

The Principles and Practices of Virginia High Schools which Implemented Positive Behavioral
Interventions and Supports Framework to Reduce Office Discipline Referrals

Caroline Jean Wray

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James L. Sellers, Co-Chair
John R. Gratto, Co-Chair
Cherie C. Whitehurst
M. David Alexander

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ABSTRACT

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) frameworks, formerly known as effective school-wide discipline, started in 2005 as a State initiative to help raise student achievement by “[...] addressing the overlapping relationship between classroom conduct and academic achievement” (Virginia Department of Education, 2009, superintendent’s message). Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports implemented as part of the effective school-wide discipline practices in the Commonwealth of Virginia are seeing strong reductions in referrals and student exclusions/suspensions from school (Ciolfi, Shin, & Harris, 2011). “Over 90,500 individual students were suspended or expelled from a Virginia school in 2010-2011; many of them more than once” (2011 p.1). As paradigms switch from reactionary to prevention, school-wide approaches to discipline utilizing Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports are becoming more frequently used as a tool to reduce the number of office discipline referrals (ODR) and to keep students in class. Since the state has now 223 schools supporting the PBIS framework from 43 different school divisions, a study of the principles and practices of the most successful high school implementations could help high schools which are struggling with managing student conduct issues. By providing a compilation of those principles and practices that school leaders utilized to implement a highly effective Positive Behavioral Intervention Process, schools could focus on them to more successfully incorporate Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports frameworks in their high schools.

Three questions guided the work for this study. First, were there specific principles that the high schools using Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports operated by to successfully implement and reduce office discipline referrals? Secondly, were there certain practices that these high schools also employed which garnered success? Lastly, what artifacts could the successful schools provide demonstrating their successful implementation of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports framework that would provide benefit to beginning or struggling high schools implementing Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports?

A qualitative study was used utilizing the grounded theory method and cross school comparisons of data. Interviewing superintendent-designated leaders from nine high schools that reduced office discipline referrals (ODR), uncovered the principles and practices common to the successful high schools employing Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. There were twelve interviews: three group interviews with 2 respondents each and nine individual interviews. The twelve interviews involved 15 people:

- four division-level personnel: three were division leaders who were also PBIS Division Coaches and one who was titled PBIS Division Coordinator
- eight school administrators (five principals and three assistant principals)
- three teachers who also were designated as PBIS School Coaches

No interviewee designated by the superintendent refused to be interviewed. Reviews of the data collected were analyzed across all divisions to report these principles and practices. These principles and practices could be shared with new high schools to consider prior to Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports framework programs being implemented. As more high schools employ Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports and are studied regarding reducing the number of office discipline referrals, the Commonwealth of Virginia's Department of Education can utilize these longitudinal data to craft more effective support for the programs across the Commonwealth of Virginia.

All data were extracted from the recordings and then charted for common elements. Three principles emerged that led to the theoretical propositions those high schools that reduced ODR had:

1. PBIS Leaders who created a minimal set of school-wide rules.
2. PBIS leaders who believed improving school climate for staff learners improved student behaviors.
3. PBIS leaders who asserted that all school staff must be consistent with application of rules.

Additionally the data reviewed were analyzed and the researcher discovered that high schools that reduce office discipline referrals (ODR) have common practices where:

1. PBIS leaders recognized positive behaviors and defined the expectations to the school.
2. PBIS leaders involved other learning community members and empowered students.

3. PBIS leaders analyzed and disaggregated data to inform their procedures.
4. PBIS leaders trained staff members and promoted school expectations.

Additionally the data collected from the 12 interviews had respondents stating the single greatest obstacle that they encountered while implementing PBIS to reduce ODR which led to more implications for practice. Thus, the following lists the top obstacles that all respondents referred to in their interviews:

1. Nine interviews had respondents who listed the top obstacle as establishing consistency in both staff participation and rule application.
2. Six interviews also had respondents that listed finding time to implement PBIS strategies and interventions was their greatest obstacle.
3. One interview had a respondent who also stated finding funding was his main obstacle.

Providing these data enabled high schools interested in implementing PBIS to be aware of these obstacles so those schools may avoid the pitfalls encountered as high schools employed PBIS frameworks to reduce ODR. However, all twelve interviews were noted with success stories that respondents felt were directly related to their reduction of ODR.

1. Six interviews had respondents that reported enhanced relationships between students, teachers, and administrators (within the school).
2. Seven interviews had participants that described how student successes enhanced school pride and school promotion.
3. Three interviews had respondents that discussed the improved relationships with community partners and parents.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the students of tomorrow. In researching the effect that instilling Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports will help you with your future and current goals, I have become a better educator. Additionally, I dedicate this dissertation to my husband, Tim Wray. Your faith in me made me finish and bolstered me when I doubted myself. You, my best friend and soul mate, are the reason I finished. You are my heart!

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First, I am humbled by the many people who helped me complete the process of obtaining my doctorate. The challenge was unbelievable and a definite battlefield of the mind. I would like to honor those that supported me.

To all the superintendents, principals, PBIS Division Coaches or Coordinators, and School-wide Coaches I interviewed and contacted, thank you very much for your participation and consent. I hope by recording your efforts to reduce office discipline referrals in the best interests of supporting students, I have provided you with information and helpful examples that will bolster you in your continued efforts to help our students. I admire all of you and feel blessed to have extended my network with such dedicated educators.

Dr. Sellers and Dr. Gratto, co-chairs of my committee: Your wisdom, straightforwardness, integrity, and time spent during the process were priceless. Your assistance and constant reminders, without making unbelievable obstacles, were greatly appreciated. Dr. Sellers, from the moment I met you, years prior to your being my chair, you were a listener, an encourager, and someone devoutly dedicated to making education better. The hours you spent with me, even when you were on vacation, humbled me. You never made me feel inadequate no matter how many times you had to send some things back. The four quadrants of learning really helped me in my career and writing this dissertation. I'm honored you were a part of my committee. Dr. Gratto, your ability to focus me on a course that was "doable" and to keep me from bird walking down too many paths is how I was able to finish the process. Your ability to help me be more succinct in my writing made the research clearer and focused.

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Thanks again to my wonderful family, friends, neighbors, and colleagues in Bedford County and beyond. I am blessed. While I end with my thanks to God, He certainly is the first and last reason for all that came before and all that follows. Sometimes people do not understand when I look up at Him and smile and whisper, "now, you're just showing off," but in my life I see His hand at work daily and without Him in my heart and His constant shaping and calling, I would be a noisy cymbal only. For Him, I strive to enrich others and hope I can serve others with any knowledge I gained here or in the future. Lastly, but surely, to Gary Basham who taught me the key to being an educator: "Remember to do what's best for students, and the rest takes care of itself."

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Chapter 1

Introduction to the Study

Schools have always sought to eradicate bad student behavior due to the belief that academic success is directly related to fostering positive characteristics in students that will lead to higher student achievement. Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) framework programs (Simonsen & Sugai, 2012) provide school high schools with the opportunity to institute programs that will build upon successful methods to create a culture that fosters academic achievement.

The Research Problem

Introduction. Drawing from the multiple studies on the outcomes of PBIS framework implementation, the Virginia Department of Education is supporting effective school-wide discipline practices in schools to reduce the number of student referrals and expulsions in an effort to increase student achievement. This study intends to provide high schools new to the PBIS process with the common principles and practices that high schools employed who have reduced their office discipline referral rate the most over the years of 2011-2014. Utilizing the State obtained data to distinguish nine high schools in the Commonwealth of Virginia that have reduced office discipline referral percentages the most, this researcher hoped to provide high schools newly implementing PBIS frameworks with the key principles and practices that have led to the success.

History of positive behavioral interventions and supports framework and national awareness. According to Simonsen and Sugai (2012):

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports [are] 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).

As a “framework,” the emphasis is on a process or approach, rather than a curriculum, intervention, or practice. The “continuum” notion emphasizes how evidence or research-based behavioral practices are organized within a multi-tiered system of support, also called “response-to-intervention” (Sugai & Horner, 2009). Within this definition, the mutually beneficial

relationship between academic and social behavior and student success is highlighted (Chard, Harn, Sugai, & Horner, 2008; Sugai, Horner, & Gresham, 2002). Finally, the important supportive relationship between positive school climate and classroom-wide culture and individual student success is emphasized. (p. 1)

The historical review of literature related to the development of positive behavioral intervention and supports regarding school discipline have received a great deal of attention from Commonwealth of Virginia education officials, local school division administrators, and behavior specialists. Recognizing that youth violence prevention programs were effective, the Office of the Surgeon General (2001) analyzed prevention programs methodically through the meta-analysis of effect size, treatment conditions, controls, and success rates, while synthesizing common successful elements in multiple programs. Box 5-1 from the Surgeon General's report listed three levels of intervention ranging from first response strategies of re-teaching, second response strategies of more planned group interventions to more intense and counseling responses at a third level. Congressmen, State officials, and school administrators also saw a need to infuse prevention strategies for behavior into education. For example, in 2007, in a press release from Brundage, Mulka, and Schlittner revealed that,

Senators Barack Obama (D-IL) and Dick Durbin (D-IL), and Representative Phil Hare (D-IL) introduced the Positive Behavior for Effective Schools Act (H.R. 3407, S. 2111), which directs resources to innovative programs designed to teach positive behavior as a way to improve school climate and make it easier for students to learn. Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports programs define and support appropriate behaviors by explicitly teaching students about good behavior and including it as part of the curriculum. (p. 1)

Nationwide, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports are becoming a practical approach to preventing behavior problems. Sugai and Horner (2002) reported that the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (1997, 2004) placed into policy and practice observing and recording catalysts for poor student behavior in functional behavioral assessments and creating strategies of prevention through behavior intervention plans.

The paradigm switch from traditional punitive and reactive discipline to establishing an effective school wide discipline program promoting Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports was founded in strong roots that can be traced back to the scientific study of behavior

initiated by Skinner (1953) and other psychologists. Skinner (1953) utilized the scientific method to whittle down the causes of the behaviors to establish patterns that may produce results that can be applied to prevent behavior. Skinner's scientific approach led to swift changes in how behavior was studied, analyzed, and compartmentalized. The origins of effective school-wide discipline programs using Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports referred to Skinner's (1953) study of human behavior in trying to change human behavior by intentionally focusing on catalysts that spark behavior. Skinner (1953) wrote:

If we can observe 'human behavior carefully from an objective point of view and come to understand it for what it is, we may be able to adopt a more sensible course of action.'"

Skinner blazed a path of utilizing science to examine the general behaviors of humans in terms of the surrounding environment, the external conditions of institutions that control behavior, the behavior of individuals in the context of a group and strove to create "A functional analysis which specifies behavior as a dependent variable and proposes to account for it in terms of observable and manipulable physical conditions.... (p. 41)

Skinner's concepts of operant conditioning and positive reinforcement were the two main tenets of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. Sugai (G. Sugai, personal communication December 11, 2012) credited the early behavioral scientists such as Skinner and Baer, Wolf, and Risley (1968) who also referenced Skinner as the forerunner of behavior analysis. Baer, Wolf, and Risley applied the mechanisms of behavior identified by Skinner to examine "...what controls the behavior under study" (p. 91). They reported that the basic foundations of the study of human behavior should be "...applied; behavioral, and analytic; in addition, [the study of behavior] should be technological, conceptually systematic, and effective, and it should display some generality (p. 92)." Further explained in their article was their research design that focuses on how to analyze behavior in a social setting that does not have the controlled environment of a laboratory. They also highlighted the importance of being able to replicate with fidelity and record clearly the results which could then be applied to the general population as long as it was sustainable over time (Baer, Wolf, and Risley, 1968). Sugai and Horner applied their understanding of environmental factors influencing individuals' behaviors to school environments influencing student behaviors and hypothesized that changing the school culture to reflect a positive not punitive environment changed negative student behavior.

