined for this table.

past the state and county in which the researcher resides. Narrowing the sample from the population to make the study manageable and feasible for scientific inquiry, the researcher made the determination to limit research to Riverside County, California.

Sample

Riverside County, California, is the fourth most populous county in the state. A diverse county with both densely and sparsely occupied areas, Riverside County is 7,208 square miles in area and borders Arizona to the east. There are mountain ranges, but Riverside County is predominantly a desert area. The student populace comes from manufacturing hubs, suburban areas, mountain communities, and arid desert cities and towns to be educated in Riverside County schools. Table 2 identifies the school districts within Riverside County.

The sample was derived from 23 school districts within Riverside County. There were 263 schools represented by the sample of this study. Not all of the schools in Riverside County implement PBIS. There are some schools that implement portions of

Table 2

Riverside County Public Schools

School district	Elementary	Middle	High	Alternative education sites
Alvord Unified	14	4	3	2
Banning Unified	4	1	2	1
Beaumont Unified	6	2	2	
Coachella Valley Unified	13	2	3	1
Corona-Norco Unified	28	8	9	3
Desert Center Unified	1			
Desert Sands Unified	18	5	5	2
Hemet Unified	14	4	6	3
Jurupa Unified	17	3	3	2
Lake Elsinore Unified	14	4	4	
Menifee Union	9	3		
Moreno Valley Unified	23	6	5	5
Murrieta Valley Unified	11	4	4	
Nuview Union	2	1	1	1
Palm Springs Unified	15	5	5	2
Palo Verde Unified	3	1	1	2
Perris Elementary	7			
Perris Union High		1	4	2
Riverside Unified	30	7	7	4
Romoland	4	1		
San Jacinto Unified	7	2	2	
Temecula Valley Unified	17	6	5	
Val Verde Unified	12	4	3	
Total	269	74	74	30

Note. Charter schools and those schools operated by the Riverside County Office of Education due to the possible specialization of instruction and discipline were omitted from this study.

the multitiered system of support but fail at full implementation. This study required that

the sample participants be a part of a district that had implemented PBIS for more than a

year at some level. However, each district has a person responsible to ensure that federal laws and programs are implemented and followed. This person, the director of student services or administrator who oversees student discipline, imparts the law and recommendations throughout his or her district. This person is also responsible for duties such as coordinating intradistrict and interdistrict transfers.

Purposeful sampling was utilized for this study and is defined as follows: "The researcher selects particular elements from the population that will be representative or informative about the topic of interest" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 138). The selection of experts is mandated by the Delphi method. The potential sample size for this study was 23 or higher with 100% of the respondents participating. The Delphi method does not have a minimum number of respondents. Respondents make up a homogeneous group that can yield results in "a sample of between ten to fifteen people [for] sufficient results" (Skulmoski, Hartman, & Krahn, 2007, p. 10). Therefore, the rationale for the sampling in this investigation was to limit the scope of the research to the county in which the researcher resides. The research questions in this study fit the target sample's expertise and yielded results further discussed in Chapter V.

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Selection Criteria for the Expert Panel

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According to Habibi, Sarafrazi, and Izadyar (2014), "One of the most important phases of Delphi technique is selecting eligible members for the Delphi panel because the validity of the results depends on the competence and knowledge of panel members" (p. 10). It is important that the experts selected for the study have knowledge and expertise regarding the subject of the study. The Delphi study results in a compilation of

subjective expert opinions that are considered to be more reliable than individual

statements (Sackman, 1975).

As previously stated, the Delphi method does not have a minimum number of

respondents. However, researchers have suggested a small homogeneous "sample of

between ten to fifteen people [for] sufficient results" (Skulmoski et al., 2007, p. 10).

Thirty experts were invited to participate in this study. The selection criteria were

established to include directors of student services or administrators who oversaw student

discipline in primary, middle, and high school grades who had implemented PBIS for

more than a year at some level. By polling the spectrum for participants, the researcher

was able to better understand why PBIS is not implemented universally given the obvious

benefits. These experts' judgments and opinions were requisites for the qualitative

Delphi study (Habibi et al., 2014).

Participants in this study were selected using the method of purposeful sampling.

In purposeful sampling, the researcher makes a judgment about subjects to be selected on

the basis of the subjects' knowledge of the topic. According to McMillan and

Schumacher (2010), purposeful sampling is "a type of sampling that allows choosing

small groups or individuals who are likely to be knowledgeable and informative about the

phenomenon of interest; selecting cases without needing or desiring to generalize to all

such cases" (p. 489).

Instrumentation

In the review of literature for this study, the researcher saw the merit of PBIS in

schools providing for improved student performance, positive school culture, and reduced

rates of exclusionary discipline. With these benefits, it was important to understand the

experts' assessments of PBIS elements and implementation. Adhering to the Delphi

method, the researcher prepared questionnaires to present to participants utilizing the

Survey Monkey online survey website (https://www.surveymonkey.com/). Directors of

student services or administrators who oversee student discipline have great demands

placed on their time, and to respect their schedules, an electronic survey was used and

elicited a response rate conducive to this study. The researcher created the survey

questions to address the purpose of this study. The first questionnaire allowed for open-

ended responses, as each of the questions was followed by a 500-character text box.

Participants were encouraged to provide broad answers in order to convey a full

understanding of their perspectives of the topic.

Delphi Round 1

Themes were developed after the aggregation of responses were received from the

participants to the Round 1 questionnaire. The identified themes were sent to the

participants with the Round 2 questionnaire. A Likert scale stratified each of the

identified themes extracted from the data. Participants could then see the results, rate the

importance, and answer the second questionnaire while seeing the anonymous

contributions of their peers.

Delphi Round 2

The results from the responses received from the Round 2 questionnaire were sent

to the participants with the Round 3 questionnaire. The participants were given

additional space within the Round 3 questionnaire to record any additional thoughts that

could have relevance to the study after reviewing the responses.

Delphi Round 3

The responses from the third round of questions were analyzed for common themes and frequency of responses to provide results.

Data Collection

Permission was sought to interact with each of the participants from his or her district superintendent, via an e-mail proposal. The researcher provided a synopsis of the research study and a copy of the proposal. The researcher also offered to provide a verbal explanation of the study's aims. In this study, the researcher, using the Delphi technique, administered questionnaires to obtain information from the expert panel. The researcher utilized an account through an online survey service, Survey Monkey, to generate an online shell for all questionnaires. The online component for this study provided convenience for the respondents to answer as their time allowed and in the locations of their choice.

Delphi Round 1

The first questionnaire hyperlink was sent to the participants via the e-mail accounts provided. A set of directions for the completion of the survey was contained in the body of the e-mail correspondence. Survey Monkey served as an online repository for responses and allowed the researcher to have an archive for further study during the course of the survey. A 1-week reply period was established for the completion of the survey.

Delphi Round 2

After aggregating the first questionnaire responses and identifying emergent themes, a second questionnaire was developed to include a Likert scale to rate responses.

Results from the first survey were provided to the participants. The second questionnaire hyperlink was sent to the participants via e-mail. A set of directions for the completion of the survey was contained in the body of the e-mail correspondence. Survey Monkey served as an online repository for responses and allowed the researcher to have an archive for further study during the course of the survey. An 18-day reply period was established for the completion of the survey.

Delphi Round 3

After aggregating the second questionnaire responses, a third questionnaire was developed to include a Likert scale to rate responses. Results from the second survey were provided to the participants. The third questionnaire hyperlink was sent to the participants via e-mail. A set of directions for the completion of the survey was contained in the body of the e-mail correspondence. Survey Monkey served as an online repository for responses and allowed the researcher to have an archive for further study during the course of the survey. A 15-day reply period was established for the completion of the survey.

Brandman University Institutional Review Board

Prior to any survey instrument being administered to participants, the BUIRB reviewed all materials related to the study. The BUIRB was formed to safeguard participant rights and to ensure that the welfare of participants is not impacted by Brandman University studies. The BUIRB requires that a letter of introduction (Appendix B) be sent to inform potential participants about the study. Each e-mail correspondence sent to the participants reiterated the confidentiality of any data collected related to the study. The letter of introduction was sent to each participant via e-mail

correspondence. After informing participants of the nature of the study, the informed

consent form (Appendix C) was sent to each participant with the Research Participant's

Bill of Rights (Appendix D) document.

Validity and Reliability

There is no evidence for the reliability of the Delphi technique. The method

depends on the expertise of the sample selected. Helmer (1967) supported the validity

and reliability of the technique as an acceptable method of data collection from an

identified group. It is a future-prediction tool based on the opinions of experts in the field

studied. Habibi et al. (2014) asserted, "One of the most important phases of Delphi

technique is selecting eligible members for the Delphi panel because the validity of the

results depends on the competence and knowledge of panel members" (p. 10). To vet the

instrument prior to the application, the researcher administered a pilot study to

educational professionals to understand if the questions were germane to the study and

aligned to the research questions for the study.

Pilot Study

The goal of the pilot study (Appendix E) was to confer with experts and eliminate

ambiguity in the survey questions. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) stated, "It is

important to conduct a pretest by asking some thoughtful individuals to read and respond

to the questions" (p. 204). Therefore, five participants with master's degrees and a

minimum of 10 years of experience in the field of education were chosen to vet the

questions. Ratifying the questions for the first round of the Delphi process through these

experts allowed for increased reliability for the instrument presented. The clarity of the

instrument and the appropriateness of the means to rate the responses were corrected as a

result of the pretest. The pilot test consisted of 14 questions and required 20 minutes to complete.

Data Analysis

Patton (2002) stated, "Modern alchemy aims to transform raw data into knowledge, the coin of the information age" (p. 432). After each round of this Delphi study, the questionnaire responses were analyzed as described below.

Delphi Round 1

The first questionnaire (Appendix A) was open-ended and allowed the participants to give broad-based responses from which the researcher could derive themes to be coded and stratified through a Likert scale for participant rating with the second questionnaire.

Delphi Round 2

The second questionnaire, developed from the first questionnaire responses, was provided to the participants with data from the themes derived from their initial responses. A Likert scale was presented to the participants to rate the importance of the themes identified in the Round 2 questionnaire.

Delphi Round 3

After receipt of the second round of survey responses, the researcher aggregated the experts' responses. The results were then given to the participants along with the third round of questions. The third round of questions required the participants to review the results of the Round 2 questionnaire and categorize the results according to the importance of each emergent theme using another Likert scale for the responses.

Limitations

The scope of the study was limited to Riverside County, California. Due to time constraints and financial limitations, sampling a larger population consisting of more counties and states was not possible for a manageable study. Another limiting factor was the exclusion of charter schools and schools under the purview of the Riverside County Office of Education, as their specialization and/or methodology differs from public schools, which could have elicited outlying responses, influencing validity. Finally, the survey instrument was developed by the researcher and may have lacked the reliability measures of other types of contexts and settings.

Summary

The third chapter of this study provided a review of the purpose statement and research questions. The research design was explained, and the methodology was detailed to provide a definition of the Delphi method as well as an overview of the population and sample for this study. Data collection, data analysis, and study limitations concluded Chapter III.

In the next chapter, Chapter IV, the results of data collection, data analysis, and findings are presented. Chapter V provides a summary of information, findings, conclusions, and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH, DATA COLLECTION, AND FINDINGS

Chapter IV of this dissertation presents the data findings of this Delphi study. Experts representing 23 school districts in Riverside County, California, were asked to respond to a survey about the implementation of positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS). The Delphi participants were surveyed for their expertise about PBIS implementation, both facilitators and barriers, and impacts on exclusionary discipline and school culture.

Overview

In this chapter, the purpose statement is reiterated, the population and sample are discussed, the Delphi methodology that was applied to an expert panel for data collection is described, the findings are presented, and a summary completes this chapter. The population for this study included directors of student services or administrators who oversee student discipline. The sample was purposefully selected and delimited to directors of student services or administrators who oversee student discipline in the 23 school districts in Riverside County.

Purpose Statement

The first purpose of this Delphi study was to identify the degree to which Riverside County directors of student services or administrators who oversee student discipline perceive that positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) components reduce exclusionary discipline and promote a positive school culture. The second purpose of this study was to identify key facilitators and barriers to PBIS implementation within the school districts of the experts who participated in this study.

Research Questions

The research questions that guided this study were as follows:

1. What elements of PBIS have the greatest impact on reducing behaviors that contribute to student discipline?

2. What elements of PBIS have the greatest impact on enhancing behaviors that contribute to a positive school culture?

3. What do the directors of student services or administrators who oversee student discipline identify as barriers to the implementation of PBIS within the school district?

4. What do the directors of student services or administrators who oversee student discipline identify as facilitators to the implementation of PBIS within the school district?

Research Methods and Data Collection Procedures

The Delphi research methodology was selected for this study as it allowed the researcher to query experts in the field of student discipline about experiences in the implementation of PBIS. Using a Delphi method, the researcher surveyed a group of experts to gain their consensus on the topic. Through the Delphi method, the researcher employed both qualitative and quantitative methods for data collection from this panel.