While Skinner (1953) and others were looking for the stimulus to negative behavior, Glasser's (1986) control theory focused on prevention by understanding the motivations behind the behaviors. Glasser felt that creating and utilizing a learning team model and proposing shifts from traditional teaching to teachers as facilitators would diffuse the problem of students feeling powerless. Glasser proposed that feelings of powerlessness contributed to a student's struggle both behaviorally and academically; he posited that "the need for power is essential in understanding adolescent behavior more than the other needs of survival, love and community, freedom, and having fun" (Glasser, 1986, p.23). Interestingly enough, in a revision of his 1986 publication, Glasser changed his title from *Control Theory* to *Choice Theory* (2001). The mission is the same but the title revealed the emphasis on the choices that students and staff make in public education. Doing so supported the theories of Sugai and Horner. The framework combined Skinner's (1953) conditioning and positive reinforcement successes with Baer, Wolf, & Risley's (1968) model of studying participants in their environments rather than a controlled laboratory setting. The development of these prevention programs and behavior education aimed to teach students to make positive choices like Glasser (1986, 2001) stipulated. He added that students needed to have the freedom to choose.

Drawing on Skinner's research, Sugai and Horner (G. Sugai, personal communication, December 11, 2012) developed the idea of operant conditioning of positive behaviors framework to apply to students with disabilities through functional behavioral assessments and then generalized the idea of a systems approach to include the general population. Sugai stated (G. Sugai, personal communication, December 11, 2012):

In brief, I am a behavior analyst because I use behavioral theory, behavior analytic principles, and positive behavior support values to describe what I see, provide an explanation or hypothesis for why I'm seeing it (mechanism), and what I might do to improve/affect what I'm seeing (intervention/instruction). My early work and training was in biology/botany, and the importance of the scientific approach has always been an important influence on my behavioral leanings.

I've applied this behavioral framework to my work at the individual student level, at the classroom behavior management level, at the school-wide discipline level, and now at the division and State organizational level. Behavioral function is fundamental to

understanding the relationship between what individuals or groups of individuals do and the contexts in which [people] are more or less likely to be seen/emitted.

[...]When we got the opportunity to develop and run the PBIS Center in 1996, we took our behavior analytic training and applied it to the larger task of technical assistance, dissemination, and scaling up of behavioral practices. We have stayed true to our behavior analytic and positive behavior support roots (theory, principles, practices); however, we've adopted the language of general education. We have stayed focused on empirically supported, evidence-based practices...and have expanded our research to practice efforts to understanding the contingencies that affect implementers and organizations that support the implementers.

I would not characterize our [Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports] work as 'evolutionary'but more an extension of a defensible theoretical approach to some different applied challenges/problems. Some change agents call this operational focus as their 'theory of action,' and it is reflected again in how we do business, develop logic models, approach new problems, etc.

Our current efforts are focused on how to sustain and scale up the utilization of behavioral practices in schools, and again, we are applying our behavior analytic technology to that challenge (e.g., what contingencies maintain bad practice? what alternative can be established to compete with and replace these contingencies? what is it [*sic*] gonna take to sustain implementation behaviors? etc.)

Sugai's (2007) PBIS framework referred back to Skinner's idea of reinforcement for positive outcomes and operant conditioning. Like Skinner's analytical behavior analysis, Sugai focused on the observable behavior of students attempting to pinpoint the trigger that started the undesirable behavior. Through numerous studies (e.g., Spaulding, Irvin, Horner, May, Emeldi, Tobin, & Sugai, 2010; Horner, Todd, Lewis-Palmer, Irvin, Sugai, & Boland, 2004; Irvin, Horner, Ingram, Todd, Sugai, Sampson, & Boland, 2006; Irvin, Tobin, Sprague, Sugai, & Vincent, 2004) behavior researchers have demonstrated a causal relationship between implementing a clear behavior plan and achieving more acceptable student behaviors. By behaving acceptably in the classroom students will not be sent out and thus receive more instruction time.

Virginia implementation of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS).

The effort to reduce undesirable behavior through the use of PBIS frameworks became a focus

for the Virginia Department of Education. Utilizing the framework of Sugai and Horner's (2007) systems approach, the Virginia Department of Education designated an Education Training and Technical Assistance Center to implement the PBIS program throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia:

Schools throughout Virginia are striving to ensure that schools offer a safe and effective instructional environment in which all students are successful learners. The Virginia Department of Education is working closely with education personnel to accomplish that goal by means of Effective School-wide Discipline (ESD). As part of that effort Effective School-wide Discipline supports priority projects throughout the Commonwealth and works in a collaborative partnership with the Virginia Department of Education Training and Technical Assistance Centers. The Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports project is headquartered at Old Dominion University, serving as the fiscal agent and providing logistical support and resources. (para.1, *Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support*)

The Training and Technical Assistance Center provided assistance, documents, training, and researched-based analysis of discipline data (<http://www.ttac.odu.edu/pbisva/index.htm>).

Beginning in 2005, the Virginia State Department of Education and the Office of Special Education invited principals to a meeting at the Department of Education in Richmond, Virginia, for information on school-wide discipline (Principals' memo No. 1, 2005). In 2013, there were 33 school divisions and 208 individual schools within those high schools listed as participating in the program and functioning at different levels in the process of Effective School-Wide Discipline implementation. The Training and Technical Assistance Center, comprised of the Virginia's Department of Education appointed staff, work on location at Old Dominion University and are the voice of authority on implementation of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. In fact, the *Getting Involved Flowchart* published on the *Positive Behavioral Interventions and Strategy* website, (<http://ttac.odu.edu/pbisva/documents/Getting-Involved-Flowchart.doc>), depicted a graphic representation of the historical steps of how effective school-wide discipline has evolved in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The flowchart started with the Superintendent of Public Education creating a memo asking for school officials to attend an effective school-wide discipline information meeting. The memo ended with how the process works once a school division decides to implement effective school-wide discipline frameworks.

The plan asked for a division coordinator to be appointed and provided education of the division coordinator on the fidelity of implementing an effective school-wide discipline structure. Lastly TTAC provide training on completing a readiness checklist. The checklist for each school included the appointment of a school coach, school discipline team, data analysis, and the completion of a school profile, school readiness checklist, and school commitment form. After these steps were completed, the plan specified that members of the discipline teams will then attend trainings. These trainings were provided by the Training and Technical Assistance Center that focus on effective school-wide discipline planning. Then the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports aspect of the framework were defined according to the specific needs for each school.

The rationale for Virginia adopting the PBIS program was additionally based on the work of Bohanon et al. (2006). His work re-stated the purpose of effective school-wide discipline programs with positive behavior intervention and supports framework: “Positive behavior support includes a broad range of systematic and individualized strategies for achieving important social and learning outcomes while preventing problem behavior” (p. 80). The researchers further stated that the use of a systems approach benefitted students in three distinct ways while constructing a positive school-wide climate for all staff members:

The application of this approach leads to at least three outcomes for students:

(a) improved academic achievement (b) enhanced social competence, and (c) safe learning and teaching environments (Office of Special Education Programs, 2002). In sum, this approach should lead to improved quality of life for teachers, students, staff, and family members through the combination of (a) valued outcomes, [...]. The ‘system’ of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports includes implementing and assessing universal interventions (e.g., supports all students), interventions for groups of students who need additional support (e.g., classroom levels, function-based interventions; Hawken & Horner, 2002; Leedy, Bates, & Safran, 2004), and intensive supports for individual students (Colvin, 1991; Lewis & Sugai, 1999; Walker et al., 1996). (p.131)

Thus, the movement to prevention rather than reaction has pervaded the education literature as a plausible discipline foundation for educators and administrators to consider enacting in their schools.

Purposes of the Study

This study was based upon research completed on all nine high schools and their corresponding division in the Commonwealth of Virginia. These schools reported the most dramatic decrease in their office discipline referral (ODR) since implementing Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) frameworks. Discipline data from all high schools using PBIS (listed on the website: <http://ttac.odu.edu/pbisva/>) were obtained by cross referencing the schools listed on the website and gathering their discipline data from the School Safety Information Resource (SSIR) Database which was retrieved November 5, 2014 from <https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/pti/>. Out of 135 school divisions in Virginia, 43 divisions, 223 schools and specifically 26 high schools are participating in Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports framework adoptions. The basis for determining successful implementation results were determined by examining the overall percentage of incident reduction rates of each school for the year 2011-2014 using the Safe Schools Information Resource Database located on the Commonwealth of Virginia's Department of Education Website <https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/pti/>. Out of those 223 schools, this researcher was interested in providing accurate data for high schools Statewide regarding the number of high schools reporting reductions in office discipline.

The researcher sought data from nine high schools from seven different divisions in Virginia which have had the most reduction in office discipline referrals while implementing the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports framework. The revelation of these principles and practices was important to all Virginia high schools due to mandatory indicators including behavior statistics that schools of improvement or focus schools must monitor, adjust, and change. Schools that are in warning must comply with the following required actions:

- The school uses an identification process for all students at risk of failing or in need of targeted interventions.
- The school uses a tiered, differentiated intervention process to assign research-based interventions aligned with the individual needs of identified students (the process includes a description of how interventions are selected and assigned to students as well as the frequency and duration of interventions for Tier 2 and Tier 3 students).
- The school uses a monitoring process (including a multidisciplinary team that meets regularly to review student intervention outcome data and identifies “triggers” and

next steps for unsuccessful interventions) for targeted intervention students to ensure fidelity and effectiveness.

In fact, the purpose of this study focused on the principles and practices high schools used to implement PBIS frameworks to successfully reduce office discipline referrals. Furthermore, the intent was to collect and to publish a qualitative analysis to gather common principles and practices other high schools may employ for success.

Significance of Study

The idea and framework shaping this study focused on citing practical principles and practices of nine high schools in Virginia that reduced office discipline referrals the most in order to provide other schools with that information they can use to duplicate that reduction. Utilizing the principles and practices gathered in this study will provide ideas for other high schools to use that wish to reduce the number of office discipline referrals. The findings can be a resource to other high schools in similar settings to seek improvement in their own implementation of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports.

Research Questions

1. What are the guiding principles that each high school used to reduce office discipline referrals?
2. What are the practices that each high school employed to reduce office discipline referrals?
 - a. What was your greatest obstacle to reducing ODR?
 - b. What do you think has been the greatest success resulting from reducing your ODR?
3. Are there any artifacts that your high school will share that supported your successful decrease in ODR?

Research Design

Seven divisions containing nine high schools have been studied with one agreeing to participate and requesting anonymity. The investigator was permitted access to seven divisions of the 14 she contacted.

While in the Commonwealth of Virginia there are 135 School divisions in the State, there are 43 divisions and 223 schools are using Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports in their division. Among those divisions, not all schools in the chosen division are using PBIS, so the division level involvement may not be as important as first theorized in the study. The superintendent of each school division was the first person of contact.

Lastly, only nine high schools of 26 high schools in seven different divisions in Virginia are represented in the study which may limit the validity for scalability to all high schools in Virginia. Additionally, incorrect data depleted the original number of high schools from 26 to 22. Those schools' data were discovered to be inaccurately reported to the state due to a computer transfer issue.

Organization of the Study

Chapter two outlines the literature that explains the historical derivation of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports and reports the significant studies that allowed the researcher to a) use office discipline referral data as a point of determination of implementation and b) explain the process of implementation so that the researcher's study was warranted in a qualitative method. Chapter three explained the methodology used to analyze the implementations at the successful schools while Chapter four presented the data and the analysis of the data in the context of grounded theory. Lastly, Chapter five will convey a summary of all data coupled with implications for practice, overarching themes, and future study suggestions.

Chapter 2

Review of the Related Literature

To understand why PBIS was the selected intervention strategy for 43 school divisions and 223 schools from across the Commonwealth of Virginia, one must first understand why Virginia Schools would be interested in PBIS as a part of school improvement plans. During this study in Virginia, schools were held to common standards of learning for each grade level that culminate in periodic standardized assessments. These assessment results were then published and utilized to determine a school division's success in achieving the common standards for learning. These assessments and standards have evolved since their beginning in 1992 to now be part of virtually all curricula. As recently as 2011, increased rigor aspects were added to the assessments. These additional rigorous elements involved multi-level questioning, technology enhanced questions, and modifying tests to include higher taxonomy of skill sets of application, problem solving, analyzing, and assimilation. Once the rigor was implemented into the sets of questions, schools were not as successful, and many more schools entered into warning status or were marginally successful.

Among the evaluative tools, the concept emerged of examining students who may share common qualities that influenced academic achievement. With the ability to drill down to where students were being unsuccessful by strand of the Standards of Learning, the Virginia Department of Education began to see that English Language Learners, students with special needs, minorities, and lower socio economic/disadvantaged students were not being successful. These "gap group" commonalities thus became a focus for schools of improvement whose data supported these findings.

Thus, leaders began to look at factors that influenced student achievement. In triangulating more data points to determine factors that resulted in achievement gain, absences from the classroom were studied regarding at-risk students which led to studying suspensions and office discipline referrals as a component for study. As a result, teaching positive behaviors for successful learning was now part of the process for schools in improvement status to prevent office discipline referrals/suspensions so students will remain in class and not miss instruction. For example, according to Sugai (2008) in his presentation Positive Behavior Support: Beyond Discipline, he produced a slide that assigns the use of 15 minutes per referral for administrators and 45 minutes per referral of instruction time. Thus, using his formula, a school

with an average 1500 referrals a year used 375 hours of administrative time or 47 8-hour days, while students who receive the referrals missed 1125 hours of instruction or 160 7-hour days of instruction. Furthermore, recent action by the Commonwealth of Virginia to combine Response to Intervention (RtI) and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) strategies was the foundation for the Virginia Department of Education's recent summit in September 2013. The summit's agenda explained the Virginia Tiered System of Supports which combines the academic approaches of RtI and the behavioral adjustments of PBIS to support the individual student needs for achievement.

According to Sugai and Horner (2002) there were six shared components of implementing the framework of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports in their review of research:

1. Statement of Purpose that expresses the explicit objective of and rationale for a school-wide discipline structure. This statement should
 1. be positively phrased;
 2. focus on all staff, all students, and all school settings;
 3. link academic and behavioral outcomes.

For example, George Ikuma School is a community of learners. We are here to learn, grow, and become good citizens.
2. Clearly Defined Expectations and Behavioral Examples that permit consistent communications and establish an effective verbal community for all staff and students and across all settings. Five or fewer positively stated expectations are expressed in a few common words, for example, Respect Ourselves, Respect Others, Respect Environment, Respect Learning.
3. Procedures for Teaching Expectations and Expected Behaviors that staff can use to ensure students know and understand school-wide rules, expectations, routines, and positive and negative consequences. Basically, the same procedures that are used to teach academic skills and concepts are applied:
 1. teach directly (tell/show, practice, test),
 2. supervise use,
 3. provide positive and/or corrective feedback.

4. Procedures for Encouraging Expected Behaviors that are organized and provided along a continuum of:
 1. tangible to social forms of feedback,
 2. staff to student administered,
 3. high to low frequency,
 4. predictable to unpredictable presentations.
5. Procedures for Preventing Problem Behavior that are organized and provided along a continuum of:
 1. minor to major rule violations
 2. Increasing intensity and aversiveness of responses.

These procedures should provide clear definitions and examples of rule-violating behaviors, focus on preventing future occurrences of problem behavior by teaching and strengthening pro-social replacement behaviors, consider the contextual function (purpose) of rule-violating behavior, and delineate between teacher versus administrator managed problem behaviors.
6. Procedures for Record Keeping and Decision Making that allow for regular (weekly and monthly) feedback to staff about the status of school-wide discipline implementation efforts. Teams should be able to examine patterns at least across students, time, locations, behavior types (appropriate and inappropriate), consequences, and staff members to improve the effectiveness, efficiency, and relevance of their efforts. (p. 32-33)

These six components Sugai and Horner believed are the foundation upon which a school builds its personalized behavior vision using strategies, programs, or other practices listed above. Discovering the connections between the PBIS principles needed to create and execute the prevention practices were the focus of this study. As advocates of behavior prevention strategies for special education students, behavior scientists Sugai and Horner (2002) focused on correcting and preventing behaviors in school by spring-boarding off the behavioral theories of Skinner's operant conditioning and positive reinforcement. Together, Sugai and Horner modified their functional behavior assessment for special education children to apply to the general population of all students in schools. By focusing on this type of plan to identify negative behaviors, establish positive behaviors, and create intervening adult relationships, Sugai (G. Sugai, personal

communication, December 11, 2012) stated, “We've applied this approach to academic and social behavior....in large part because a behavior is a behavior....and they occur in context (environment).” Thus, Sugai indicated that utilizing the practices common for special education children were also appropriate for those students who were not identified as having a learning disability.

A school-wide program would contain all of these elements and, with implementation fidelity, would show the same reduction of referrals as a result. For instance, researchers have reported that an effective school-wide discipline framework approach will reduce the number of office discipline referrals for schools (Horner, Todd, Lewis-Palmer, Irvin, Sugai, & Boland, 2004; Irvin, Horner, Ingram, Todd, Sugai, Sampson, & Boland, 2006; Irvin, Tobin, Sprague, Sugai, & Vincent, 2004). However, there are strict guidelines to implementation of an effective school-wide discipline plan that will result in such reductions. The first key element to implementation of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports was an understanding of the true target audience in public schools K-12. Yanek (personal communication, February 22, 2013) has shared a model for dissecting a school's population. According to “triangle logic” (see Figure 1 below), 80% of students followed the acceptable rules of behavior in schools, 15% were potentially at risk of not following rules and in need of secondary intervention and prevention tactics, while only 5% were students who needed immediate intervention and constant reinforcement to follow school rules. Yanek (2013) stated the figure represented:

[. . .] how we organize the continuum of supports grounded in those evidence based, core features we just identified. We start with the host environment and what it is we do for all students and staff in the building/division. We know that about 80% (sometimes higher in ES and MS (as high as 94%) and sometimes slightly lower in HS (78%) of students will “respond” to the universal school-wide supports. About 15% of students will require something in addition to the school-wide supports. About 3-5% of students require the most intensive level of support/intervention.

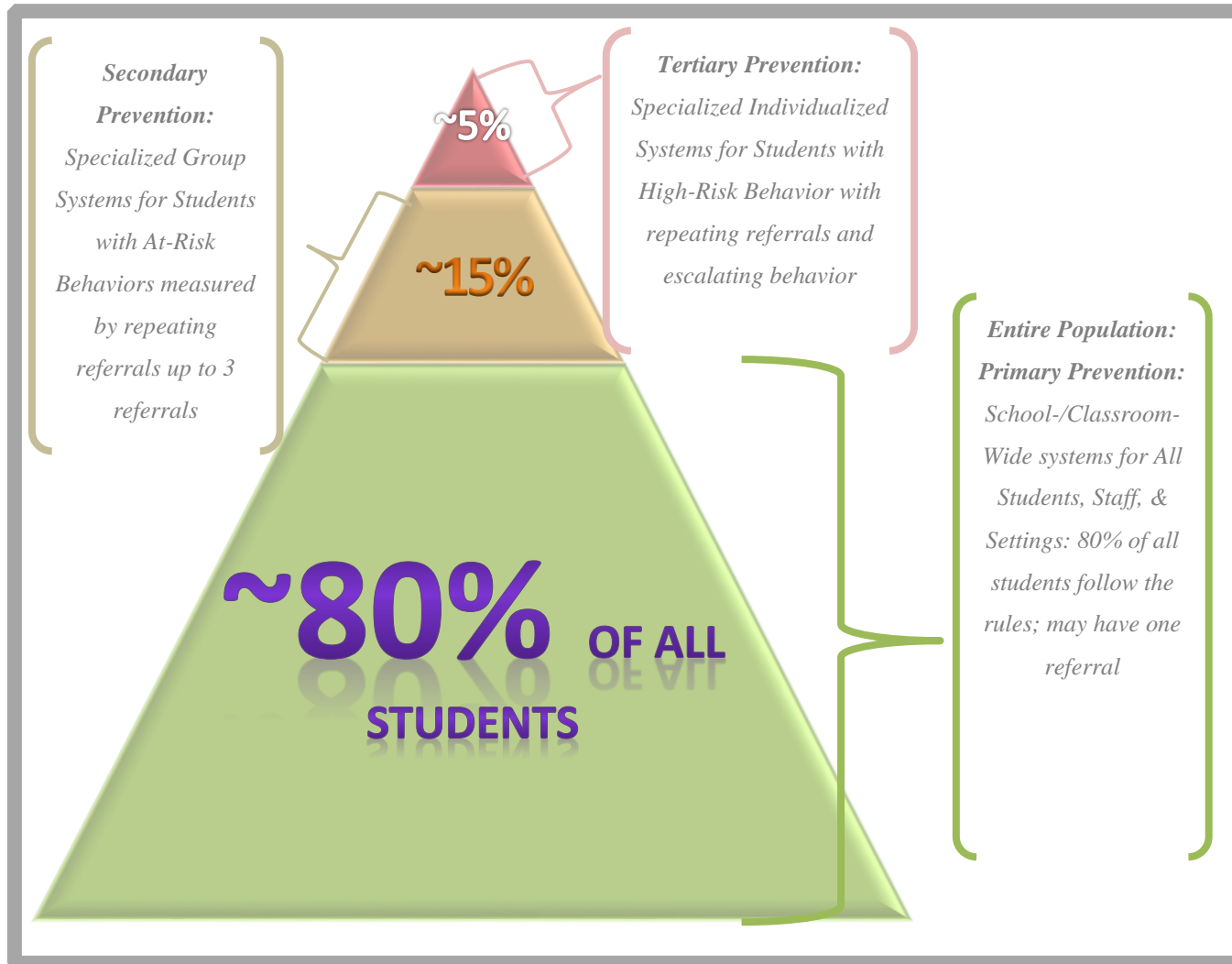


Figure 1. Adapted from Sugai's Continuum of positive behavior support from the Virginia's Department of Education's website *Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports* <http://www.ttac.edu.edu/esd/Resources/index.htm>