Beginning with a pilot study, the survey was vetted by a group of experts to ascertain if the potential questions aligned with the study. Experts for the pilot study had 10 or more years of certificated teaching experience and master's degrees. From the data gathered in the pilot study, the first-round questionnaire was modified. After contacting the Riverside County Office of Education, the researcher obtained contact information for persons meeting the selection criteria from each of the 23 school districts. Through

purposeful sampling, directors of student services or administrators who oversaw student discipline in Riverside County were contacted as the expert panel. A contact letter was sent immediately to initiate contact with the sample for this study. The first-round survey was created, and a link to the Survey Monkey website was provided in an invitation to participate. Anonymity in the survey was provided by the secure website, Survey Monkey. In the Survey Monkey design shell, each participant was provided with the informed consent form and the Research Participant's Bill of Rights. Open-ended questions in the first-round survey allowed the participants to answer utilizing comment boxes to convey answers in their own words. At the conclusion of the first round, themes were identified from the responses given.

Aligning the themes to the research questions, the second-round survey was created to answer questions posed in this study. The Round 2 survey was sent to participants along with the results of the first-round survey to allow the participants to see the response rates from the previous survey. A Likert scale was applied to each second-round question. Its purpose was to enable participants to identify the degree to which each identified theme had an impact on the implementation of PBIS. These Likert-scale responses allowed for the initial quantitative data collection for response rates.

In the third round, participants were again asked to complete the same questionnaire with the Likert scale after reviewing the results from the second-round questionnaire analysis. The purpose of providing the questionnaire with the results was to allow the participants to reach consensus. Chapter III of this dissertation provided a detailed description of the research method, the process, and the design used in this study.

Pilot Study

The goal of the pilot study (Appendix E) was to confer with experts and eliminate ambiguity in the questions. The pilot study was conducted for validity, as McMillan and Schumacher (2010) stated, "It is important to conduct a pretest by asking some thoughtful individuals to read and respond to the questions" (p. 204). Therefore, five participants with master's degrees and a minimum of 10 years of experience in the field of education were chosen to vet the questions. On October 23, 2016, the pilot study was sent to the preselected panel via an e-mail link provided by the Survey Monkey website. Participants for this phase of the study provided two answers for each question. The pilot-study participants were provided with the questions to be used in the first-round survey. The pilot test consisted of 14 questions and required 20 minutes to complete. Included with the survey was the informed consent form and the Research Participant's Bill of Rights. The Survey Monkey website provided a means for participants to anonymously respond to the survey at their convenience but within a predetermined series of dates. Answers indicated that each question was either pertinent to the study or required correction for study alignment. A comment box was provided to allow for corrections to be entered by the pilot-study participants. Of the five participants surveyed, all responded and provided comments to improve the questions for study alignment. The pilot survey closed on October 30, 2016.

The questions for the first round of the Delphi process were ratified through these experts to allow for increased reliability of the instrument presented. The majority of the survey was unchanged during the pilot implementation; however, at the suggestion of the participants, changes were made to several survey questions. Changes in wording were

recommended to align with the understanding of the sample. For example, the word *certified* was replaced with the word *certificated* when referring to teachers. Two participants suggested the addition of a question concerning the number of hours of professional development (training) that survey participants had received related to PBIS. At the request of the pilot-study participants, the operational definitions for both facilitators and barriers used in the dissertation were added to the questions as a reference for the Round 1 study participants.

Population

In the state of California, where the researcher resides, there are 58 counties, each with numerous school districts. The information retrieved from the California Department of Education (2015) website indicated that there are 1,022 school districts within the state. Directors of student services or administrators who oversee student discipline and are responsible for the application of federal programs in Riverside County were the target population of this study. Narrowing the sample from the population to make the study manageable and feasible for scientific inquiry, the researcher made the determination to limit research to Riverside County, California. Experts selected to participate were required to have implemented PBIS for a year or more at a school site in their district.

Sample

Purposeful sampling was utilized for this study and is defined as follows: "The researcher selects particular elements from the population that will be representative or informative about the topic of interest" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 138). The selection of experts is mandated by the Delphi method. At the researcher's request, the

Riverside County Office of Education provided a list of 30 directors of student services or administrators who oversaw student discipline in Riverside County. The sample was derived from 23 school districts within Riverside County. There were 263 schools represented by the sample of this study. However, each district has a person responsible to ensure that federal laws and programs are implemented and followed as it relates to student disciplinary matters. This person, the director of student services, imparts the law and recommendations throughout his or her district. This person is also responsible for duties such as coordinating intradistrict and interdistrict transfers.

Demographic Data

The Delphi panel for this study represented 23 school districts located in Riverside County, California. A list provided by the Riverside County Office of Education indicated that 30 persons were the county's one-stop student discipline contacts. These were the directors of student services or administrators who oversaw student discipline in their respective districts. Among the panel of experts, 43.75% of the panelists had between 15 and 20 years of experience as certificated employees in the California educational system, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Years of Experience as a Certificated Employee of the California Educational System

Years of experience	Percentage of respondents
5 years or less	6.25%
5 to 10 years	0.00%
10 to 15 years	12.50%
15 to 20 years	43.75%
20 years or more	37.50%

As a part of the criteria for participation in this study, each participant was required to have had one school in his or her district undergoing implementation of PBIS for a year or more. Because a key part of PBIS implementation requires training, 92.86% of the sample had received PBIS training. Of that portion of the sample, 84.62% of participants had received 3 days or more of PBIS training (professional development), as shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Amount of PBIS Training (Professional Development) Received by Participants

Amount of training	Percentage of respondents
1 to 2 hours	0.00%
4 to 8 hours	15.38%
1 to 2 days	0.00%
3 days or more	84.62%

The participants in this study served an administrative function as directors of student services or administrators who oversaw student discipline. One hundred percent of survey participants agreed that PBIS is suitable for school districts in Riverside County, California. Of those participants surveyed, 92.86% stated that they had utilized PBIS concepts and strategies. PBIS is a multitiered system of support that employs strategies through tiers designed to meet students' needs at various levels. Participants were questioned about their experience in implementing each tier of PBIS. The majority of participants, 92.31%, had implemented PBIS through all tiers (I-III).

Presentation and Analysis of Data

Initial Contact

After requesting and receiving a list of e-mail addresses for directors of student services or administrators who oversaw student discipline from the Riverside County Office of Education, an initial contact correspondence was created (Appendix B). The e-mail was sent to the 30 potential participants on November 1, 2016. The contact correspondence served as an introduction to both the research and the researcher. In the correspondence, an explanation of participant confidentiality and the three rounds of questions were thoroughly detailed. The criteria for participation in the study were also provided in detail.

Delphi Round 1 Survey

The Round 1 survey (Appendix A) was sent to participants on November 2, 2016, via the Survey Monkey website. The survey was sent to the 30 potential participants from the list provided by the Riverside County Office of Education. The list was entitled the "One Stop List for Student Discipline in Riverside County." The web link to the survey and embedded e-mail surveys were sent to all participants in both computer and mobile device formats, with several reminders to encourage participation. After receipt of the survey link, two persons opted out, and an out-of-office reply left 27 participants as a sample. In the 7 days that the survey was active, 16 participants chose to participate in the survey. The response rate for the Round 1 survey was 59%. Data analysis began immediately upon Round 1 survey closure on November 9, 2016.

Delphi Round 2 Survey

From the participant responses in Round 1, emergent themes were identified and aligned with the research questions, and new questions were developed for the Round 2 survey. A Likert-scale set of answers was provided with each new question to identify the degree of importance for each element. Maintaining the confidentiality of participants, results for the Round 1 survey were sent to the sample via e-mail. The Round 2 survey (Appendix F) was sent to participants on November 13, 2016, via the Survey Monkey website. The survey was sent to the 16 participants who responded to the Round 1 survey. The web link to the survey and embedded e-mail surveys were sent to all participants in both computer and mobile device formats, with several reminders to encourage participation. In the 18 days that the survey was active, 11 participants chose to continue their participation. The response rate for the second-round survey was 69%. Data analysis began immediately upon Round 2 survey closure on November 30, 2016.

Delphi Round 3 Survey

The Round 3 survey was sent to the 11 participants who responded to the Round 2 survey. Results for the Round 2 survey were sent to the sample via e-mail while maintaining the confidentiality of participants. The Round 2 survey questions were again provided to the participants in Round 3. The questions were sent to the participants with the results from the previous survey to determine the consensus among the expert panel. Again utilizing the Likert-scale set of answers, the group was asked to identify the degree of importance for each question. The Round 3 survey (Appendix G) was sent to participants on December 1, 2016, via the Survey Monkey website. The Round 3 survey questions remained the same as the Round 2 questions with the exception of an omission

of a duplicated question (Survey Question 11). The Round 3 survey closed on December

15, 2016, after 15 days of data collection. The web link to the survey and embedded e-

mail surveys were sent to all participants in both computer and mobile device formats,

with several reminders to encourage participation. To elicit responses, an appeal e-mail

with a web link was sent to each participant 7 days after opening the Round 3 survey. In

the 15 days that the survey was active, seven of the 11 participants from Round 2 chose

to continue their participation. The response rate for the third-round survey was 64%.

Data analysis began immediately upon Round 3 survey closure on December 15, 2016.

Delphi Round 1 Findings

After receipt of the survey link, two persons opted out, and an out-of-office reply

left 27 participants as a sample. In the 7 days that the survey was active, 16 experts chose

to participate in the survey. The response rate for the Round 1 survey was 59%. Data

analysis began immediately at the Round 1 survey closure on November 9, 2016. Round

1 survey data provided demographic information and established the themes used

throughout the study. Implementation was a key criterion for this study. Of the experts

surveyed, 61.54% answered that PBIS had been implemented in part in their district.

Only 38.46% had fully implemented PBIS in their district. Figure 2 provides a visual

representation of the results.

When queried about the impacts on negative behaviors of Tier I of PBIS, 84.62%

of participants indicated that PBIS worked to curtail negative behaviors. Fewer

participants, 15.38%, answered that PBIS Tier I strategies did not work. Figure 3

provides a visual representation of the results.
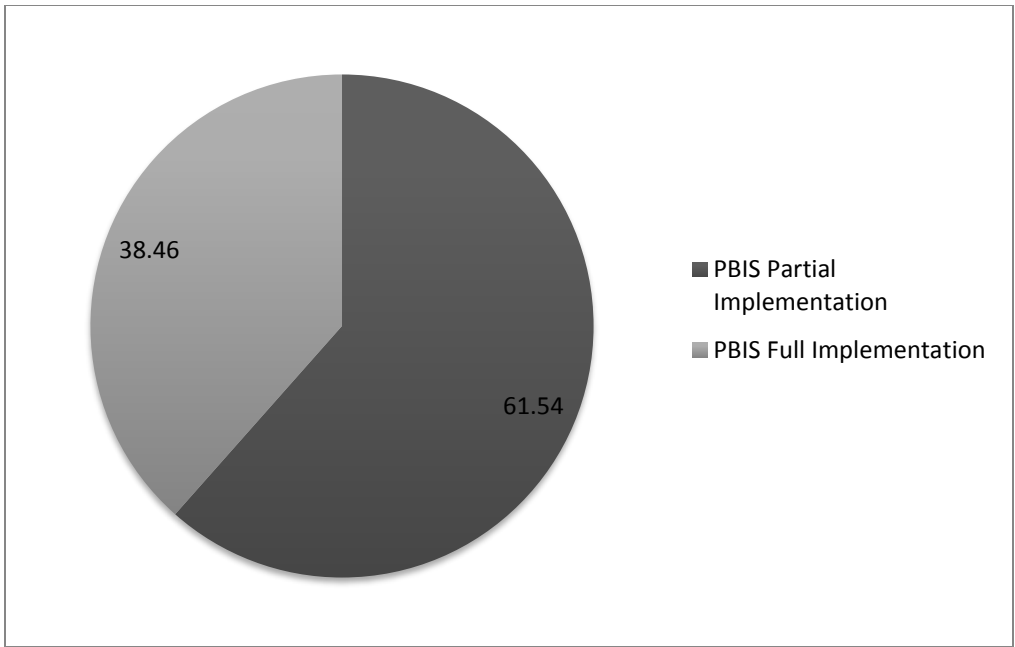
Figure 2. PBIS level of implementation chart.
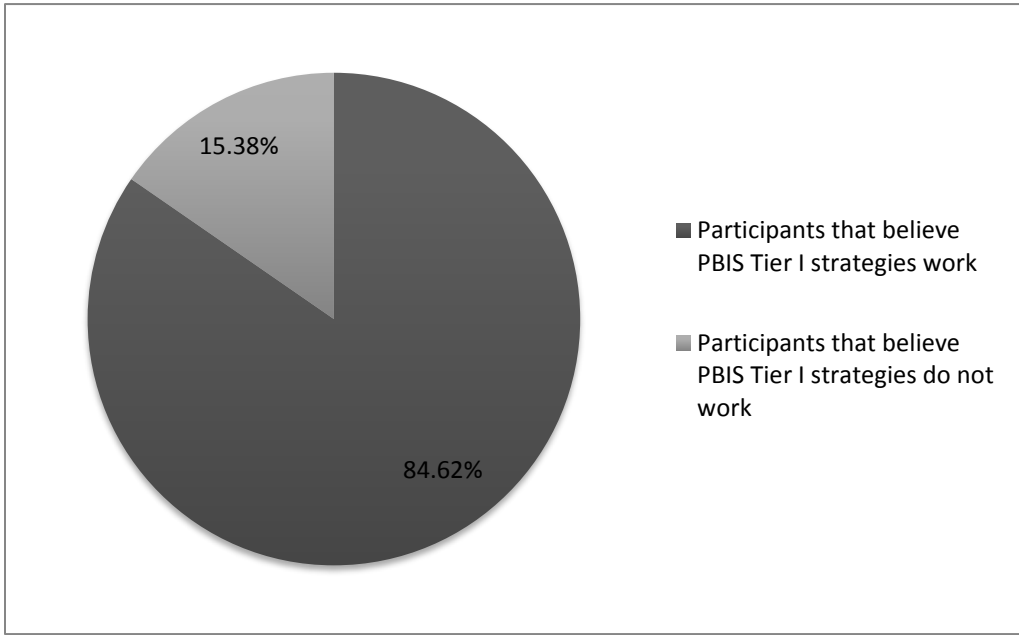
Figure 3. PBIS Tier 1 strategies efficacy chart.