Colvin (2007) likewise described the use of a behavior response team to create and proceed through the seven steps that comprise a proactive school-wide discipline plan. These seven steps were: “(a) create a purpose statement, (b) establish school-wide behavior expectations, (c) teach the behavior expectations, (d) maintain the behavior expectations, (e) establish correction procedure for problem behavior, (f) use the data, and (g) sustain the plan for the long haul” (Colvin, 2007, p. 39). Similarly the Virginia Department of Education’s website *Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports* established specific statements that go hand-in-hand with Colvin’s seven steps. These specific procedures must be followed to ensure fidelity of implementation and operation of a school-wide approach. Table 1 presented an outline of the seven steps adapted from the Virginia Department of Education’s *Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports* website and classified each of those steps with Colvin’s key elements to developing an effective school-wide discipline plan. The table further defined the Virginia Department of Education’s *PBIS of Virginia: Benchmarks of Quality Resources* that frame the steps and clarified the makeup of each critical element. In other words, the *PBIS of Virginia: Benchmarks of Quality Resources* below represented a checklist for schools to use to measure whether each key element was employed correctly. Additionally the *PBIS of Virginia: Benchmarks of Quality Resources* were infused with Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports that included involving the entire school in creating, maintaining, awarding, and evaluating the program. Equally important was getting the entire staff to have a common language of discipline expectations. By posting positive and consistent statements of acceptable behaviors, instead of *can’t do* statements, PBIS leaders posted actions to take in specific problem areas such as the cafeteria, the classroom, the hallway, the bathroom, and on the bus.

| Colvin Step Correlation | Critical Element | PBIS of Virginia: Benchmarks of Quality Resources |
|---|--|---|
| Colvin Step Correlation | Critical Element | PBIS of Virginia: Benchmarks of Quality Resources |
| Step 1: Purpose Statement | Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (*PBIS) Team | 1 - Team has broad representation 2 - Team has administrative support 3 - Team has regular meetings (at least monthly) 4 - Team has established a clear mission/purpose |
| Step 1: Purpose Statement | Faculty & Staff Commitment | 5 - Faculty are aware of behavior problems across campus (regular data sharing) 6 - Faculty involved in establishing and reviewing goals 7 - Faculty feedback obtained throughout year |
| Step 2: Schoolwide Behavior Expectations | Effective Procedures for Dealing with Discipline | 8 - Discipline process described in narrative format or depicted in graphic format 9 - Process includes documentation procedures 10 - Discipline referral form includes information useful in decision making 11 - Behaviors defined 12 - Major/minor behaviors are clearly identified/understood 13 - Suggested array of appropriate responses to minor (non-office managed) problem behaviors 14 - Suggested array of appropriate responses to major (office-managed) problem behaviors |
| Step 6: Using the Data | Data Entry & Analysis Plan Established | 15 - Data system to collect and analyze Office Discipline Referral data 16 - Additional data collected (attendance, grades, faculty attendance surveys) 17 - Data entered weekly (minimum) 18 - Data analyzed monthly (minimum) 19 - Data shared with team and faculty monthly (minimum) |
| Step 2: Schoolwide Behavior Expectations | Develop Expectations & Rules | 20 - 3-5 positively stated school-wide expectations posted around School 21 - Expectations apply to both students and staff 22 - Rules developed and posted for specific settings (where problems are prevalent) 23 - Rules are linked to expectations 24 - Staff feedback/involvement in expectations/rule development |
| Step 3: Teaching the Behavior Expectations | Establish Acknowledgement Program | 25 - A system of acknowledgment has elements that are implemented consistently 26 - A variety of methods are used to acknowledge students 27 - Acknowledgement is linked to expectations 28 - Acknowledgement is varied to maintain student interest 29 - System includes opportunities for naturally occurring acknowledgement 30 - Ratios of acknowledgement to corrections are high |

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 31 - Students are involved in identifying/developing incentives 32 - The system includes acknowledgement for staff/faculty |
| Step 3: Teaching the Behavior Expectations | Develop Lesson Plans for Teaching Expectations/ Rules | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 33 - A behavioral curriculum includes concept and skill level instruction 34 - Lessons include examples and non-examples 35 - Lessons use a variety of teaching strategies 36 - Lessons are embedded into subject area curriculum 37 - Faculty/staff and students are involved in development and delivery of lesson plans 38 - Strategies to reinforce the lessons with families/community are developed and implemented |
| Step 4: Maintaining the Behavior Expectations | Plan for Implementation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 39 - Develop, schedule, and deliver plans to teach staff the discipline and data system 40 - Develop, schedule, and deliver plans to teach staff the lesson plans for students 41 - Schedule/plans for teaching students expectations/rules/acknowledgements are developed 42 - Booster sessions for students and staff are scheduled, planned, and delivered 43 - Schedule for acknowledgements for the year is planned 44 - Plans for orienting incoming staff and students are developed and implemented 45 - Plans for involving families/community are developed and implemented |
| Step 5: Correcting Problem Behavior | Crisis Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 46 - Faculty/staff are taught how to respond to crisis situations 47 - Responding to crisis situations is rehearsed 48 - Procedures for crisis situations are readily accessible |
| Step 7: Sustaining the Plan for the Long Haul | Evaluation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 49 - Students and staff are surveyed about *PBIS 50 - Students and staff know expectations and rules 51 - Staff use discipline system/documentation appropriately 52 - Staff use acknowledgement system appropriately 53 - Outcomes (behavior problems, attendance, morale) are documented and used to evaluate *PBIS plans |

Figure 2. PBIS of Virginia: Benchmarks of Quality Resources adapted from the Virginia’s Department of Education’s website *Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports* <http://www.ttac.odu.edu/esd/Resources/index.htm>

*Note That the term of (ESD) Effective School-Wide Discipline was changed to (PBIS) Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports to reflect Virginia’s change from ESD to PBIS

Each school’s plan should be structured to meet the individual needs of each school. Analyses of office discipline referrals provided evidence to keep the program dynamic and changing in response to the needs. Namely, the monthly review was a needs assessment that validated or negated the procedures established by the team like a litmus test using the reduction

of office discipline referrals as the measurement of success. In essence, data drove the actions of the effective school-wide discipline team to modify their plans and to implement more intense application of the steps of effective school-wide discipline. All plans used the items specific to each referral such as where, when, who, how, data from office discipline referral analysis to effectively craft their school's approach of tiered interventions to reduce the number of office discipline referrals for students. While one may deduce that more instruction time should result in higher student academic achievement, the reduction in discipline problems must be coupled with more than just a focus on the reduction of referrals, but include teaching common behavior expectations to all staff and (Sadler, 2000; Lassen, Steele, & Sailor, 2006). Thus, while no two schools' discipline plans were exactly the same, the outcomes should be the same—a measurable reduction of office discipline referrals.

Aspects of Schools Implementing PBIS

Office discipline referral analysis. Fueled by the need to establish empirically that data should be gathered consistently and with intent to disaggregate and use, Irvin, Horner, Ingram, Todd, Sugai, Sampson and Boland, (2006) first applied Messick's construct validity framework (1995) to the use of office discipline referral as a measure for effectiveness in applying effective school-wide discipline at the elementary and middle school level. Irvin et al. were intent on making sure the school-wide information systems approach employed by schools in gathering office discipline data could be validated from collection to use. Moreover, they sought to ensure that the data used would be perceived as effective by the participants. Thus, the study focused on the process of inputting data into school-wide information systems, the frequency of input, the analysis of reports, and the effectiveness of using this data input. Additionally, the study assessed the level of usefulness the participants perceived these data points to be in making school-wide and division-level decisions concerning changing negative behaviors in students. Irvin et al. (2006) found that the use of a school-wide information system was an effective mechanism to track office discipline referral rates and that the use of the data produced were a valid source of information to use in decisions about behavior policies. The study, however, had a limited sample of 22 elementary schools and 10 middle schools and the researchers were concerned about scalability to other schools due to the small sample. The researchers also referenced limitations due to the ever growing need of data analysis, the variations of definitions

of behaviors by participants entering data, and the need for customization of school-wide information systems of the future. Thus, while preliminary studies have indicated the collection of data through a school-wide information system was useful, further research was needed to validate the actual usage of the gathered information in making policy decisions.

A study by Smith (2009) and a study by Horner, Sugai, and Anderson (2010) both reference Irvin et al.'s (2006) study that demonstrated that the data collection by a computerized student information system can be used to make school-wide decisions for reducing discipline and pinpointing the areas of concern (e.g., location, time of day, type of behavior, repeat offenders, referring teachers). Without data being recorded consistently (Irvin et al., 2006), the information for implementing Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports was not grounded in solid evidence. More specifically, the effective school-wide discipline team established by Colvin (2007) could not shape the school's responses effectively and uniquely.

Team discipline, high five implementation, Saoi (i.e., a Gaelic term meaning learner, wisdom, and scholar) programs using PBIS frameworks. Even before data collection, Bell-Rupert (1994) studied whether a classroom discipline plan was effective for middle school students in reducing bad behavior. In this northwest Georgia middle school, the sixth grade was divided into two teams—each their own English math, social studies and science teacher. One team met and established a set of behavior rules for all students to follow on their team while the other team did not establish a team-wide discipline plan. The first team of teachers agreed to the rules and set out to instill the common set in all their students. Bell-Rupert's (1994) study supported the assertion that a group-wide plan rather than individual or no plan did indeed stave off referrals and problem behaviors. Bell-Rupert also noticed the change of teacher intervention from punitive consequences to preventative in the team with a plan. No prevention methods occurred in the other team and Bell-Rupert concluded that intervention without instilling a self-directed behavior skill set in middle school children also needed further study.

While the focus of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports on student behavior comprised one aspect of effective school-wide discipline, Taylor-Greene and Kartub's (2000) research focused on another program (i.e., the High Five Program) that instituted Positive Behavioral and Interventions Supports for interactions between staff and students. The five main tenets to the High Five Program used by the entire school are:

1. Be Respectful

2. Be Responsible
3. Follow Directions
4. Keep Hands and Feet to Self
5. Be There-Be Ready

By encouraging more positive reactions to good and bad behavior, these choreographed teacher responses to bad behavior did indeed reduce 68% of office discipline referrals over a five-year implementation period.

Strahan, Cope, Hundley, and Faircloth (2005) likewise noted a reduction of office discipline referrals with the implementation of Saoi program (i.e., a Gaelic term meaning learner, wisdom, and scholar). This program focused on the positive relationships between teacher and student to reduce disruptive classroom behavior. Strahan, Cope, Hundley, and Faircloth drilled down to the level of interaction between student and teacher through qualitative interviews to see what positive supports worked for students to actually change and modify their behavior. The researchers found that clear expectations of high achievement verbalized and taught were the key to getting struggling students to cooperate. The researchers also found that a better way to encourage students was determined by achievement and empathy. These intrinsic motivators worked better than creating an extrinsic reward system based on assigning points for exhibiting positive behaviors and removing points for exhibiting negative behaviors.