There were similar results regarding the effectiveness of Tier II strategies in reintegrating students into a normal classroom after negative behaviors. The majority of

participants, 76.92%, indicated that Tier II strategies were successful. Fewer participants, 23.08%, did not believe that Tier II strategies were successful. Figure 4 provides a visual representation of the results.
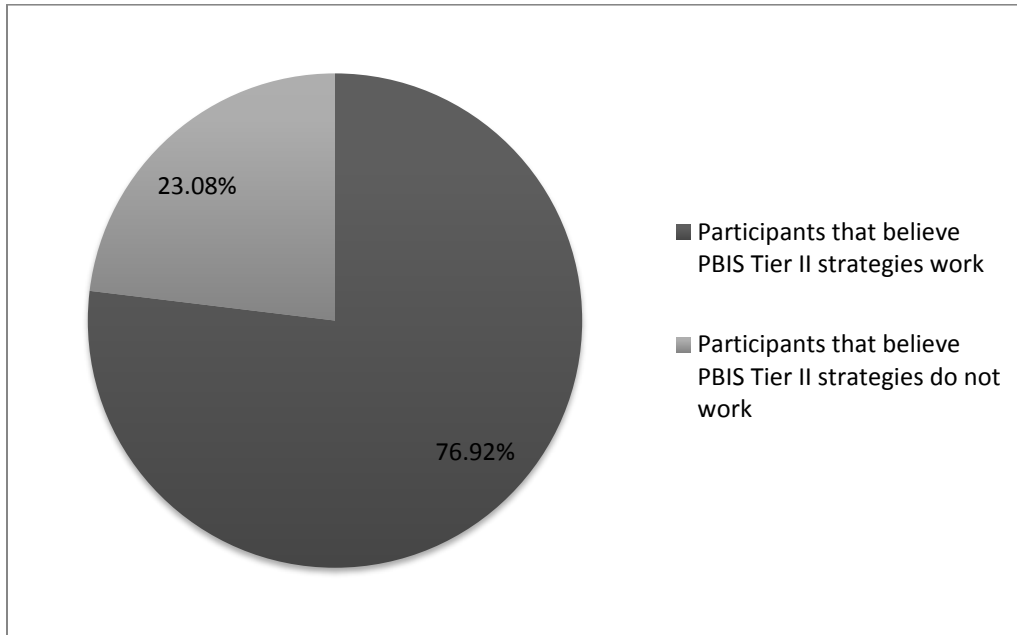
Figure 4. PBIS Tier 2 strategies efficacy chart.

Participants were asked, "To what extent is the Tier III (Tertiary Level) used as a deterrent in lieu of exclusionary discipline in your district?" Participants' responses were categorized as full implementation, partial implementation, or not participating for reporting purposes. Just under half of the participants, 41.66%, indicated full implementation of Tier III, while 41.66% answered that they had achieved partial implementation of Tier III. In the minority, 16.68% answered that they had not implemented Tier III at the time of the survey. Figure 5 provides a visual representation of the results.
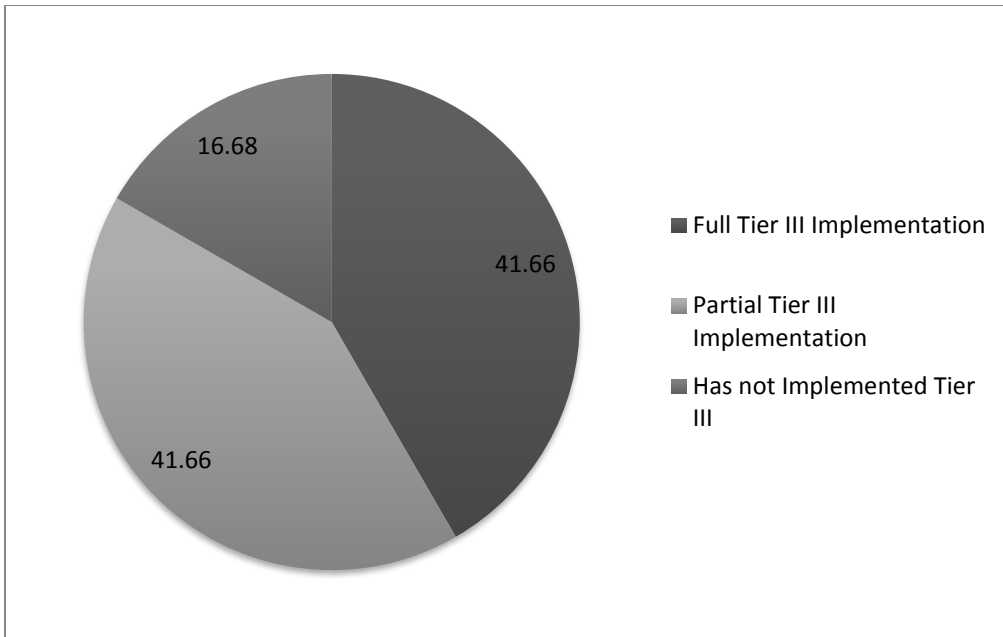
Figure 5. PBIS Tier 3 implementation chart.

Data collection and analysis for this study began on November 9, 2016, and ended on December 25, 2016. Utilizing open-ended questions that aligned with the research questions, the Round 1 survey solicited opinions. Tables 5-8 indicate the responses to the open-ended, qualitative questions of the survey.

Determined through the process of qualitative data coding, Table 5 presents the major factors identified by the participants related to facilitators for the implementation of PBIS in Riverside County school districts. Professional development (PBIS training), reducing exclusionary discipline, funding and resources, and additional staffing and facilitators (counselors and coaches) were key themes identified by the researcher for further study.

Determined through the process of qualitative data coding, Table 6 presents the major factors identified by the participants related to barriers to the implementation of

Table 5

Responses to Survey Question, "What Are the Facilitators to Implementing PBIS in Your District?"

Facilitator	Number of participants mentioning this factor	Number of times factor was mentioned
Professional development (PBIS training)	3	3
Reducing exclusionary discipline	2	2
Funding and resources	2	2
Additional staffing and facilitators (counselors and coaches)	3	3

Note. The following definition of *facilitator* was provided in the survey: "Helps to bring about an outcome (as learning, productivity, or communication)" ("Facilitator," n.d., para. 1).

PBIS in Riverside County school districts. Teacher understanding of PBIS, willingness to fully participate (buy-in), accountability for all stakeholders, a lack of instructional time, and a lack of professional development were key themes identified by the researcher for further study.

Table 6

Responses to Survey Question, "What Barriers Hamper the Implementation of PBIS in Your District?"

Barrier	Number of participants mentioning this factor	Number of times factor was mentioned
Teacher understanding of PBIS	3	3
Willingness to fully participate (buy-in)	2	3
Accountability for all stakeholders	1	1
Lack of instructional time	3	3
Lack of professional development	3	3

Note. The following definition of *barrier* was provided in the survey: "Anything used or acting to block someone from going somewhere or from doing something, or to block something from happening" ("Barrier," n.d., para. 1).

Determined through the process of qualitative data coding, Table 7 presents the major factors identified by the participants related to elements that reduce behaviors that contribute to student discipline. Consistent communication, positive reinforcement, relationship building and social skills between staff and peers, and common agreement of language, rules, and expectations were key themes identified by the researcher for further study.

Table 7

Responses to Survey Question, "What Elements of PBIS Have the Greatest Impact on Reducing Behaviors That Contribute to Student Discipline and the Need for Exclusionary Discipline?"

Element	Number of participants mentioning this factor	Number of times factor was mentioned
Consistent communication	5	5
Positive reinforcement	3	3
Relationship building and social skills between staff and peers	5	8
Common agreement of language, rules, and expectations	5	5

Determined through the process of qualitative data coding, Table 8 presents the major factors identified by the participants related to enhancing behaviors that contribute to a positive school culture. Understanding student needs, communication of schoolwide expectations (including universal expectations) and taking time for conversations, common language, and praising students for their strengths and expressing value for those strengths were key themes identified by the researcher for further study.

Table 8

Responses to Survey Question, "In Your Opinion, What Elements of PBIS, if Any, Have the Greatest Impact on Enhancing Behaviors That Contribute to a Positive School Culture? Please Provide Examples."

Element	Number of participants mentioning this factor	Number of times factor was mentioned
Understanding student needs	3	3
Communication of schoolwide expectations (including universal expectations) and taking time for conversations	3	3
Common language	1	1
Praising students for their strengths and expressing value for those strengths	3	3

Delphi Round 2 Findings

The Round 2 survey was sent to the 16 participants who responded to the Round 1 survey. The web link to the survey and embedded e-mail surveys were sent to all participants in both computer and mobile device formats, with several reminders to encourage participation. In the 18 days that the survey was active, 11 participants chose to continue participation. The response rate for the second-round survey was 69%. Data analysis began immediately upon Round 2 survey closure on November 30, 2016. Emergent themes identified in the responses to the open-ended questions in the Round 1 survey were aligned with the second-round survey questions. Table 9 aligns the Round 2 survey questions and the theme-related survey questions.

A Likert scale was added to each question for the Round 2 survey to identify the degree to which each of the emergent themes had relevance. Choices of *important*, *somewhat important*, *less important*, and *does not apply* were provided to the participants

Table 9

Alignment Between Identified Themes and Survey Questions

Main survey question	Theme-related survey questions
To what degree are the elements of PBIS that were identified in Round 1 important to reducing behaviors that contribute to student discipline?	• To what degree does consistent communication of expectations contribute to a reduction in exclusionary discipline? • To what degree does positive reinforcement contribute to a reduction in exclusionary discipline? • To what degree does relationship building and social skills between staff and peers contribute to a reduction in exclusionary discipline? • To what degree does common agreement of language, rules, and expectations for all school areas contribute to a reduction in exclusionary discipline?
To what degree are the elements of PBIS that were identified in Round 1 important to promoting a positive school culture?	• To what degree does understanding student needs and addressing needs contribute to the promotion of a positive school culture? • To what degree does communication of school-wide expectations (including universal expectations) and taking the time for conversations contribute to the promotion of a positive school culture? • To what degree does common language contribute to the promotion of a positive school culture? • To what degree does praising a student for strengths and expressing value for them contribute to the promotion of a positive school culture?
To what degree is it important to overcome the barriers that were identified in Round 1 to the implementation of PBIS within the school district?	• To what degree is teacher understanding of PBIS and willingness to fully participate (buy-in) a barrier to the implementation of PBIS within a school district? • To what degree is accountability for all stakeholders to implement PBIS consistently a barrier to the implementation of PBIS within a school district? • To what degree is a lack of instructional time a barrier to the implementation of PBIS within a school district? • To what degree is a lack of professional development (PBIS training) a barrier to the implementation of PBIS within a school district?
To what degree are the facilitators that were identified in Round 1 important to the implementation of PBIS within the school district?	• To what degree is professional development a facilitator to the implementation of PBIS within a school district? • To what degree is a reduction of exclusionary discipline (suspensions and expulsions) a facilitator to the implementation of PBIS within a school district? • To what degree is additional funding a facilitator to the implementation of PBIS within a school district? • To what degree is additional staffing a facilitator to the implementation of PBIS within a school district?

to garner their expert opinions. Categorizing the survey questions into four sections, including training, logistics, accountability, and culture, the survey results are detailed below.

Training. In Survey Question 13, participants were asked about the lack of professional development (PBIS training) as a barrier to PBIS implementation within a school district. Of those respondents participating, 90% deemed the lack of professional development (PBIS training) important as a barrier, whereas 10% of respondents found the lack of professional development (PBIS training) only somewhat important as a barrier to the implementation of PBIS in a school district. In contrast, Survey Question 14 asked the respondents to what degree professional development (PBIS training) was a facilitator to the implementation of PBIS within a school district. Ninety percent deemed professional development (PBIS training) a facilitator to implementing PBIS within a school district. The remaining 10% of respondents found professional development (PBIS training) less important as a facilitator to implementing PBIS within a school district.

Logistics. Survey Question 16 asked the respondents to what degree additional funding and resources were facilitators to the implementation of PBIS in a school district. Sixty percent of respondents rated this element as important. Thirty percent of the respondents found additional funding and resources somewhat important, but 10% of respondents answered that additional funding and resources were less important as a facilitator to the implementation of PBIS in a school district.

When asked about additional staffing and facilitators (counselors and coaches) in Survey Question 17, 70% of respondents answered that this element was an important

facilitator to the implementation of PBIS in a school district. Twenty percent of respondents found additional staffing somewhat important, and 10% found it less important as a facilitator to the implementation of PBIS in a school district. When asked about a lack of instructional time as a barrier in Survey Question 12, 40% of respondents found it to be a less important barrier to the implementation of PBIS in a school district. To a lesser degree, 30% found a lack of instructional time to be somewhat important, 20% found it to be important, and 10% felt that a lack of instructional time did not apply as a barrier to the implementation of PBIS in a school district.

Accountability. In Survey Question 9, respondents were asked to what degree teacher understanding of PBIS and willingness to fully participate (buy-in) was a barrier to the implementation of PBIS within a school district. The majority of respondents, 90%, answered that teacher understanding and willingness to fully participate (buy-in) was important as a barrier to the implementation of PBIS within a school district. Fewer respondents, 10%, answered that teacher understanding and willingness to fully participate (buy-in) was a somewhat important barrier to the implementation of PBIS within a school district.

In the 10th question of the survey, respondents were asked about stakeholder accountability as a barrier to the implementation of PBIS in a school district. The majority of respondents, 55.56%, answered that accountability of all stakeholders was important as a barrier to the implementation of PBIS in a school district. Fewer participants, 33.33%, found accountability of stakeholders somewhat important, while 11.11% of participants thought that accountability of stakeholders was less important as a barrier to the implementation of PBIS in a school district.

Survey Question 15 asked about a reduction of exclusionary discipline

(suspensions and expulsions) as a facilitator to the implementation of PBIS in a school

district. The majority of respondents, 70%, indicated that the reduction of exclusionary

discipline was important as a facilitator to the implementation of PBIS within a school

district. Fewer participants, 20%, answered that a reduction of exclusionary discipline

was somewhat important, and 10% responded that it was less important as a facilitator to

the implementation of PBIS in a school district.

Culture. In the first question of the survey, the respondents were asked to what

degree consistent communication of expectations contributed to a reduction in

exclusionary discipline. The respondents answered 100% in agreement that consistent

communication of expectations contributed to a reduction in exclusionary discipline. In

the second question of the survey, respondents were asked to what degree positive

reinforcement contributed to a reduction in exclusionary discipline. The majority of

respondents, 90%, answered that positive reinforcement was important to reducing

exclusionary discipline. Fewer respondents, 10%, answered that positive reinforcement

was somewhat important in contributing to a reduction in exclusionary discipline.

In Survey Question 3, participants were asked to what degree relationship

building and social skills between staff and peers contributed to a reduction in

exclusionary discipline. Respondents answered unanimously (100%) that relationship

building and social skills between staff and peers were important in the reduction of

exclusionary discipline. The degree to which understanding student needs contributed to

a positive school culture was addressed in Survey Question 5. Ninety percent of

respondents answered that understanding student needs was important to contributing to a

positive school culture. Of all respondents, 10% answered that understanding student needs was somewhat important in contributing to a positive school culture.

Respondents on the fourth question of the survey rated the degree to which common language, rules, and expectations for all school areas contributed to a reduction in exclusionary discipline. The majority of respondents, 90%, indicated that common language, rules, and expectations for all school areas were important in reducing exclusionary discipline. In the minority, 10% of respondents found common language, rules, and expectations for all school areas somewhat important in the reduction of exclusionary discipline. In Survey Question 7, the respondents were asked to what degree common language promoted a positive school culture. The majority of respondents, 90%, answered that common language was important in promoting a positive school culture. The minority of respondents, 10%, answered that common language was somewhat important in promoting a positive school culture.

Survey Question 6 asked the respondents to what degree communication of schoolwide expectations (including universal expectations) and taking the time for conversations contributed to the promotion of a positive school culture. The majority of respondents, 90%, answered that communication of schoolwide expectations (including universal expectations) and taking the time for conversations was important in the promotion of a positive school culture. Fewer respondents, 10%, answered that communication of schoolwide expectations (including universal expectations) and taking the time for conversations was somewhat important to the promotion of a positive school culture. Survey Question 8 asked the participants to what degree praising students for their strengths and expressing value for them contributed to the promotion of a positive

school culture. The majority of respondents, 80%, answered that praising students for

their strengths and expressing value for them was important to the promotion of a

positive school culture. In the minority, 20% answered that praising students for their

strengths and expressing value for them was somewhat important to the promotion of a

positive school culture.

Table 10 provides a reference for easy comparison of the data related to

categories identified in the Round 2 survey. Table 11 provides the rate of respondents'

answers to each question, presented to illustrate consensus.

Delphi Round 3 Findings

The Round 3 survey was sent to the 11 participants who responded to the Round 2

survey. The web link to the survey and embedded e-mail surveys were sent to all

participants in both computer and mobile device formats, with several reminders to

encourage participation. To elicit responses, an appeal e-mail with a web link was sent to

each participant on the seventh day of the survey window. In the 15 days that the survey

was active, seven of the 11 participants chose to continue their participation. The

response rate for the third-round survey was 64%. Data analysis began immediately upon

Round 3 survey closure on December 15, 2016.

A reapplication of the second-round survey, with the omission of a duplicated

question that appeared as both Survey Questions 9 and 11, was sent via a Survey Monkey

web link to the participants. For Round 3, the participants were provided with the Round

2 response rates to review. Table 12 identifies the changes in the survey question

numbers between the second and third rounds.

Table 10

Round 2 Survey Likert Results per Category

Category	Question	Percentage of responses			
		Important	Somewhat important	Less important	Does not apply
Training	To what degree is professional development (PBIS training) a facilitator to the implementation of PBIS within a school district?	90.00%	10.00%		
	To what degree is a reduction of exclusionary discipline (suspensions and expulsions) a facilitator to the implementation of PBIS within a school district?	90.00%		10.00%	
Logistics	To what degree is additional funding and resources a facilitator to the implementation of PBIS within a school district?	60.00%	30.00%	10.00%	
	To what degree is additional staffing and facilitators (counselors and coaches) a facilitator to the implementation of PBIS within a school district?	70.00%			
	To what degree is a lack of professional development (PBIS training) a barrier to the implementation of PBIS within a school district?		30.00%	40.00%	10.00%

Table 10 (*continued*)

Category	Question	Percentage of responses			
		Important	Somewhat important	Less important	Does not apply
Accountability	To what degree is teacher understanding of PBIS and willingness to fully participate (buy-in) a barrier to the implementation of PBIS within a school district?	90.00%	10.00%		
	To what degree is accountability for all stakeholders to implement PBIS consistently a barrier to the implementation of PBIS within a school district?	55.56%	33.33%	11.11%	
	To what degree is a reduction of exclusionary discipline (suspensions and expulsions) a facilitator to the implementation of PBIS within a school district?	70.00%	20.00%	10.00%	
Culture	To what degree does consistent communication of expectations contribute to a reduction in exclusionary discipline?	100.00%			
	To what degree does positive reinforcement contribute to a reduction in exclusionary discipline?	90.00%	10.00%		

Table 10 (*continued*)

Category	Question	Percentage of responses			
		Important	Somewhat important	Less important	Does not apply
Culture (cont'd)	To what degree does relationship building and social skills between staff and peers contribute to a reduction in exclusionary discipline?	100.00%			
	To what degree does understanding student needs and addressing those needs contribute to the promotion of a positive school culture?	90.00%	10.00%		
	To what degree does common agreement of language, rules, and expectations for all school areas contribute to a reduction in exclusionary discipline?	90.00%	10.00%		
	To what degree does common language contribute to the promotion of a positive school culture?	90.00%	10.00%		
	To what degree does communication of school-wide expectations (including universal expectations) and taking the time for conversations contribute to the promotion of a positive school culture?	90.00%	10.00%		
	To what degree does praising a student for their strengths and expressing value for them contribute to the promotion of a positive school culture?	80.00%	20.00%		

Table 11

Round 2 Consensus Table

Survey question	Percentage of responses			
	Important	Somewhat important	Less important	Does not apply
1	100.00%			
2	90.00%	10.00%		
3	100.00%			
4	90.00%	10.00%		
5	90.00%	10.00%		
6	90.00%	10.00%		
7	90.00%	10.00%		
8	80.00%	20.00%		
9	90.00%	10.00%		
10	55.56%	33.33%	11.11%	
12	20.00%	30.00%	40.00%	10.00%
13	90.00%	10.00%		
14	90.00%		10.00%	
15	70.00%	20.00%	10.00%	
16	60.00%	30.00%	10.00%	
17	70.00%	20.00%	10.00%	

Note. Data are not included for Survey Question 11 because it was a duplicate of Survey Question 9.

A Likert scale was added to each question in the Round 3 survey to identify the degree to which each of the emergent themes had relevance. Choices of *important*, *somewhat important*, *less important*, and *does not apply* were provided to the participants to garner their expert opinions. Categorizing the survey questions into four sections, including training, logistics, accountability, and culture, the survey results are detailed below.

Table 12

Survey Question Alignment Between Rounds 2 and 3

Round 2 question number	Round 3 question number
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5
6	6
7	7
8	8
9	9
10	10
11 (duplicated Survey Question 9)	Removed
12	11
13	12
14	13
15	14
16	15
17	16

Training. In Survey Question 12, participants were asked about the lack of

professional development (PBIS training) as a barrier to PBIS implementation within a

school district. Of those respondents participating, 100% answered that the lack of

professional development (PBIS training) was important as a barrier. In contrast, Survey

Question 13 asked the respondents to what degree professional development (PBIS

training) was a facilitator to the implementation of PBIS within a school district. The

majority of participants, 66.67%, answered that professional development (PBIS training)

was important as a facilitator to implementing PBIS within a school district. Fewer

respondents, 33.33%, found professional development (PBIS training) somewhat important as a facilitator to implementing PBIS within a school district.

Logistics. Survey Question 15 asked the respondents if additional funding and resources were a facilitator to the implementation of PBIS in a school district. The majority, 83.33%, of respondents rated the element as an important facilitator. Fewer respondents, 16.67%, found additional funding and resources somewhat important as a facilitator to the implementation of PBIS in a school district. When asked about additional staffing and facilitators (counselors and coaches) in Survey Question 16, 83.33% of respondents answered that this element was an important facilitator to the implementation to PBIS in a school district. Fewer respondents, 16.67%, found additional staffing less important as a facilitator to the implementation of PBIS in a school district. When asked about the barrier of a lack of instructional time in Survey Question 11, 50% of respondents found it less important as a barrier to the implementation of PBIS in a school district. To a lesser degree, 33.33% found a lack of instructional time somewhat important, and 16.67% found it to be an important barrier to the implementation of PBIS in a school district.

Accountability. In Survey Question 9, respondents were asked to what degree teacher understanding of PBIS and willingness to fully participate (buy-in) was a barrier to the implementation of PBIS within a school district. The majority of respondents, 83.33%, answered that teacher understanding and willingness to fully participate (buy-in) was important as a barrier to the implementation of PBIS within a school district. Fewer respondents, 16.67%, answered that as a barrier, teacher understanding and willingness to

fully participate (buy-in) was somewhat important to the implementation of PBIS within a school district.

In the 10th question of the survey, respondents were asked about the accountability of all stakeholders as a barrier to the implementation of PBIS in a school district. The majority of respondents, 83.33%, answered that accountability of all stakeholders was important as a barrier to the implementation of PBIS in a school district. Fewer participants, 16.67%, thought that accountability of stakeholders was less important as a barrier to the implementation of PBIS in a school district. Survey Question 14 asked about a reduction of exclusionary discipline (suspensions and expulsions) as a facilitator to the implementation of PBIS in a school district. All of the respondents (100%) indicated that the reduction of exclusionary discipline was important as a facilitator to the implementation of PBIS within a school district.