Effects on classroom behaviors. Mendler (2007) and Mendler and Curwin (2007) also focused on specific strategies and verbal language teachers and school administrators used with students. They found that wording was as a major influence that shaped students' behavioral responses. In these "how to" respond to disruptive student behaviors downloaded from Barnes and Noble books, Mendler (2007) and Mendler and Curwin (2007) related anecdotal evidence from actual situations and demonstrated exact ways to respond to students to promote positive behaviors. In both e-books, the authors constantly related how looking from different frameworks about student behavior helped educators and administrators react better to negative behaviors. Instead of wondering why a child reacted the way he/she does, the authors encouraged focusing on what the child was doing correctly and stating the options he/she had available should the situation recur. In other words, teach what the acceptable behavior was during moments of bad behavior. Mendler and Curwin advocated "educating for change" (p.19) rather than for rewards or for punishments as one of the five guiding principles in their

framework. This idea of the attitude of the educator affecting discipline was further illustrated by the authors' four remaining principles teachers utilized to reduce negative behaviors:

a) making students feel empowered and able to learn, (b) motivating students by challenging them to achieve more contributed to less discipline situations, (c) viewing discipline as another form of instruction, adding more ways of teaching and instruction, and (d) being motivated to do so out of concern for student achievement. Mendler and Mendler and Curwin provided teachers and administrators with actual situations, scripts for responding, and the positive outcomes that occurred when teachers and administrators employed these word choices. They further instructed staff to think differently about the causes of negative student behavior.

Mendler (2007) and Mendler and Curwin (2007) also presented the premise that student behavior toward adults was not personal and should not gather a personal reaction by labeling students and expecting bad behavior. Furthermore, they indicated that educators must retain the collective belief that people can change otherwise change cannot occur. The researchers also discussed what triggers common behaviors by referring to needs students have: "belonging, attention, competence/mastery, power/influence, empathy, fun/stimulation, and relevance" (Mendler & Curwin, 2007, p.50). While the words are simplistic, they further defined these catalysts within actual situations, but more importantly, they suggested specific actions to help an educator prevent the unwanted behavior. The focus was on the responsibility of the adults to react with courage and innovation. Additionally the authors encouraged educators to examine their reactions to bad discipline within the context of maintaining poise for all their actions and for all their students. Once again Sugai and Horner (2009) and Mendler and Curwin (2007) have offered the foundation for PBIS in curbing discipline problems is creating a positive climate in the schools. In other words, "Positive behavior support is a general term that refers to the application of positive behavioral interventions and systems to achieve socially important behavioral change" (Sugai et al., 2000, p. 133).

Williams (2009) also supported the need for the behavior modification of teachers and education leaders to create positive climates in schools. He found that nearly 50% of the teachers surveyed in two schools studied felt student behaviors occurred that obstructed the school climate for instruction. Williams attempted to present a consensus of what constituted disruptive behavior. According to the teachers, the main problematic behavior was disruption. Williams then provided the staff with evidence to suggest what school initiatives could change

the disruptive behavior. While the study was limited to two schools, teachers identified the lack of parental involvement as the number one item that was needed to change the students' behaviors. Williams' study also reported that over 80% of teachers felt they had positive interpersonal relationships with the students.

In contrast, Koth, Bradshaw, and Leaf (2006) found that, from a student's perspective, relationships between teachers and students were not that positive and do contribute to bad classroom behaviors. Koth, Bradshaw, and Leaf focused their research on what students' valued as the most important element to successful school climate. "The results of the current study indicate that student- and classroom-level factors tend to have greater influence on students' perceptions of the school environment than do school-level factors" (Koth, Bradshaw, & Leaf, 2006, p.102). Specifically, classroom level factors that influenced student perceptions of school climate were: the teacher management style, the constant exposure to disruptive behavior or clustering of students with disruptive behavior, and the gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status, and parental involvement levels of students in the classroom. In contrast the school level factors initially hypothesized by Koth, Bradshaw, and Leaf to greatly influence the school climate perception by the students, like school size, staff turnover, student movement in and out of schools, and the overall socioeconomic status of the entire student body were discovered to be minimal catalysts for the students' perceptions of school climate. Koth, Bradshaw, and Leaf's research also indicated that discipline and negative acts by students were shaped by their perception of the classroom as a safe environment or an unsafe environment. In fact, Koth, Bradshaw and Leaf's results showed how elementary school students studied perceived their school environments unfavorably when their classroom populations contained a large number of peers with troubled behaviors. Koth, Bradshaw, and Leaf also found that students did not base their perceptions on the school as a whole but on individual classrooms. More specifically, Koth, Bradshaw, and Leaf stated that "Efforts to increase the connectedness of within-school groupings, such as improving relations between teachers and students and those between peers within classrooms, may have a more favorable impact on students' perceptions of school climate than focusing on efforts to affect school-level factors (e.g., reducing school size)" (p. 102). In other words, fostering individual and classroom relationships must be the focus by educators who wished to positively affect the school climate perceptions of students.

Leadership effects on the outcome of PBIS. Another determining factor in the successful implementation of effective school-wide discipline using Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports was administrative support. Colvin (2007) found direct correlations between the amount of administrative involvement and attention and the successful outcome for PBIS implementation. Colvin further lists 13 specific strategies principals should demonstrate to reflect support for behavior initiatives. From Colvin's perspective the school staff knew that leadership support was critical, but the steps administrators needed to take were unclear and nonspecific. Thus, Colvin listed actions that demonstrated that the principal was supportive of the efforts of the teachers and the discipline plan:

1. Maintain Standards
2. Make a public statement of support
3. Establish a leadership team
4. Support the team members
5. Guide the decision-making process
6. Take a leadership role in problem solving
7. Support the team meetings
8. Provide recognition to the faculty and team for their work
9. Serve as the point person for school-related groups
10. Monitor implementation activities and provide feedback
11. Review data and provide feedback regularly
12. Ensure innovation is sustained
13. Make a time commitment

In a related study, Richter, Lewis, and Hagar (2011) examined the relationship between principal leadership skills and school-wide positive behavior supports. The researchers discussed the boosted job satisfaction of principals who incorporated elements of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports in their schools versus those who did not. One of the key findings was that "The consensus across the teams appeared to suggest that rather than school-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports changing principals; it enhanced characteristics and skills already in evidence" (p.74). While the study focused on elementary school applications only, the promising results spurred the researchers to conclude that:

[...] replications of their study would provide validation of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports in other levels of education and also provide more relevant training strands for education and professional development for principals to employ in the field of discipline management. (p.75)

Wyatt (2010) researched the perceptions of assistant principals regarding teacher behaviors and their relationship to student discipline. While the study did not mention PBIS specifically, the idea of leadership's perceptions of teacher behavior regarding student discipline was a loosely referenced part of PBIS framework related to teacher professional development within a school-wide plan.

Challenges for instituting and studying effective school-wide discipline-PBIS frameworks. While the aforementioned studies (e.g., Bell-Rupert, 1994; Irvin, Horner, Ingram, Todd, Sugai, Sampson, & Boland, 2006; Irvin, Tobin, Sprague, Sugai, & Vincent, 2004) explain how ODR reduced when a school uses Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, Sailor, Roger, Wolf, Choi, and Keetle (2008) reported on the obstacles faced in sustaining effective school-wide discipline framework in school systems:

These challenges are respectively described as siloization, the tendency to fragment programs and services in schools, with few bridging systems from one to another; bifurcation, the tendency to split school-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports into general education and special education functions, with general education assuming responsibility for the implementation of Level 1 (primary applications) and special education assuming responsibility primarily for Level 3 (tertiary applications); and sustainability, the tendency of schools to return to stasis over time following intensive training and short term, follow-up technical assistance. [Sailor, Roger, Wolf, Choi, and Keetle] suggested that one way to overcome these challenges might be found through the process of enculturation, or the manner in which a school embeds a systems change process into its own unique culture, assumes 'ownership' of the process, and has the process become a part of business as usual at the school. (p. 664)

Further problems associated with sustainability have been studied by other researchers such as limited scopes of study and site implementation fidelity for similar populations. In fact in the New Hampshire implementation Muscott et al. (2004), scrutinized the validity and reliability of the tools used to measure effectiveness. Furthermore other researchers listed

challenges in creating a supportive staff that values the positive behavior approach (Jacoby, 2008) and another cited problems with scalability (Berry, 2011).

Another area of relevant data collection revolved around the codes of conduct at the division level of the schools. The Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act State and Local Grants Program, authorized by the 1994 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) (Title IV, §§ 4111-4116, 20 U.S.C. 7111-7116), which further expanded the ideas of the authorization of these grants in 2001, was based on school divisions utilizing researched-based strategies to reduce suspensions and expulsions. By bringing to the forefront public concerns about safety in schools and holding schools accountable for reporting disruptive behaviors, the report spurred the implementation of behavior prevention programs. The Office of the Surgeon General's Report of 2001 indicated 97% of the schools had codes of conduct for discipline actions which may have been a significant factor present in discipline reductions.

Behavioral researchers have also reviewed division level codes of conducts to examine the relative consequences for disruptive behaviors (Cicek, 2012). For example, Horowitz (2010) studied 120 codes of conduct from six States. She looked at three main elements of each: if suspension varied with severity of behaviors, if the differences between the conduct codes varied by State and how they listed suspension criterion, and if the codes of conduct varied by type of school setting. Horowitz first assessed whether school suspension numbers across States showed a huge variance. She also conducted a multivariate analysis to determine if each of the schools utilized suspension for all types of behavior and found that indeed all schools used school suspensions as the main source of behavior consequence for mild to severe infractions. Horowitz directly referenced school-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports as a method of reduction of suspensions. She further postulated that the terminology in codes of conducts should contain more proactive/positive language and preventative strategies.

Ward (2007), Gable et al. (2009), and Osher et al. (2010) all pursued the idea that Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports in schools reduced discipline problems so more students were in class rather than referred to the office. Collectively, these researchers have asserted that including a system of school-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports infused with teaching and modeling appropriate behaviors, lead to a reduction in problem discipline and increased student achievement in class. While they reported similar success rates, sustainability was found to be challenging.

Another consideration for study but which was more challenging to investigate was linking student achievement with Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. Algozzine and Algozzine (2009) relate their findings in applying academic achievement and implementation of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports:

- School-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports shares characteristics with those identified in effective schools research and evidenced in high-performing schools.
- When implemented with fidelity, school-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports results in favorable behavior outcomes.
- Two types of studies link school-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports with important outcomes for students.
- The first indicates the number of hours of instruction gained by decreases in [referrals] and makes [the assumption] that more time in the classroom will result in improved achievement.
- The other demonstrates that high-quality implementation of school-wide behavior interventions and supports and evidence-based reading intervention results in improvements in behavior and reading.
- Evidence for improvements in academic achievement as a result of adding school-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports in an effective school is less clearly established in research.
- Continued research is needed to show that schools implementing school-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports with fidelity show improvements in academic and behavior outcomes.
- Continued study of simultaneous implementation of school-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports and evidence-based academic interventions is clearly warranted. (p. 544)

Algozzine and Algozzine's (2009) findings demonstrated the belief that as students remained in class, student achievement increased. However, the data were not able to be truly correlated consistently. This research outcome held promise, but the authors were cautious and concluded that more research was needed to validate the connection between school-wide discipline plans and greater academic achievement.