Culture. In the first question of the survey, the respondents were asked to what degree consistent communication of expectations contributed to a reduction in exclusionary discipline. The respondents answered unanimously (100%) that consistent communication of expectations was important in contributing to a reduction in exclusionary discipline. In the second question of the survey, respondents were asked to what degree positive reinforcement contributed to a reduction in exclusionary discipline. The majority of respondents, 83.33%, answered that positive reinforcement was important to reducing exclusionary discipline. Fewer respondents, 16.67%, answered that positive reinforcement was somewhat important in contributing to a reduction in exclusionary discipline.

In Survey Question 3, participants were asked to what degree relationship building and social skills between staff and peers contributed to a reduction in exclusionary discipline. The majority of respondents, 83.33%, replied that relationship building and social skills between staff and peers were important in the reduction of exclusionary discipline. Fewer participants, 16.67%, answered that relationship building and social skills between staff and peers were somewhat important in the reduction of exclusionary discipline. The degree to which understanding student needs contributed to a positive school culture was addressed in Survey Question 5. Unanimously, 100% of respondents answered that understanding student needs was important to contributing to a positive school culture.

Respondents on the fourth question of the survey addressed the degree to which common language, rules, and expectations for all school areas contributed to a reduction in exclusionary discipline. All of the respondents (100%) indicated that common language, rules, and expectations for all school areas were important in reducing exclusionary discipline. In Survey Question 7, the respondents were asked to what degree common language promoted a positive school culture. Half of the respondents (50%) answered that common language was important in promoting a positive school culture. The other half of respondents (50%) answered that common language was somewhat important in promoting a positive school culture.

Survey Question 6 asked the respondents to what degree communication of schoolwide expectations (including universal expectations) and taking the time for conversations contributed to the promotion of a positive school culture. The majority of respondents, 83.33%, answered that communication of schoolwide expectations

(including universal expectations) and taking the time for conversations was important in the promotion of a positive school culture. Fewer respondents, 16.67%, answered that communication of schoolwide expectations (including universal expectations) and taking the time for conversations was somewhat important to the promotion of a positive school culture. Survey Question 8 asked the participants to what degree praising students for their strengths and expressing value for them contributed to the promotion of a positive school culture. Unanimously, 100% of respondents answered that praising students for their strengths and expressing value for them was important to the promotion of a positive school culture.

Table 13 provides the rate of respondents' answers to each question, presented to illustrate consensus.

Results: Research Questions

Research Question 1

The first research question asked, "What elements of PBIS have the greatest impact on reducing behaviors that contribute to student discipline?" In response to the first research question, the participants shared comments regarding elements that had the greatest impact on reducing behaviors that contributed to student discipline. The following list presents the themes identified from the participants' responses related to Research Question 1: (a) consistent communication; (b) positive reinforcement; (c) leadership building and social skills between staff and peers; and (d) common agreement of language, rules, and expectations.

Table 13

Round 3 Consensus Table

| | Percentage of responses | | | |
Survey Question	Important	Somewhat important	Less important	Does not apply
1	100.00%			
2	83.33%	16.67%		
3	83.33%	16.67%		
4	100.00%			
5	100.00%			
6	83.33%	16.67%		
7	50.00%	50.00%		
8	100.00%			
9	83.33%	16.67%		
10	83.33%		16.67%	
11	50.00%	33.33%	16.67%	
12	100.00%			
13	66.67%	33.33%		
14	100.00%			
15	83.33%	16.67%		
16	83.33%		16.67%	

Research Question 2

Research Question 2 asked, "What elements of PBIS have the greatest impact on enhancing behaviors that contribute to a positive school culture?" In response to the second research question, the participants shared comments regarding elements that had the greatest impact on enhancing behaviors that contributed to a positive school culture. The following list presents the themes identified from the participants' responses: (a) understanding student needs, (b) communication of schoolwide expectations

(including universal expectations) and taking time for conversations, (c) common language, and (d) praising students for their strengths and expressing value for them.

Research Question 3

Research Question 3 asked, "What do the directors of student services or administrators who oversee student discipline identify as barriers to the implementation of PBIS within the school district?" In response to the third research question, the participants shared comments regarding barriers to the implementation of PBIS within a school district. The following list presents the themes identified from the participants' responses: (a) teacher understanding of PBIS, (b) willingness to fully participate (buy-in), (c) accountability for all stakeholders, (d) lack of instructional time, and (e) lack of professional development.

Research Question 4

Research Question 4 asked, "What do the directors of student services or administrators who oversee student discipline identify as facilitators to the implementation of PBIS within the school district?" In response to the fourth research question, the participants shared comments regarding facilitators to the implementation of PBIS within a school district. The following list presents the themes identified from the participants' responses: (a) professional development (PBIS training), (b) reducing exclusionary discipline, (c) funding and resources, and (d) additional staffing and facilitators (counselors and coaches).

<div align="center">**Summary**</div>

Chapter IV of this study presented the results of data collection. The first purpose of this Delphi study was to identify the degree to which Riverside County directors of

student services or administrators who oversee student discipline perceive that PBIS components reduce exclusionary discipline and promote a positive school culture. The second purpose of this study was to identify key facilitators and barriers to PBIS implementation within the school districts of the experts who participated in this study. The respondents, experts in their field, shared their opinions about PBIS implementation in Riverside County, California.

The Delphi study examined emergent themes through the application of surveys. During the three rounds of surveys, some consensus was discovered through participant agreement in responses they gave to the survey questions. Complete consensus was achieved in six areas of concern. A high percentage of consensus was achieved in other areas, which are detailed in Chapter V. Findings, implications, and suggestions for future studies are discussed in Chapter V. Chapter V also includes a summary of the study, the study's purpose, and conclusions and comments.

CHAPTER V: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter V of this dissertation presents the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of this Delphi study. A discussion of the purpose of the study, results of the research questions, methods utilized in the collection of data, and sampling from the population are detailed. In this chapter, the major findings of the study, unexpected findings, conclusions, and recommendations for further research are also discussed. The chapter ends with concluding remarks.

Purpose Statement

The first purpose of this Delphi study was to identify the degree to which Riverside County directors of student services or administrators who oversee student discipline perceive that positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) components reduce exclusionary discipline and promote a positive school culture. The second purpose of this study was to identify key facilitators and barriers to PBIS implementation within the school districts of the experts who participated in this study.

Research Questions

The research questions that guided this study were as follows:

1. What elements of PBIS have the greatest impact on reducing behaviors that contribute to student discipline?

2. What elements of PBIS have the greatest impact on enhancing behaviors that contribute to a positive school culture?

3. What do the directors of student services or administrators who oversee student discipline identify as barriers to the implementation of PBIS within the school district?

4. What do the directors of student services or administrators who oversee student discipline identify as facilitators to the implementation of PBIS within the school district?

Population

In the state of California, where the researcher resides, there are 58 counties, each with several school districts. The information retrieved from the California Department of Education (2015) website indicated that there are 1,022 school districts within the state. Directors of student services or administrators who oversee student discipline and are responsible for the application of federal programs in Riverside County were the target population of this study. Narrowing the sample from the population to make the study manageable and feasible for scientific inquiry, the researcher made the determination to limit research to Riverside County, California. Participants selected to participate were required to have implemented PBIS for a year or more at a school site in their district.

Sampling Frame

The sampling frame for this study was a purposeful sampling method. The researcher requested a contact list from the Riverside County Office of Education for directors of student services or administrators who oversaw student discipline for all of the school districts in Riverside County. A list that was entitled "One Stop List for Student Discipline in Riverside County," containing 30 e-mail contacts, was provided by the Riverside County Office of Education. An introduction letter about the study was sent to each contact, accompanied by a request for participation. The first-round survey link was sent to the 30 potential participants, and 16 replied. At the conclusion of the

first-round survey, a link to the survey for the second round was sent, and 11 respondents

continued their participation. After the second survey closed, a third-round survey was

sent, and seven participants completed the final survey.

<div align="center">**Major Findings**</div>

This section of Chapter V presents the major findings of the study. The most

important findings were determined through the complete consensus of the panel of

experts. Therefore, this section addresses the questions related to reducing student

discipline, promoting a positive school culture, barriers to PBIS implementation, and

facilitators to PBIS implementation.

Major Finding 1: Consistent Communication of Expectations Is Important to

Reducing Exclusionary Discipline

In Round 1, the participants were asked, "What elements of PBIS have the

greatest impact on reducing behaviors that contribute to student discipline and the need

for exclusionary discipline?" Sixteen experts participated in the first-round survey.

Twelve participants answered the open-ended question. After all of the responses were

collected, the emergent theme of consistent communication of expectations was

identified in five of the responses (41% frequency). During Round 2, the participants

were asked the question, "To what degree does consistent communication of expectations

contribute to a reduction in exclusionary discipline?" Eleven participants continued their

participation in Round 2. All 11 participants (100%) answered that consistent

communication of expectations is important to reducing exclusionary discipline. In

Round 3, seven participants continued their participation. The same question presented

in Round 2 was posed in the Round 3 survey with the results from the second round. All

seven participants answered unanimously that consistent communication of expectations is important to reducing exclusionary discipline.

Major Finding 2: Common Agreement of Language, Rules, and Expectations for All School Areas Is Important to a Reduction in Exclusionary Discipline

Another theme identified in Round 1 was that the common agreement of language, rules, and expectations for all school areas contributes to a reduction in exclusionary discipline. This emergent theme of common agreement of language, rules, and expectations for all school areas was identified in five of the responses (41% frequency). During Round 2, the participants were asked the question, "To what degree does common agreement of language, rules, and expectations for all school areas contribute to a reduction in exclusionary discipline?" Of the 11 participants who continued their participation in Round 2, 90% answered that common agreement of language, rules, and expectations for all school areas was important to a reduction in exclusionary discipline. Fewer participants, 10%, responded that common agreement of language, rules, and expectations for all school areas was somewhat important to a reduction in exclusionary discipline. In Round 3, seven participants continued their participation. The same question presented in Round 2 was posed in the Round 3 survey with the results from the second round. All seven participants answered unanimously that common agreement of language, rules, and expectations for all school areas was important to a reduction in exclusionary discipline. Similarly, Wood and Freeman-Loftis (2012) found, "By tuning in to the language we use with children, day in and day out, everywhere in school, we can empower students, helping them to learn new skills and become their best selves" (p. 35).

Major Finding 3: Understanding Student Needs and Addressing Those Needs as Well as Praising Students for Their Strengths and Expressing Value for Them Is Important to a Positive School Culture

In Round 1, the participants were asked, "In your opinion, what elements of PBIS, if any, have the greatest impact on enhancing behaviors that contribute to a positive school culture?" Twelve participants answered the open-ended question. After all of the responses were collected, the emergent theme of understanding student needs and addressing those needs was identified in three of the responses (25% frequency). During Round 2, the participants were asked the question, "To what degree does understanding student needs and addressing those needs contribute to the promotion of a positive school culture?" Of the 11 participants who continued their participation in Round 2, 90% answered that understanding student needs and addressing those needs was important to a positive school culture. Fewer participants, 10%, responded that understanding student needs and addressing those needs was somewhat important to a positive school culture. In Round 3, seven participants continued their participation. The same question presented in Round 2 was posed in the Round 3 survey with the results from the second round. All seven participants answered unanimously that understanding student needs and addressing those needs was important to a positive school culture. According to research on positive school culture, the first step toward establishing a positive culture is for teacher education faculty to recognize that teaching students from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds is a salient and nuanced topic that needs to be included throughout the teacher education curriculum (Costa, McPhail, Smith, & Brisk, 2005).

Another theme identified in Round 1 was the praising of students for their strengths and expressing value for them. Reese (2007) noted, "The one-to-one connection between teacher and student, often involving praise, is a powerful tool for establishing respect in the classroom" (p. 24). This emergent theme of praising students for their strengths and expressing value for them was identified in three of the responses (25% frequency). During Round 2, the participants were asked the question, "To what degree does praising a student for their strengths and expressing value for them contribute to a positive school culture?" Of the 11 participants who continued their participation in Round 2, 80% answered that praising students for their strengths and expressing value for them was important to a positive school culture. Fewer participants, 20%, responded that praising students for their strengths and expressing value for them was somewhat important to a positive school culture. In Round 3, seven participants continued their participation. The same question presented in Round 2 was posed in the Round 3 survey with the results from the second round. All seven participants answered unanimously that praising students for their strengths and expressing value for them was important to a positive school culture.

Major Finding 4: Lack of Professional Development (PBIS Training) Is Important as a Barrier to the Implementation of PBIS Within a School District

In Round 1, the participants were asked, "What barriers hamper the implementation of PBIS in your district?" The following definition of a barrier was provided for the participants: "Anything used or acting to block someone from going somewhere or from doing something, or to block something from happening" ("Barrier," n.d., para. 1). Eleven participants answered the open-ended question. After all of the

responses were collected, the emergent theme of a lack of professional development (PBIS training) was identified in three of the responses (27% frequency). During Round 2, the participants were asked the question; "To what degree is a lack of professional development (PBIS training) a barrier to the implementation of PBIS within a school district?" It is important to note that a question duplication in the second round caused a discrepancy between the second- and third-round surveys. In Round 2, the theme appeared in Survey Question 13, and in the third round it was applied to Survey Question 12. Of the 11 participants who continued their participation in Round 2, 90% answered that a lack of professional development (PBIS training) was important as a barrier to the implementation of PBIS within a school district. Fewer participants, 10%, responded that a lack of professional development (PBIS training) was somewhat important as a barrier to the implementation of PBIS within a school district. In Round 3, seven participants continued their participation. The same question presented in Round 2 was posed in the Round 3 survey with the results from the second round. All seven participants answered unanimously that a lack of professional development (PBIS training) was important as a barrier to the implementation of PBIS within a school district. Research has indicated that professional development is a facilitator to better understanding: "Considering the importance of facilitation to teacher learning, a better knowledge of how to prepare skilled facilitators would provide the supports needed to promote teacher learning such as the implementation of the Problem-Solving Cycle" (Gonzalez, Deal, & Skultety, 2016, p. 447).

Major Finding 5: Reduction of Exclusionary Discipline (Suspensions and Expulsions) Is Important as a Facilitator to the Implementation of PBIS Within a School District

In Round 1, the participants were asked, "What are the facilitators to implementing PBIS in your district?" The following definition of a facilitator was provided for the participants: "Helps to bring about an outcome (as learning, productivity, or communication)" ("Facilitator," n.d., para. 1). Eleven participants answered the open-ended question. After all of the responses were collected, the emergent theme of a reduction of exclusionary discipline (suspensions and expulsions) as a facilitator to the implementation of PBIS within a school district was identified in two of the responses (18% frequency). During Round 2, the participants were asked the question, "To what degree is a reduction of exclusionary discipline (suspensions and expulsions) a facilitator to the implementation of PBIS within a school district?" It is important to note that a question duplication in the second round caused a discrepancy between the second- and third-round surveys. In Round 2, the theme appeared in Survey Question 15, and in the third round it was applied to Survey Question 14. Of the 11 participants who continued their participation in Round 2, 70% answered that a reduction of exclusionary discipline (suspensions and expulsions) was important as a facilitator to the implementation of PBIS within a school district. Fewer participants, 20%, responded that it was somewhat important as a facilitator, and 10% responded that a reduction of exclusionary discipline (suspensions and expulsions) was less important to the implementation of PBIS within a school district. In Round 3, seven participants continued their participation. The same question presented in Round 2 was posed in the Round 3 survey with the results from the

second round. All seven participants answered unanimously that a reduction of exclusionary discipline (suspensions and expulsions) was important as a facilitator to the implementation of PBIS within a school district. Steinberg and Lacoe (2017) agreed that "exclusionary discipline is used too frequently in response to lower-level, nonviolent student behavior" (p. 44).

To conclude this section, a summary is provided of the complete consensus of expert survey participants and the major findings of the study. They are as follows:

1. Consistent communication of expectations is important to reducing exclusionary discipline.

2. Common agreement of language, rules, and expectations for all school areas is important to a reduction in exclusionary discipline.

3. Understanding student needs and addressing those needs is important to a positive school culture. All seven participants answered unanimously that praising students for their strengths and expressing value for them is important to a positive school culture.

4. A lack of professional development (PBIS training) is important as a barrier to the implementation of PBIS within a school district.

5. A reduction of exclusionary discipline (suspensions and expulsions) is important as a facilitator to the implementation of PBIS within a school district.

Unexpected Findings

The unexpected findings emerged in results of questions that separated the panel in their answers. With the themes below, the divergence of opinion occurred in the second and third rounds of the survey.

Positive School Culture Divergence

In Round 1, the participants were asked, "In your opinion, what elements of PBIS, if any, have the greatest impact on enhancing behaviors that contribute to a positive school culture?" Twelve participants answered the open-ended question. After all of the responses were collected, the emergent theme of common language contributing to a positive school culture was identified in one of the responses (8% frequency). During Round 2, the participants were asked, "To what degree does common language contribute to the promotion of a positive school culture?" Eleven participants continued their participation in Round 2. The majority of respondents, 90%, answered that consistent, common language is important in contributing to a positive school culture. Fewer respondents, 10%, answered that consistent, common language is somewhat important in contributing to a positive school culture. In Round 3, seven participants continued their participation. The same question presented in Round 2 was posed in the Round 3 survey with the results from the second round. After collection of the Round 3 survey results, participants' responses diverged. Half of the respondents (50%) answered that consistent, common language is important, and 50% found it somewhat important in contributing to a positive school culture.

Barriers to PBIS Implementation Divergence

In Round 1, the participants were asked, "What barriers hamper the implementation of PBIS in your district?" The following definition of a barrier was provided to participants: "Anything used or acting to block someone from going somewhere or from doing something, or to block something from happening" ("Barrier," n.d., para. 1). Eleven participants answered the open-ended question. After all of the

responses were collected, the emergent theme of a lack of instructional time was identified in three of the responses (27% frequency). During Round 2, the participants were asked, "To what degree is a lack of instructional time a barrier to the implementation of PBIS within a school district?" It is important to note that a question duplication in the second round caused a discrepancy between the second- and third-round surveys. In Round 2, the theme appeared in Survey Question 12, and in the third round it was applied to Survey Question 11. Eleven participants continued their participation in Round 2. The majority of respondents, 80%, answered that a lack of instructional time was important, and 20% answered that it was somewhat important as a barrier to the implementation of PBIS within a school district. In Round 3, seven participants continued their participation. The same question presented in Round 2 was posed in the Round 3 survey with the results from the second round. After collection of the Round 3 survey results, participants' responses diverged. The majority of respondents, 50%, answered that a lack of instructional time is important, 33.33% found it somewhat important, and 16.67% answered that it is less important as a barrier to the implementation of PBIS within a school district.

Facilitator for PBIS Implementation Divergence

In Round 1, the participants were asked, "What are the facilitators to implementing PBIS in your district?" The following definition of a facilitator was provided to participants: "Helps to bring about an outcome (as learning, productivity, or communication)" ("Facilitator," n.d., para. 1). Eleven participants answered the open-ended question. After all of the responses were collected, the emergent theme of professional development (PBIS training) as a facilitator to the implementation of PBIS

within a school district was identified in three of the responses (27% frequency). During

Round 2, the participants were asked, "To what degree is professional development

(PBIS training) a facilitator to the implementation of PBIS within a school district?" It is

important to note that a question duplication in the second round caused a discrepancy

between the second- and third-round surveys. In Round 2, the theme appeared in Survey

Question 14, and in the third round it was applied to Survey Question 13. Eleven

participants continued their participation in Round 2. The majority of respondents, 90%,

answered that professional development (PBIS training) was important as a facilitator to

the implementation of PBIS within a school district. Fewer participants, 10%, responded

that professional development (PBIS training) was somewhat important to the

implementation of PBIS within a school district. In Round 3, seven participants

continued their participation. The same question presented in Round 2 was posed in the

Round 3 survey with the results from the second round. After collection of the Round 3

survey results, participants' responses diverged. The majority of respondents, 66.67%,

answered that professional development (PBIS training) is important, and 33.33%

answered that it is somewhat important as a facilitator to the implementation of PBIS

within a school district.

　　　　To conclude this section, a summary is provided of the disagreement of expert

survey participants and the unexpected findings of the study. They are as follows:

1. The expert panel disagreed about the degree to which common language contributes to

　　the promotion of a positive school culture.

2. The expert panel disagreed about the degree to which a lack of instructional time is a

　　barrier to the implementation of PBIS within a school district.

3. The expert panel disagreed about the degree to which professional development (PBIS training) is a facilitator to the implementation of PBIS within a school district.

Conclusions

In this section, the researcher aligns findings from the research questions with the findings from the literature review from this study. The participants were asked questions related to reducing student discipline, promoting a positive school culture, barriers to PBIS implementation, and facilitators to PBIS implementation. Participants answered open-ended questions to provide broad-based responses. The researcher analyzed the responses for themes (answers recurring with frequency). In the second round, the themes were stratified with a Likert scale to determine their degree of importance. After receipt of the second-round survey responses, the researcher aggregated the experts' responses. The second-round results were given to the participants with the third-round survey. The third round of questions required the participants to review the results of the Round 2 questionnaire and categorize the results according to the importance of each emergent theme using another Likert scale for the responses.

Reducing Student Discipline

Through the three rounds of surveys, consensus was achieved concerning the elements of PBIS that have the greatest impact on reducing behaviors that contribute to student discipline. Through Round 1, participants identified consistent communication, positive reinforcement, leadership building and social skills between staff and peers, and common agreement of language, rules, and expectations as the elements of PBIS that reduce student discipline. In Round 2, the panel rated these themes as either important or

somewhat important as elements of PBIS that reduce student discipline. In Round 3, with the benefit of results from Round 2, participants came to complete consensus about two themes related to elements of PBIS that have the greatest impact on reducing behaviors that contribute to student discipline. Based on the findings and literature, it is concluded that in order to successfully reduce behaviors that contribute to student discipline, an emphasis on consistent communication should be stressed to all stakeholders. In addition, qualified district leaders need to provide teachers and administrators with training on the common agreement of language, rules, and expectations.

Promoting a Positive School Culture

Through the three rounds of surveys, consensus was achieved concerning the elements of PBIS that have the greatest impact on enhancing behaviors that contribute to a positive school culture. Through Round 1, participants identified understanding student needs, communication of schoolwide expectations (including universal expectations) and taking time for conversations, common language, and praising students for their strengths and expressing value for them as elements of PBIS that have the greatest impact on enhancing behaviors that contribute to a positive school culture. In Round 2, the panel rated these themes as either important or somewhat important as elements of PBIS that contribute to a positive school culture. In Round 3, with the benefit of results from Round 2, participants came to complete consensus about one theme related to elements of PBIS that have the greatest impact on enhancing behaviors that contribute to a positive school culture. Based on the findings and literature, it is concluded that in order to enhance behaviors that contribute to a positive school culture, an emphasis on meeting student needs should be stressed to all stakeholders. Qualified district leaders need to

encourage teachers and administrators to openly dialogue with students about behaviors, nutrition, hygiene, and social and emotional needs. Open lines of communication, without judgment, can aid in facilitating a more positive school culture.

Barriers to PBIS

Through the three rounds of surveys, consensus was achieved in response to the question, "What do the directors of student services or administrators who oversee student discipline identify as barriers to the implementation of PBIS within the school district?" Through Round 1, participants identified teacher understanding of PBIS, willingness to fully participate (buy-in), accountability for all stakeholders, and a lack of instructional time as barriers to the implementation of PBIS within a school district. In Round 2, the panel rated these themes as either important or somewhat important as barriers to the implementation of PBIS within a school district. In Round 3, with the benefit of results from Round 2, participants came to complete consensus about one theme as an important barrier to the implementation of PBIS within a school district. Based on the findings and literature, it is concluded that in order to address the barrier of a lack of instructional time in the implementation of PBIS, training is required. Qualified district leaders need to mandate that teachers, administrators, parents, and any stakeholders attend PBIS training. PBIS as a multitiered system of support would have a greater chance of success if all stakeholders had a fundamental understanding of how it works.

Facilitators to PBIS

Through the three rounds of surveys, consensus was achieved in response to the question, "What do the directors of student services or administrators who oversee

student discipline identify as facilitators to the implementation of PBIS within the school district?" Through Round 1, participants identified professional development (PBIS training), reducing exclusionary discipline, funding and resources, and additional staffing and facilitators (counselors and coaches) as facilitators to the implementation of PBIS within a school district. In Round 2, the panel rated these themes as either important or somewhat important as facilitators to the implementation of PBIS within a school district. In Round 3, with the benefit of results from Round 2, participants came to complete consensus about one theme as an important facilitator to the implementation of PBIS within a school district. Based on the findings and literature, it is concluded that in order to facilitate PBIS implementation, a reduction of exclusionary discipline is necessary. Qualified district leaders need to abolish zero-tolerance policies and find alternatives to suspension and expulsion. Children cannot learn curriculum or appropriate school behaviors if they are deprived of school attendance.

Implications for Action

Based on the findings from the expert panel, key themes were identified as important to the implementation of PBIS in Riverside County school districts. From the findings, the following suggestions for action are presented for improving PBIS implementation.

Consistent Communication

The experts indicated that constant communication is important in reducing exclusionary discipline. To achieve communication requires effort and time. Dialogue with students creates inroads to understanding what motivates them to participate and achieve. Teachers have meetings with peers, parents, and administrators but not students,

aside from instruction. In Riverside County, schools should allocate time for teachers to convey expectations as well as for students to convey aspirations to foster communication. Currently, parents attend voluntary conferences with teachers. Consistent communication requires parental participation in the students' education process. Parents must partner with teachers, engaging in conversations regarding student discipline and academic aspirations. Free and appropriate education should include mandatory communication with all of the stakeholders in student success.