Lassen, Steele, and Sailor (2006) have similarly demonstrated the application of school-wide positive behavior supports reduces loss of instruction time for students. The researchers sought to demonstrate that the infusion of school-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports framework would enable more instruction time and result in increased standardized test scores. While students' gains in math scores and a nominal gain in reading scores were observed, Lassen, Steele, and Sailor proposed that further study utilizing a control school would serve to better gauge the causal relationship between integrating effective school-wide discipline and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports frameworks with student achievement.

Chapter Two Summary

In conclusion, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports framework was a system-wide approach that began theoretically with psychological researchers such as Skinner (1953) and his scientific study of behaviors. The process was influenced by Glasser's (1986) control theory, and became Sugai and Horner's (2002) premise for applying the special education approaches of individual behavior plans to entire student bodies. Furthermore, the report from the Office of the Surgeon General (2001) presented three levels of prevention and defined methods of success strategies at each level that were researched based strategies and proven to be effective. More recently politicians such as Senators Barack Obama and Dick Durbin who introduced the Positive Behavior for Effective Schools Act in 2007 have also supported prevention programs in education.

Across the nation, studies (e.g., Bell-Rupert, 1994; Taylor-Green & Kartub, 2000; Strahan, Cope, Hundley, & Faircloth, 2005) of instituting PBIS framework plans have demonstrated the reduction of office discipline referrals in schools. Additionally fidelity awareness prompted researchers like Colvin (2007), Irvin Horner, Ingram, Todd, Sugai, Sampson and Boland (2006), Smith (2009), Horner, Sugai, and Anderson (2010) to identify common elements present in the creation of an effective school-wide discipline plan with Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. Likewise Irvin et al. (2006) validated school-wide information systems as effective instruments to gather the behavior data used to direct the effective school-wide discipline framework implementation. Further studies reviewed (e.g., Bell-Rupert, 1994; Taylor-Green & Kartub, 2000; Strahan, Cope, Hundley, & Faircloth, 2005) reported the positive effects of instituting a system-wide approach rather than individual or

classroom approach. More specific studies appeared in the research literature that have drilled down to the factors that have contributed to success like teacher and student relationships and using discipline to educate (e.g., Strahan, Cope, Hundley, and Faircloth, 2005; Mendler, 2007; Mendler & Curwin, 2007; Williams 2009; Koth, Bradshaw, and Leaf , 2006).

Other researchers have focused on leadership and the importance to the successful implementation of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (e.g., Colvin, 2007; Richter, Lewis, & Hagar, 2011; Wyatt, 2010). While most of the studies reviewed (e.g., Bell-Rupert, 1994; Taylor-Green & Kartub, 2000; Strahan, Cope, Hundley, & Faircloth, 2005) have reported the positive effects of implementing PBIS frameworks other researchers (e.g., Sailor, Roger, Wolf, Choi, & Keetle, 2008; Muscott et al., 2004; Jacoby, 2008; Berry, 2011) have identified the obstacles to avoid and the solutions to overcome those obstacles (e.g., isolationism of classrooms and grade levels within a school). Muscott et al. (2004) has spoken to the scalability of plans to large populations and cautions against limited scope studies while Jacoby (2008) has identified the variance of collection tools being problematic for large scalability. Berry (2011) determined that collective efficacy of teachers was not a key ingredient to the success of implementing large scale Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) framework plans. Still another group of behavioral scientists (i.e., Cicek, 2012; Horowitz, 2010) have proposed that the codes of conduct that school divisions employed should contain wording that specifies Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports framework (Horowitz, 2010). Other researchers (Ward, 2007; Gable et al., 2009; Osher et al., 2010; Lassen, Steele, & Sailor, 2006) hypothesized that the lost instruction time from suspensions translated to academic failure by those students suspended. However, Algozzine and Algozzine (2009) pointed out that there are limited longitudinal studies that validated the link between student achievement and effective school-wide discipline plans.

Academic achievement relationships aside, since 2005, the Virginia Department of Education encouraged all school divisions to use PBIS frameworks based on evidence that prevention strategies in the process reduced office discipline referrals. These reductions were proposed to lead to more student interaction and classroom time. In addition, principals and assistant principals could spend more time on curriculum leadership and evaluating teachers if they spent less time on discipline issues.

Recognizing the relationship between classroom attendance and academic success and drawing on the report that 70% of the suspensions were for minor infractions like disruption (Ciolfi, Shin, & Harris, 2011), the Virginia Department of Education's initiative of using an effective school-wide discipline system with PBIS frameworks became more relevant to study Statewide. By analyzing the principles and practices triangulated with artifacts those high schools in Virginia that are demonstrating reductions in office discipline referrals this researcher provided Virginia high schools clearer execution pathways to reducing office discipline referrals.

Chapter 3

Methodology

The study examined the phenomena surrounding the guiding principles and practices in Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports (PBIS) which resulted in the highest percentage reduction in office discipline referrals (ODR) since implementing PBIS frameworks. (Participants interviewed for this study were identified by the school superintendent or his/her designee). The interviews were coded and studied for repeating phrases and natural commonalities both within the case (school) study, and then multidirectional across all the high schools. Utilizing these data collection points could provide successful steps for other schools to use who wish to reduce the number of office discipline referrals.

By accessing the discipline data collected for analysis from the Safe Schools Information Resource (SSIR) database, the study focused on the principles and practices that high schools who used PBIS and produced a the largest percentage of reducing ODR during the 2011-2014 school years. Recognizing that not all schools would participate, the researcher gathered data from all high schools using PBIS and listed them from highest to lowest population and the corresponding reduction rate over the 2011-2014 school years. The researcher focused on schools with higher populations initially to ensure the percentages were not skewed by fewer students.

The remainder of this chapter will cite:

- A. The Definitions Used in the Study
- B. The Focus of the Inquiry
 - a. The Selection Process of Schools as Cases to Study
 - b. The Purpose of the Study
- C. Type of Study in Relationship to the Literature
 - a. The Research Questions
- D. Sources of Data for the Study
 - a. Demographics and the Structure of Each School
 - b. Interviews with Superintendent Designated Individuals
- E. Compilation of School Division Data
 - a. Report of Interview Findings
 - b. Steps for Using the Word Cloud Generator

- c. Verification of Interview Findings by Interviewees
 - d. Interview Questions and Answers are Compiled in Tabular Form/Word Clouds
- F. Limitations and Delimitations

Definitions

Code of Conduct: A list of behaviors divided by elementary and secondary responses which list certain codes established by the Virginia Department of Education and explains to students the expectations of behaviors and the consequences when a student disregards the code of conduct.

Office Discipline Referrals (ODR): Also known as an office referral, this document was written by a school official (teacher, principal, bus driver, etc.) when a student has violated the code of conduct of the school division.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS): In Virginia, a state-wide initiative instituted to decrease office discipline referrals which will ensure students' time was more spent in the classroom. This framework focuses on school-wide discipline expectations of good behavior taught, reinforced, and ODR analyzed by a school team monthly to determine future actions. This term was formerly: effective school-wide discipline.

School Division/School District: In Virginia, there are 135 different school divisions also known as school districts.

Focus of Inquiry

This phenomenological study focused on the principles and practices of seven divisions with nine high schools that reduced the overall percentages of office discipline referral rates who were implementing the framework of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). “In a phenomenological study, the access issue is limited to finding individuals who have experienced the phenomenon and gaining their written permission to be studied” (Creswell, 1998). The phenomenon was the reduction of office discipline referrals (ODR) by schools that used Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) frameworks. Furthermore, the researcher used a grounded theory approach to analyze the data that Creswell described (1998, p. 150) as open, axial and selective coding. “Grounded theory provides a procedure for developing categories of information (open coding), interconnecting the categories (axial

coding), building a “story” that connects the categories (selective coding), and ending with a discursive set of theoretical propositions” (Creswell, 1998, p.150).

The selection process of schools as cases to study. Specifically, the researcher collected reduction rates of offense discipline referrals (ODR) of all high schools provided by the Safe Schools Information Resource (SSIR) Data Base housed at <https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/pti/> and accessible by the public. The Safe Schools Information Resource (SSIR) Data Base houses information on school conduct for all 135 school divisions in the State of Virginia.

1. A Comma Separated Value Report (CSV) was downloaded from the SSIR Database of Virginia Website: <https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/pti/> with the following parameters set to include:
 - a. School Year: 2011-2012, 2012-2013, 2013-2014 (to match the data included on each School Report Card that is publicly accessible at <https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/reportcard/> .
 - b. This summation produced the Yearly Number Offenses column on the adapted report spreadsheet.
 - c. Region Name: All
 - d. Division Name: All
 - e. School Type: High
 - f. School Name: All
 - g. Offense Category: All
 - h. Offense Type: All
 - i. Discipline Type: All
 - j. Repeat Offender: All
 - k. Ethnicity: All
 - l. Grade: All
 - m. Gender: All
 - n. Disability: All
 - o. Report Type: Offense Frequency
2. The researcher then cross-referenced the high schools that used PBIS frameworks according to the listing on the Virginia PBIS Website http://ttac.odu.edu/pbisva/region_schools.htm and validated by Region Five PBIS

director Jacki Nickel, Email: nickeljr@jmu.edu, Office: (540) 568-7924. The high schools not listed on the website were removed, leaving 26 high schools with three years of data each.

3. Once the list was limited to high schools using PBIS frameworks as of 2014, the researcher then added a column of summation to the right of all the offenses to get an overall number of offenses per year. The categories of offenses analyzed were based on the data from the report that aligned exactly with the School Report Card Categories. The researcher then combined all data to create an overall Yearly Offense Rate:
 - a. Weapons Offenses
 - b. Offenses Against Students
 - c. Offenses Against Staff
 - d. Other Offenses Against Persons
 - e. Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Offenses
 - f. Property Offenses
 - g. Disorderly or Disruptive Behavior Offenses
 - h. Technology Offenses
 - i. All Other Offenses

4. Then Yearly Offense Totals were Compared by school years as follows:

- a.

| | | |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|
| School Years Compared | 2011-2012 | 2012-2013 |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|

- b. The final column consisted of the overall reduction over the course of three school years (2011-2012; 2012-2013; 2013-2014).
- c. The report was formatted to highlight the 20 largest numerical reductions by each school year and then finally by the top average percentage reduction.
- d. The last step to creating the report was to sort by:
 - i. 1st level: largest population high schools largest to smallest
 - ii. 2nd level: highest to lowest average percentage of yearly offense totals

The researcher identified 15 divisions with high schools that utilized PBIS frameworks. From that number, 26 high schools demonstrated ODR reduction according to the SSIR

Database. One division reported data inaccuracies with their Student Information System prevented their participation, leaving 22 high schools and 14 divisions remaining eligible for the study. Every superintendent was contacted by phone and then by email when attempts at phone calls were not fruitful. The researcher received acceptances from seven division superintendents (one requesting anonymity) or review committees, rejections from three divisions, and no response from four divisions after multiple attempts to contact the division superintendent.