Common Agreement of Language, Rules, and Expectations

Based on the findings of the surveys, common agreement of language, rules, and expectations is important in reducing exclusionary discipline. Students must understand what the rules are if they are expected to abide by them. Implied understanding allows for misconception. Therefore, clarification is required. An initial meeting about rules with students having input on their application could elicit ownership in the rules, and the likelihood of keeping to them would be increased. Rules must be posted and reviewed to be enforced. As a part of a new student orientation, students should be given a written copy of rules and be walked to locations such as the classroom, playground, cafeteria, auditorium, and office areas, and the rules for each area should be explained. A continually updated uniform disciplinary matrix for interventions, supports, and exclusionary discipline should be agreed on by all stakeholders. It is also recommended that latitude should be granted to administrators and teachers to develop creative solutions to address rule infractions and nonconforming behaviors.

Parents also must be provided with the rules for these areas. Infractions of rules and consequences should not catch parents by surprise. Deliberate rule infractions should

be met with consequences, while ignorance of rules should result in education with the student, parent, teachers, and administrators.

Understanding Student Needs

The respondents indicated that understanding student needs has the greatest impact on enhancing behaviors that contribute to a positive school culture. Hospitals and correctional facilities utilize a triage method to address an urgency of need, identify a classification, and assign a degree of need depending on the individual. However, the teacher as the first line responder to the educational needs of students is given limited information when students arrive to be taught. Disparities exist in socioeconomic circumstances, learning modalities, and any number of variables for students coming to learn. A triage assessment should happen at registration with both students and parents. Throughout Riverside County school districts, a simple questionnaire filled out by an agent for the districts could determine specific student needs by just communicating with both the parents and the students. The Riverside County Office of Education should develop a guiding template to serve as an initial triage questionnaire to assess student need. The questionnaire could be used to complete a needs profile for each student that teachers could access through a secured server. Thus, teachers would be better equipped to address student needs.

Professional Development (PBIS Training)

Based on the findings of the surveys, a lack of professional development (PBIS training) is important as a barrier to the implementation of PBIS within a school district. Clearly, continued training on PBIS is critical. All stakeholders must be trained in the multitiered system of support of PBIS. It is important that stakeholders understand why

PBIS is crucial to ending the school-to-prison pipeline. The state superintendent of

public instruction and director of education should allocate funding for policymakers,

administrators, teachers, and parents to tour correctional facilities to understand the need

to make changes in exclusionary disciplinary practices. This would illustrate the

disparity in the cost of education versus the astronomical costs that incarceration places

on society. Mandatory quarterly training provided for teachers and administrators could

inform participants of updates and trends, and provide a venue for concerns and

celebrations. Throughout the academic year, parent trainings would serve to reinforce

rules and make the culture commonplace for the students. For the program to succeed,

the information must be easy to follow and consistent. Training materials can be

developed for electronic distribution in the way of apps and programs. Simple flip charts

could provide matrices for supports and interventions to couple with incidents of rule

infractions. The training would be incentivized through additional pay or stipends for

participants.

Reducing Exclusionary Discipline

Findings from the surveys indicated that reducing exclusionary discipline is

important as a facilitator to the implementation of PBIS within a school district. By

maintaining consistent communication; promoting common agreement of language, rules,

and expectations for all school areas; understanding and providing for student needs;

providing professional development; and reducing exclusionary discipline, the school-to-

prison pipeline could be destroyed. Exclusionary discipline should be a last resort when

all else fails. Zero tolerance should be abolished by the state superintendent of public

instruction and director of education, as each case should be judged individually for the

severity of the rule infraction, the likelihood for recidivism, and the propensity for danger to other students or staff. Decisions about expulsions should be presented to a disciplinary panel comprised of teachers, administrators, legal experts, and parent representatives, with evidence presented and testimony as a part of due process.

Recommendations for Further Research

After conclusion of the surveys, the researcher identified areas that need further research. For example, regional education studies are needed to gain a better understanding of how national programs or systems of support work locally. Cultural, economic, and geographic differences influence how practices change to fit the area in which they are applied. As there is no universal plan that works everywhere, further studies would provide insight into differences and improve implementation.

While this study provides a snapshot of PBIS implementation in Riverside County, a longitudinal case study should be conducted to understand if the multitiered system of support creates the changes that PBIS documentation purports. Research needs to be expanded to include the 5 years of implementation that the research suggests is necessary for full implementation of PBIS. As previously stated, there are unique challenges that exist in each region, and the knowledge base would benefit from a macro view of the subject. By following trends of exclusionary discipline over the 5 years of implementation, a researcher could determine if PBIS is regionally successful over the implementation phase of the multitiered system.

As a universal understanding of language, rules, and norms, school culture is the intangible factor that improves the scholastic experience and provides a route for academic success. Regional studies about school culture could find what is important to

students in these areas. Students should feel safe and understood by their peers. An imbedded researcher could conduct research with individuals and groups of students to understand school culture as it exists in Riverside County.

In addition to other studies mentioned, regional studies about exclusionary discipline are needed to understand the local impacts on financial resources and student dropout rates and the impacts to society through the judicial and correctional systems. As the literature indicates, the overuse of exclusionary discipline is a short-term remedy that results in long-term societal costs. A case study about exclusionary discipline in Riverside County could coincide with the PBIS implementation study mentioned previously.

While there have been a number of studies about zero tolerance in well-populated urban areas in cities throughout the United States, a regional study about zero tolerance in Riverside County would yield data that could lead to changes in policymaking and funding. Urban planning in Riverside County needs to take into account population changes in correctional facilities that result from zero-tolerance policies that perpetuate the school-to-prison pipeline.

Parental involvement as stakeholders is also crucial in the educational process. It is common knowledge that the educational process does not completely occur at school. Parental involvement in the academics is needed to reinforce the learning of the day. In areas concerning discipline, there is no difference. If parents reinforce rules and norms from school, students can learn to acclimate naturally. A study about parental involvement is needed to determine the level at which parents participate in the education of their children, specifically with behavioral interventions. Teachers have to educate

children who may lack the support of a parent or guardian. It is important to understand the whole life of a child to address needs.

Furthermore, given that findings from this study indicated that student needs were a concern for the panel, understanding student needs is an important first step to fulfilling those needs, whether academic or basic needs such as nutrition or clothing. Without tools such as writing implements, books, tablets, and computers, some students are at a disadvantage to their contemporaries. Basic needs for students with disabilities, such as building access (handrails or ramps), hearing aids, and braille books, are necessary for learning. Meeting emotional needs is also essential for learning to occur. Students in Riverside County could benefit from a longitudinal study about providing for student needs.

Concluding Remarks and Reflections

This Delphi study investigated PBIS implementation in Riverside County, California. A group of participants shared their expert opinions about facilitators and barriers to the implementation of PBIS. The expert participants were also asked about enhancing behaviors that promote a positive school culture.

The expert panel answered open-ended questions and provided insights into each of the research questions. The responses identified themes and were stratified through a Likert scale to pose back to the expert panel through a survey to identify the themes' importance. Through three rounds of surveys, the experts came to a consensus of opinion in answering the research questions posed by the researcher. Consensus from the experts is important as they are the decision makers who must abide by law, ensure funding for programs, and make the decisions about the ability of students who have demonstrated

negative behaviors to remain in their districts. The researcher hopes to have generated a dialogue between participants during their monthly meetings at the Riverside County Office of Education on student discipline.

The findings identified that consistent communication and common agreement of language, rules, and expectations have the greatest impact on reducing behaviors that contribute to student discipline. The expert consensus also revealed that understanding student needs has the greatest impact on enhancing behaviors that contribute to a positive school culture. In implementing PBIS, the experts agreed that a lack of professional development (PBIS training) is important as a barrier to the implementation of PBIS within a school district. Lastly, the panel unanimously agreed that reducing exclusionary discipline is important as a facilitator to the implementation of PBIS within a school district.

As mentioned in the recommendations for further research, the researcher recommends that a longitudinal study be implemented in Riverside County to better understand the nuances of PBIS implementation and the eventual outcomes. Students are important, and their successes are society's triumphs.

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APPENDICES

Welcome to the PBIS Implementation Survey. Thank you for your time.

Thank you for participating in this survey regarding the implementation of PBIS, both facilitators and barriers in Riverside County School Districts. Your feedback is important to this study and is confidential. The first purpose of this Delphi study was to identify the degree to which Riverside County directors of student services or administrators that oversee student discipline perceive that positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) components reduce exclusionary discipline and promote a positive school culture. Acknowledging the successes evidenced in the literature related to PBIS reducing the need for exclusionary discipline, the second purpose of this study is to identify key facilitators and barriers to PBIS implementation within each expert's school district. Thank you for your time and look forward to sharing the results of this study with you very soon.

The Letter of Intent for this study describes the purpose for this Delphi method to develop a consensus among a panel of experts in order to identify the degree to which PBIS components reduce exclusionary discipline and promote a positive school culture. This study also acknowledges the successes of PBIS as evidenced by the literature and seeks to determine facilitators and barriers to its universal implementation.

A Delphi study relies on expert panelists to share their experiences and opinions in order to explore and explain issues.

1. *How long have you worked in the K-12 California educational system as a certified employee?*
    a. *5 years or less*
    b. *5 to 10 years*
    c. *10 to 15 years*
    d. *15 to 20 years*
    e. *20 or more years*

2. *Have you received training in Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS)?*
    a. *Yes*
    b. *No*

3. *Have you utilized any of the concepts or strategies outlined in PBIS Training?*
    a. *Yes*
    b. *No*

4. *What Tier (I-III) have you had experience in implementing? Check all that apply.*
    a. *Tier I (Primary Level)*
    b. *Tier II (Secondary Level)*
    c. *Tier III (Tertiary Level)*

The initial questions should be open-ended in order to generate honest and informed opinions as possible. Please comment on the questions provided. The researcher, James D. Pike, will present these questions pending your review and input as the first round of Delphi for this study. Please comment on the appropriateness of the questions. Please provide suggestions if you think appropriate to the questions in the text box located below each question.

5. Do you think that PBIS is suitable for school districts in Riverside County, California?

6. Has PBIS been adopted fully or in part by your school district?

7. Have the preventative aspects of Tier I (Primary Level) Interventions and Supports curtailed or lessened occurrences and negative behaviors exhibited by students?

8. Have Tier II (Secondary Level) Interventions and Supports been successful in reintegrating students to their normal classroom experiences?

9. To what extent is the Tier III (Tertiary Level) used as a deterrent in lieu of exclusionary discipline in your district?

10. What are the facilitators to implementing PBIS in your district?

11. What barriers hamper the implementation of PBIS in your district?

12. What elements of PBIS have the greatest impact on reducing behaviors that contribute to student discipline and the need for exclusionary discipline?

13. In your opinion, what elements of PBIS have the greatest impact on enhancing behaviors that contribute to a positive school culture? Please provide examples.

14. In your opinion are there better systems than PBIS that eliminate the need for exclusionary discipline or promote a positive school culture?

Letter of Introduction

Please Share Your Expertise

My name is James D. Pike. I am a doctoral candidate at Brandman University's School of Education, part of the Chapman University system. As a requirement of the Doctorate of Education, a study has to be completed. My study is entitled: Alternative to Exclusionary Discipline: Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) – A Delphi Study of Riverside County School Districts' Directors of Student Services. The study includes administrators or designees that oversee student discipline.

I received your contact information from Dr. Levine at Riverside County Office of Education. The goal of the study is to develop a consensus among the Delphi panel of experts about the implementation of PBIS in school districts throughout Riverside County.

The criteria for participation in this study is to have one of the schools within your district having implemented any Tier (1-3) of PBIS. Your participation in three 15-20 minute online surveys will lead to understanding about facilitators and barriers associated with the implementation of PBIS in Riverside County Schools. You, the expert, provide a professional opinion about PBIS to reduce or curtail exclusionary discipline. Your anonymity and survey results are confidential.

Should you consent to participate, I ask that you please complete the survey in one week from the date of issuance. Each survey will be open for one week. Thank you, in advance, for your insight and professional experience. At the conclusion of the study,

I will share the results with you upon request. If you are willing to participate, please answer the survey link that will follow tomorrow.

My contact information is as follows:

Email: pike4401@mail.brandman.edu

Sincerely,

James D. Pike

Doctoral Candidate, Brandman University

APPENDIX C

Informed Consent Form

INFORMATION ABOUT: Alternative to Exclusionary Discipline: Perceptions of the

Effectiveness of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) – A Delphi Study

of Riverside County School Districts' Directors of Student Services.

RESPONSIBLE RESEARCHER: James D. Pike

PURPOSE OF STUDY: The first purpose of this Delphi study was to identify the degree

to which Riverside County directors of student services or administrators that oversee

student discipline perceive that positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS)

components reduce exclusionary discipline and promote a positive school culture.

Acknowledging the successes evidenced in the literature related to PBIS reducing the

need for exclusionary discipline, the second purpose of this study is to identify key

facilitators and barriers to PBIS implementation within each expert's school district.

By participating in this study, you agree to do the following: Participate in a Delphi study

that consists of completing three separate online surveys that last approximately 20

minutes each. The Delphi survey instrument consists of three rounds of questionnaires

that respondents answer consecutively.

I understand that: There are no possible risks associated with this study participation. There is no compensation for participation. I may refuse to participate or withdraw from the survey at any time without any negative consequences. Any information obtained in this study will remain completely confidential. The study data will be analyzed as a whole and not by individual participant. If the study design or use of the data is to be changed, you will be so informed and consent re-obtained. My participation in this study indicates my agreement to participate. There is no need to sign and return this document to the researcher.

If you have any questions concerning this research, please contact me via email at: pike4401@mail.brandman.edu. You may also contact my chairperson: Dr. Jonathan Greenberg, greenber@brandman.edu or the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs: Dr. Charles Bullock, cbullock@brandman.edu.

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this form and the Research Participant's Bill of Rights.

I have read the above, understand it, and hereby consent to the procedures set forth.

APPENDIX D

Research Participant's Bill of Rights

BRANDMAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Research Participant's Bill of Rights

Any person who is requested to consent to participate as a subject in an experiment, or who is requested to consent on behalf of another, has the following rights:

1. To be told what the study is attempting to discover.

2. To be told what will happen in the study and whether any of the procedures, drugs or devices are different from what would be used in standard practice.

3. To be told about the risks, side effects or discomforts of the things that may happen to him/her.

4. To be told if he/she can expect any benefit from participating and, if so, what the benefits might be.

5. To be told what other choices he/she has and how they may be better or worse than being in the study.

6. To be allowed to ask any questions concerning the study both before agreeing to be involved and during the course of the study.

7. To be told what sort of medical treatment is available if any complications arise.

8. To refuse to participate at all before or after the study is started without any adverse effects.

9. To receive a copy of the signed and dated consent form.

10. To be free of pressures when considering whether he/she wishes to agree to be in the study.

If at any time you have questions regarding a research study, you should ask the researchers to answer them. You also may contact the Brandman University Institutional Review Board, which is concerned with the protection of volunteers in research projects. The Brandman University Institutional Review Board may be contacted either by telephoning the Office of Academic Affairs at (949) 341-9937 or by writing to the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Brandman University, 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA, 92618.

Brandman University IRB   Adopted   November 2013

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Welcome to the PBIS Implementation Survey. Thank you for your time.

Thank you for participating in this survey regarding the implementation of PBIS, both facilitators and barriers in Riverside County School Districts. Your feedback is important to this study and is confidential. The first purpose of this Delphi study was to identify the degree to which Riverside County directors of student services or administrators that oversee student discipline perceive that positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) components reduce exclusionary discipline and promote a positive school culture. Acknowledging the successes evidenced in the literature related to PBIS reducing the need for exclusionary discipline, the second purpose of this study is to identify key facilitators and barriers to PBIS implementation within each expert's school district. Thank you for your time and look forward to sharing the results of this study with you very soon.

The Letter of Intent for this study describes the purpose for this Delphi method to develop a consensus among a panel of experts in order to identify the degree to which PBIS components reduce exclusionary discipline and promote a positive school culture. This study also acknowledges the successes of PBIS as evidenced by the literature and seeks to determine facilitators and barriers to its universal implementation. Please comment on the appropriateness of the questions. *A Delphi study relies on expert panelists to share their experiences and opinions in order to explore and explain issues.*

Please provide suggestions if you think appropriate to the questions in the text

box located below each question. Please comment on the questions provided. The

researcher, James D. Pike, will present these questions pending your review and input as

the first round of Delphi for this study.

1. How long have you worked in the K-12 California educational system as a certified employee?

    a. *The question is pertinent for the study*
    b. *The question requires correction for study alignment. Please provide corrections below.*

    5.
    6.

2. Have you received training in Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS)?

    a. *The question is pertinent for the study*
    b. *The question requires correction for study alignment. Please provide corrections below.*

    7.
    8.

3. Have you utilized any of the concepts or strategies outlined in PBIS Training?

    a. *The question is pertinent for the study*
    b. *The question requires correction for study alignment. Please provide corrections below.*

4. What Tier (I-III) have you had experience in implementing? Check all that apply.

    a. *The question is pertinent for the study*
    b. *The question requires correction for study alignment. Please provide corrections below.*

5. Do you think that PBIS is suitable for school districts in Riverside County, California?

   a. *The question is pertinent for the study*
   b. *The question requires correction for study alignment. Please provide corrections below.*

   ┌───┐
   │   │
   │   │
   └───┘

6. Has PBIS been adopted fully or in part by your school district?

   a. *The question is pertinent for the study*
   b. *The question requires correction for study alignment. Please provide corrections below.*

   9.
   ┌───┐
   │   │
   │   │
   └───┘

7. Have the preventative aspects of Tier I (Primary Level) Interventions and Supports curtailed or lessened occurrences and negative behaviors exhibited by students?

   a. *The question is pertinent for the study*
   b. *The question requires correction for study alignment. Please provide corrections below.*

   10.
   ┌───┐
   │   │
   │   │
   └───┘

8. Have Tier II (Secondary Level) Interventions and Supports been successful in reintegrating students to their normal classroom experiences?

   a. *The question is pertinent for the study*
   b. *The question requires correction for study alignment. Please provide corrections below.*

   ┌───┐
   │   │
   │   │
   └───┘

9. To what extent is the Tier III (Tertiary Level) used as a deterrent in lieu of exclusionary discipline in your district?

   a. *The question is pertinent for the study*
   b. *The question requires correction for study alignment. Please provide corrections below.*

   11.
   ┌───┐
   │   │
   │   │
   └───┘

10. What are the facilitators to implementing PBIS in your district?

     a.   The question is pertinent for the study
     b. The question requires correction for study alignment. Please provide corrections below.

12.

11. What barriers hamper the implementation of PBIS in your district?

     a.   The question is pertinent for the study
     b. The question requires correction for study alignment. Please provide corrections below.

13.

12. What elements of PBIS have the greatest impact on reducing behaviors that contribute to student discipline and the need for exclusionary discipline?

     a.   The question is pertinent for the study
     b. The question requires correction for study alignment. Please provide corrections below.

14.

13. In your opinion, what elements of PBIS have the greatest impact on enhancing behaviors that contribute to a positive school culture? Please provide examples.

     a.   The question is pertinent for the study
     b. The question requires correction for study alignment. Please provide corrections below.

15.

14. In your opinion are there better systems than PBIS that eliminate the need for exclusionary discipline or promote a positive school culture?

     a.   The question is pertinent for the study
     b. The question requires correction for study alignment. Please provide corrections below.

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A Delphi study relies on expert panelists to share their experiences and opinions in order to explore and explain issues.

1. To what degree does consistent communication of expectations contribute to a reduction in exclusionary discipline?

   a) *Important*
   b) *Somewhat Important*
   c) *Less Important*
   d) *Does Not Apply*
      16.
2. To what degree does positive reinforcement contribute to a reduction in exclusionary discipline?

   a) *Important*
   b) *Somewhat Important*
   c) *Less Important*
   d) *Does Not Apply*

3. To what degree does relationship building and social skills between staff and peers contribute to a reduction in exclusionary discipline?

   a) *Important*
   b) *Somewhat Important*
   c) *Less Important*
   d) *Does Not Apply*

4. To what degree does common agreement of language, rules, and expectations for all school areas contribute to a reduction in exclusionary discipline?

   a) *Important*
   b) *Somewhat Important*
   c) *Less Important*
   d) *Does Not Apply*

5. To what degree does understanding student needs and addressing those needs contribute to the promotion of a positive school culture?

   a) *Important*
   b) *Somewhat Important*
   c) *Less Important*
   d) *Does Not Apply*

6. To what degree does communication of school-wide expectations (including universal expectations) and taking the time for conversations contribute to the promotion of a positive school culture?

   a) *Important*
   b) *Somewhat Important*
   c) *Less Important*
   d) *Does Not Apply*

7. To what degree does common language contribute to the promotion of a positive school culture?

a) *Important*
b) *Somewhat Important*
c) *Less Important*
d) *Does Not Apply*

8. To what degree does praising a student for their strengths and expressing value for them contribute to the promotion of a positive school culture?

a) *Important*
b) *Somewhat Important*
c) *Less Important*
d) *Does Not Apply*

9. To what degree is teacher understanding of PBIS and willingness to fully participate (buy-in) a barrier to the implementation of PBIS within a school district?

a) *Important*
b) *Somewhat Important*
c) *Less Important*
d) *Does Not Apply*

10. To what degree is accountability for all stakeholders to implement PBIS consistently a barrier to the implementation of PBIS within a school district?

a) *Important*
b) *Somewhat Important*
c) *Less Important*
d) *Does Not Apply*

11. To what degree is a lack of instructional time a barrier to the implementation of PBIS within a school district?

a) *Important*
b) *Somewhat Important*
c) *Less Important*
d) *Does Not Apply*

12. To what degree is a lack of professional development (PBIS training) a barrier to the implementation of PBIS within a school district?

a) *Important*
b) *Somewhat Important*
c) *Less Important*
d) *Does Not Apply*

13. To what degree is professional development (PBIS training) a facilitator to the implementation of PBIS within a school district?

a) *Important*
b) *Somewhat Important*
c) *Less Important*
d) *Does Not Apply*

14. To what degree is a reduction of exclusionary discipline (suspensions and expulsions) a facilitator to the implementation of PBIS within a school district?

a) *Important*
b) *Somewhat Important*
c) *Less Important*
d) *Does Not Apply*

15. To what degree is additional funding and resources a facilitator to the implementation of PBIS within a school district?

a) *Important*
b) *Somewhat Important*
c) *Less Important*
d) *Does Not Apply*

16. To what degree is additional staffing and facilitators (counselors and coaches) a facilitator to the implementation of PBIS within a school district?
a) *Important*
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c) *Less Important*
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APPENDIX H

Letter of Intent: Round 1 Survey

Dear Participant,

My name is James D. Pike. I am a doctoral candidate in the School of Education
at Brandman University, part of the Chapman University system. As part of the
requirements for the degree of doctor, I am completing a study about the implementation
and perceptions about Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) in Riverside
County, California. The study is entitled: Alternative to Exclusionary Discipline:
Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
– A Delphi Study of Riverside County School Districts' Directors of Student Services. I
am seeking your participation in this study to better understand perceptions about and the
implementation of PBIS in Riverside County schools.

A Delphi study requires a panel of experts to share ideas and expertise
confidentially through a survey. The surveys in this study can be completed online via
the Survey Monkey website. Given your consent, your participation will consist of three
rounds of questions that require your expertise to answer. As the researcher, I will make
certain that all materials remain confidential for this study.

This correspondence is for the first round of questions for this study. The survey
link has been provided for you. The survey closes in one week from the date of this
correspondence. I require a week to process the data from the first survey and complete
the questions for the second round. There will be another window of a week for the
completion of the second survey. After another week for data processing, I will be

sending the third and final round of questions. There will again be a week window to complete the last survey. The study will require five to six weeks to complete, but your time commitment is estimated 20-30 minutes a week for three weeks.

The population for this study consists of expert representatives from the 23 school districts in Riverside County, California. Each completed survey will be coded so that anonymity is guaranteed throughout this process. The Survey Monkey website is password protected, any printed documentation will be stored in a locked office, and I am the only person that will have access to the data generated by this study. The data will be archived for a minimum of three years, after which, it will be destroyed.

By completing the survey requirements for this study, you add to the body of knowledge about exclusionary discipline and PBIS. If you have any questions related to this study please contact me via email at pike4401@mail.brandman.edu. Results of this study will be made available to you upon completion, at your request.

Thank you for giving your time, expertise, and professionalism.

Sincerely,

James D. Pike

James D. Pike

Doctoral Candidate, Brandman University

RSVP for the Online PBIS Implementation Study

I respectfully request your participation in this survey.

Please Share Your Expertise

My name is James D. Pike. I am a doctoral candidate at Brandman University's School of Education, part of the Chapman University system. As a requirement of the Doctorate of Education, a study has to be completed. My study is entitled: Alternative to Exclusionary Discipline: Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) – A Delphi Study of Riverside County School Districts' Directors of Student Services. The goal of the study is to develop a consensus among the Delphi panel of experts about the implementation of PBIS in school districts throughout Riverside County.

Your participation in this 20-30 minute survey will lead to understanding about facilitators and barriers associated with the implementation of PBIS in Riverside County Schools. You, the expert, are asked to provide a professional opinion about PBIS to reduce or curtail exclusionary discipline. Your anonymity and survey results are confidential.

I ask that you complete the survey in one week (survey closes:). I appreciate your participation and efforts in reviewing the instrument for the study. Thank you for

your insight and professional experience. At the conclusion of the study, I will share the

results with you upon request. If you are willing to participate please reply to this email,

my information is as follows;

My contact information is as follows:

Email: pike4401@mail.brandman.edu

Sincerely,

James D. Pike

Doctoral Candidate, Brandman University