Data from interviews with four division-wide personnel, five principals, three assistant principals, and three school-wide PBIS coaches (teachers), were reviewed, analyzed, and interpreted to identify common principles, practices, obstacles, and successes that respondents identified at each division and/or school influenced the reduction of office discipline referrals (ODR). Additionally, school personnel supplied artifacts that they felt helped their schools and divisions reduce office discipline referral rates. All agreed to share these artifacts in a website the researcher has created located at <https://sites.google.com/site/pbisdissertation/>.

Regional and alternative high schools using PBIS were not selected for this process as the researcher focused on public high schools using PBIS frameworks. The researcher did not remove the schools from her own district as she determined there was no conflict of interest due to her current supervisory status with the schools. Data were gathered and while larger schools were considered richer to study as the data could not be skewed, smaller populated schools were contacted in consecutive order of population when larger schools were eliminated or declined to participate. After sorting by highest population, the researcher reduced the number of schools further by sorting the top twenty high schools' student populations by highest average reduction of ODR from 2011-2014. Table 1 below indicated each high school by district, name, school year, and total number of offenses by year, percentage of reduction/referral rate decrease by years, and overall average of referral rate reduction.

Table 1

All Divisions with Corresponding High Schools Using PBIS by Each School Year Reviewed Sorted by Division

| Division Name | School Name | School Year | Population | Yearly Totals of Office Discipline Referrals Rates Total | Percentage of Reduction of Yearly Offense Total from 2011-2012 to 2013-2014/referral number decrease |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------|------------|--|--|
| Bedford County Public Schools | Jefferson Forest High | 2011-12 | 1339 | 185 | 57% |
| | | 2012-13 | 1371 | 160 | 106 |
| | | 2013-14 | 1368 | 79 | |
| Bedford County Public Schools | Liberty High | 2011-12 | 898 | 350 | 50% |
| | | 2012-13 | 951 | 314 | 174 |
| | | 2013-14 | 920 | 176 | |
| Bedford County Public Schools | Staunton River High | 2011-12 | 1092 | 440 | 10% |
| | | 2012-13 | 1110 | 345 | 42 |
| | | 2013-14 | 1058 | 398 | |
| Chesterfield County Public Schools | Monacan High | 2011-12 | 1400 | 462 | 38% |
| | | 2012-13 | 1407 | 286 | 177 |
| | | 2013-14 | 1381 | 285 | |
| Pulaski County Public Schools | Pulaski County Senior High | 2011-12 | 1420 | 508 | 45% |
| | | 2012-13 | 1376 | 334 | 231 |
| | | 2013-14 | 1375 | 277 | |
| Rockingham County Public Schools | Turner Ashby High | 2011-12 | 1008 | 116 | 40% |
| | | 2012-13 | 1013 | 95 | 46 |
| | | 2013-14 | 1027 | 70 | |
| Shenandoah County Public Schools | Central High | 2011-12 | 786 | 87 | 28% |
| | | 2012-13 | 764 | 59 | 24 |
| | | 2013-14 | 776 | 63 | |
| Tazewell County Public Schools | Richlands High | 2011-12 | 733 | 178 | 65% |
| | | 2012-13 | 725 | 76 | 116 |
| | | 2013-14 | 724 | 62 | |
| *Anonymous Division | - | - | - | - | - |

**Division Superintendent requested anonymity.*

The Purpose of the Study

The intent of this study was to collect and to publish a qualitative analysis of twelve interviews with superintendent-designated individuals he/she felt instrumental in the reduction of ODR and to collect common: principles and practices which other high schools may employ to replicate the phenomena of reducing the percentage rate of office discipline referrals (ODR). The researcher also collected artifacts each participant felt helped the school to reduce ODR and organized that data into a website accessible to all high schools across the Commonwealth of Virginia at <https://sites.google.com/site/pbisdissertation/>.

Type of Study in Relationship to the Literature

In order to establish a methodology in relationship to the topic of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, one must recount the purpose of the study in relationship to the literature presented in the previous chapter.

The constant comparative method was the research design the researcher used from Maykut and Morehouse (1994/2003). Maykut and Morehouse describe the research approach as "interpretive-descriptive" meaning, the interviews are transcribed and reported, then the interviews are interpreted for meaning in two distinct ways: to describe common themes relevant to the phenomenon, and if practical, to relate those common themes and create a theory related to why the phenomenon exists. Additional "documents" are collected to support the interview replies. These data collections fulfilled what Maykut and Morehouse state on page 48 (1994/2003), "A qualitative research report characterized by rich description should provide the reader with enough information to determine whether the findings of the study possibly apply to other people or settings." Similarly in this study with an Emergent Design like Maykut and Morehouse demonstrated on page 48, the focus of inquiry suggested a purposive sample be explored through qualitative methods of data collection in natural settings. These results were presented using a case-study approach. As a result of focusing on high schools that implemented PBIS, the inquiry was more refined and three prominent questions emerged as a result of using this research approach. The following questions were proposed with the intent to contribute to the body of research on reducing office discipline referral rates overall in high schools.

Research Questions

1. What are the guiding principles that each high school used to reduce office discipline referrals?
2. What are the practices that each high school employed to reduce office discipline referrals?
 - a. What was your greatest obstacle to reducing ODR?
 - b. What do you think has been the greatest success resulting from reducing your ODR?
3. Are there any artifacts that your high school will share that supported your successful decrease in ODR?

Chapter two related the history and origins of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports and relevant studies. These studies were cited to establish the use of reductions in ODR as a measurement tool for data analysis in implementing PBIS.

Sources of Data for the Study

Demographics and the structure of each school. To achieve the purposes of the study, the first source of data used was an analysis of the demographics and structure of each high school and their corresponding division. Utilizing the National Center for Education Statistics and each school division's websites, general information was obtained about the makeup of the student and staff populations of each division and the division structure of the school system.

The researcher utilized what Maykut and Morehouse describe an unstructured interview where the researcher's questions result from the participant's answers so that probing questions are used as needed to ensure understanding of the subject's experiences rather than being completely scripted (p.81). The interview was guided by the categories of inquiry: the principles and the practices of the high schools to reduce office discipline referral rate percentages and questions flowed naturally as the researcher responded to the answers the subjects gave in which the researcher needed clarification.

1. What are the guiding principles that each high school used to reduce office discipline referrals?
2. What are the practices that each high school employed to reduce office discipline referrals?

- a. What was your greatest obstacle to reducing ODR?
 - b. What do you think has been the greatest success resulting from reducing your ODR?
3. Are there any artifacts that your high school will share that supported your successful decrease in ODR?

The triangulation of these data helped to complete the phenomenological picture based on common patterns that Maykut and Morehouse (p.14) state "...come out of or emerge from the data." The researcher attempted to understand the phenomena in all its complexity and within a particular situation and environment." Thus, in this study, each high school was a case study of a particular environment within the framework of PBIS. The common phenomena discovered from the revelation of principles and practices provided high schools salient propositions that wish to implement PBIS. The percentage and number of office discipline referrals were summarized by each high school for the years 2011-2014. In one case, the school and division were referred to as *Anonymous School Division* since anonymity was requested.

Data Treatment and Analysis

Compilation of school division data. In studying data, most practitioners seek to find school divisions/schools with similar demographics in order to see if adaptation in their own division was possible. By providing in tabular form, the basic demographics of the division and its structure, Table 3 "Division Demographics and System Structure", school divisions were able to compare and to contrast the demographics with their own schools and divisions.

Report of interview findings. First the researcher created an account in Google called PBISdissertation@gmail.com. All correspondence and documents were then uploaded into this account to create a clear path for her dissertation information. The emails sent contained a signature from the researcher along with contact information and a cell phone number. The researcher suggested this process for anyone conducting a study as she found gathering information through other email accounts became more challenging to organize. In her Google Drive, she created a contact log of all schools to record the dates and methods of contacts, the dates of the phone interviews, the names and email addresses of all respondents, and the types of interviews (all phone) the respondent indicated from the list of: digital to traditional face-to-face. She then created folders on Google Drive for each of the divisions she wished to contact. Each

script for the superintendents were modified to be sent via email after two attempts per superintendent by phone and/or leaving voicemails earned no responses. The same information was included with two attachments: the purpose of the researcher's dissertation, and the questions the researcher intended to ask the respondents the superintendent designated. Each superintendent designated a member(s) of the division's staff that he/she or his designee indicated were instrumental in achieving reductions in ODR for that high school.

Interviews with superintendent designated individuals. Each high school's division superintendent designated the participants he/she felt were instrumental in the reduction of office discipline referrals. In an "...emergent research design the composition of the sample itself evolves over the course of study (Maykut, Morehouse 1994/2003, p. 45). Any exceptions to the list given will be listed in the Limitations and Delimitations section.

Thus, all interviews had the same origin and derivation:

1. The superintendent of each of the seven divisions and nine high schools was contacted and permission acquired to study the schools within his/her division. If permission was granted, the superintendent or his/her designee was asked to identify individuals in the division that have contributed to the successful reduction of office discipline referrals (ODR) in the high school(s).
2. After the participant agreed to be interviewed, the participant chose whether he/she would like to use Google+ Hangouts On Air as a method of interviewing.
3. All participants chose phone interviews or face-to-face interviews.
4. The researcher and participant set a time (researcher initiated the invitation).
5. Respondents all agreed to be recorded.
6. The researcher and participant held the interview.

The researcher utilized her LG tablet and app Voice Text and backed up her tablet's recording with a handheld digital recorder to document the respondent's interview. Interviews ranged from 12 minutes to 29 minutes in length with the researcher allowing the conversation to naturally dictate the length of every interview. Each .wav file was uploaded to her Google Drive then sent to a service called Rev.Com for transcribing. Each respondent was allowed to review his/her transcript and make any additions or deletions he/she wished in order to validate the information gathered.

7. The researcher had the interview transcribed, sent the transcription to the participant for validation, and then utilized the word cloud generator Tagzedo to visually interpret the data.

Steps for Using the Word Cloud Generator

1. Each interview was transcribed from the digital recording. Each of the respondent's transcription was copied and pasted into the Tagzedo cloud generator. Word cloud generators produce pictorial representations of repeated words, enlarging the font to demonstrate repetition of words. These enlarged words then were tagged in the transcripts vertically in a case to see if there were common principles, practices, or artifacts shared.
2. All participant responses about guiding principles his/her high school used to successfully reduce office discipline referral percentage rates were recorded. All participant responses about practices his/her high school used to successfully reduce office discipline referral percentage rates were recorded.
3. Repeated phrases emerged to lead the researcher to understand the vertical study of respondents within the same school for common principles and practices.
4. The transcripts of each case were then added across schools to see the common principles and practices by all schools as revealed by the word cloud pictorial representation. In addition, the researcher read pertinent sections of the transcripts to ensure accuracy and completeness of the Tagzedo findings.
5. A summary of both the vertical and horizontal study within and between each case of common principles and practices will be summarized in Chapter 4 of the study.

Creswell (1998) describes a similar process in NUD.IST (non-numerical unstructured data indexing, searching and theorizing) in the chapter Data Analysis and Representation (p.157). The hierarchical tree diagram was used to represent cases, and the common principles, practices, and artifacts each respondent shared. After the researcher dissected each interview by classifying the responses according to the broad topics of principles and practices, she then created a Tagzedo word cloud in the shape she associated with the element to begin to visualize and create subheadings under each topic. The researcher copied and pasted the data horizontally for each element (principles/practices/obstacles and successes) to generate an initial visual

representation of repeated words in individual interviews. Additionally, she compiled all text for each element and completed an overall word cloud in Taggedo to generate ideas on word patterns across the divisions. This process was repeated twice for each word cloud to confirm that each word cloud was accurately portraying the interview data gathered.

While the words by themselves were not the main statements about the evidence gathered, their increase in size, led to the examination of each enlarged word and the context of the word to generate common themes for the principles and practices employed and the obstacles and successes encountered. Each column in the sample table below evolved into statements of overarching themes dissecting further each of the four topics of study: principles, practices, obstacles, and successes. Each quote from the transcript was then placed under each common belief that grew from moving the quotes from the respondents to be under one or more then condensing the combining and retracting the statement so that two or three main themes emerged.

Common themes emerged that focused around the visual cloud. The shapes of the word cloud were chosen to indicate meaning to the researcher only and assure that the word clouds could easily be arranged by topic. Coding of the individual interviews from each division was aligned to the whole experience (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994/2003, p.31). Simultaneous coding occurred at all stages of analysis as unique statements from individuals leading to common principles and common practices public high schools employed for successful reduction of ODR in each of the schools. Natural probing questions led to the researcher recording common obstacles and common successes. First, however, the researcher examined each of the seven divisions individually and discovered within divisions rich narratives that others may utilize in creating a PBIS framework intervention for behavior. Below are the pieces of the whole that led to common proposition statements about each of the four areas of study: common principles, and common practices. These common propositions became the structure for presenting the data from the study.

Verification of interview findings by interviewees. As Maykut and Morehouse suggested on page 65, "...since the researcher is the human instrument collecting and analyzing qualitative data, it is appropriate to report information about [the researcher] (1994/2003, p. 65). At the time of the study, the researcher was a supervisor of instruction at a school board office employed in a public school division that uses PBIS framework to reduce ODR. This indwelling

of a naturalistic inquiry “looks back to events to be observed in order to clearly describe the events as they were unfolding and looks forward to the meaning which these events might have in the lived experience of the participants (p. 38).” The researcher’s knowledge of the application of PBIS resulted from being an assistant principal in charge of discipline of one of her district’s middle schools implementing PBIS strategies to prevent disruptive behaviors in classrooms.

The researcher hoped to achieve the goal of qualitative analysis “By piecing together the pieces to the meaning of the pieces was the way to understand the whole. This was the paradox of tacit knowledge and of indwelling--the pieces of the puzzle are essential to knowing the whole, but in order to gain an understanding of the whole, we must experience, rather than attend to, these pieces, thus allowing the whole to emerge from the experience” (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994/2003, p. 31).

A total of 12 interviews were conducted: three interviews were group interviews with two respondents each; nine interviews each had one respondent. Each respondent participated in the interview using traditional face-to-face or phone interviews as was conducive to his/her comfort level and scheduled at a private time. Furthermore, each respondent was allowed to present any digital artifacts that supported their reduction of office discipline referral rates for the researcher to include in a public website arranged according to the theoretical principles discovered as a result of the study. Google Drive documents provided an online place to collaborate which was not restricted by time and was available twenty-four hours a day for the respondent and the researcher. Additionally, the transcripts of the interviews and the recorded video of the interview were posted in each respondent’s personal folder online or sent by email for each subject to review for accuracy modify and to ensure construct validity. The items were downloaded and stored on a DVD after research conducted and maintained at the residence of the researcher.

Interview questions and answers were compiled in tabular form/word clouds. A cross-reference of data using word clouds and tabular forms demonstrated each division or school personnel’s responses. All 12 interviews were coded specifically by interview, and only one school division requested anonymity because the researcher only had seven school divisions in the study instead of the originally-intended ten divisions for study. For those two individual interviews in the school division where the superintendent requested anonymity the following

identification was used, *Anonymous School Division* Respondent A and *Anonymous School Division* Respondent B. All persons recommended by the superintendent or his/her designee were interviewed.

Limitations and Delimitations

There were some limitations of the study. First, multiple ways of data collection were given as options: i.e. face to face, Google+ Hangouts On Air and Google Drive, email and email attachments or phone conversations. By providing multiple methods of collecting data, the researcher hoped to overcome the constraints of time by using technology to make the questions available 24/7. The researcher hoped that use of technology for interviewing might enhance interview participation and might minimize travel restrictions and scheduling concerns, but the opposite may have been the case.

Another limitation was the labeling of a school as successfully implementing Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports if directives existed that may foster a false sense of data collection. Were schools reporting low office discipline referral rates because the program was working or because the directive was “to reduce referrals?” This uncontrollable bias may exist and was mentioned because the data collection office at TTAC shared this concern.

The researcher also recognized that a limitation of the study was the number of participants in the study. Contacting 26 schools and receiving acceptances from seven divisions and nine schools could reduce the ability to replicate the outcomes of the study. This small sample limitation also limited the ability to generalize from the study. Additionally, the researcher conducted three interviews as group interviews. This group interview process may have led to interviews being dominated by selected individuals while other members of these group interviews chose to defer to louder voices.

Lastly, in compiling the data in Chapter five, the researcher found that her two probing questions were so specific that the results seemed less pertinent due to the singular answers. In using the words, “greatest” obstacle or “greatest” success to the question, each respondent focused on one singular response and limited the scope of the results. If the researcher had asked interviewees to simply list obstacles to PBIS implementation and then successes associated with PBIS implementation first then followed by a probe for greatest obstacle and greatest success, interviewee responses might have been more uniform.

After the researcher received all the edits and confirmations of validation for the transcripts, the researcher created one table for each of her main data collection questions: common principles, common practices, common obstacles and common successes for a total of four tables. The table on the following page was a sample of one such table explaining the construction and method of disaggregating the data. Chapter Four contains the results of the study and Chapter Five allowed the researcher to frame implications of the study with suggestions for future studies.

Table 2

Sample Table Used to Identify Answers in Transcripts

Coding Key Common _____ Across all Schools

Essential Question: What were the _____ that you employed/encountered to reduce office discipline referral rates?

| Interview Listed by Division and High School Name | Example 1 of Question 1 from Transcript | Example 2 of Question 1 from Transcript | Example 3 of Question 1 from Transcript | Example 4 of Question 1 from Transcript | Example 5 of Question 1 from Transcript |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bedford County Public Schools: <i>Staunton River High School</i> Group Interview: Assistant Principal and Teacher | | | | | |
| Bedford County Public Schools: <i>Liberty High School</i> Assistant Principal | | | | | |
| Bedford County Public Schools: <i>Liberty High School</i> Teacher | | | | | |
| Bedford County Public Schools: <i>Jefferson Forest High School</i> Group Interview: Assistant Principal and Teacher | | | | | |
| Bedford County Public Schools Director of Elementary and Secondary Services who was also the Division PBIS Coach | | | | | |

(table continued)

Table 2 (cont.)

| Interview Listed by Division and High School Name | Example 1 of Question 1 from Transcript | Example 2 of Question 1 from Transcript | Example 3 of Question 1 from Transcript | Example 4 of Question 1 from Transcript | Example 5 of Question 1 from Transcript |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rockingham County Public Schools: <i>Group Interview: Division PBIS Coach and Turner Ashby High School Principal</i> | | | | | |
| Chesterfield County Public Schools: <i>Division PBIS Coach</i> | | | | | |
| Tazewell County Public Schools: <i>Richlands County High School Principal</i> | | | | | |
| Pulaski County Public Schools: <i>Pulaski County High School Principal</i> | | | | | |
| Shenandoah Public Schools: <i>Central High School Principal</i> | | | | | |
| Anonymous School Division Respondent A | | | | | |
| Anonymous School Division Respondent B | | | | | |

Chapter 4

The Results: Case Analyses

The analyses of the twelve interviews: seven divisions encompassing nine high schools illustrated common principles and common practices that all high schools can employ to reduce their office discipline referrals (ODR). While the initial operational condition of population was considered, the researcher eventually included all high schools with reduced ODR as participants in the study. Appendix I demonstrates the respondents' division, their position in that division, their school (if applicable), and their contact information. One school was coded Anonymous School Division in compliance with the superintendent's request for anonymity.

Analysis of Case I: Bedford County Public Schools

Table 3

Division Demographic Table Bedford County Public Schools

| School Board Office Physical Address | Grade Span | Locale | Total Schools | Total Students | Classroom Teachers (FTE) | Student/Teacher Ratio | ELL Students | Percent ELL Students | Students with IEPs | Percent of students with IEPs |
|---|------------|---------------------------|---------------|----------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|----------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| 310 S. Bridge Street Bedford, VA 24523 | PK-12 | Rural: Distant (42) | 23 | 10302 | 756.12 | 13.62 | 124 | 1.2% | 1067 | 10% |

Case one consisted of five interviews: four interviews from the three high schools using the PBIS frameworks for reducing ODR in their schools and one interview with the Director of Elementary and Secondary services who also served as the PBIS Division Coach. Seven people were interviewed including the Stanton River High School Assistant Principal and a teacher in a group interview, the Liberty High School assistant principal, a Liberty High School teacher, the Jefferson Forest High School assistant principal and a teacher in a group interview, and the Central Office Director of Elementary and Secondary Services who also served as the division's PBIS Coach. Both Jefferson Forest High School and Staunton River High School did group interviews where both an assistant principal who also was the PBIS Administrator and a teacher who functioned as the PBIS School Coach were present. Liberty High School had two individual interviews: one with an assistant principal who also was the PBIS Administrator, and teacher who functioned as the PBIS School Coach.

Table 4

Bedford County Public High Schools Demographic Information

| School Name | Total Students 2013-14 | Total Free and Reduced Lunch Students 2013-14 | Grade 9 Students 2013-14 | Grade 10 Students 2013-14 | Grade 11 Students 2013-14 | Grade 12 Students 2013-14 | Male Students 2013-14 | Female Students 2013-14 | Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Teachers 2013-14 | Pupil/Teacher Ratio 2013-14 | Reduction Rate of ODR from 2011-2014 Overall |
|-----------------------|------------------------|---|--------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|---|-----------------------------|--|
| JEFFERSON FOREST HIGH | 1368 | 170 | 351 | 358 | 342 | 317 | 712 | 656 | 86.57 | 15.8 | 57% |
| | | | | | | | | | | | 106 |
| LIBERTY HIGH | 920 | 378 | 223 | 247 | 217 | 233 | 475 | 445 | 70.83 | 12.99 | 50% |
| | | | | | | | | | | | 174 |
| STAUNTON RIVER HIGH | 1058 | 441 | 273 | 283 | 239 | 263 | 554 | 504 | 77.51 | 13.65 | 10% |
| | | | | | | | | | | | 42 |

* October 18, 2015 from website: <http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/districtsearch/>.

All people interviewed focused on a set of a few rules that the respondents each identified as core areas which their specific school needed to identify and publicize to change. They also agreed that changing school climate and consistency in application and teaching behaviors were common principles each approached in different ways.

Key Principles

- 1) Focused on a Few Rules to Demonstrate Positive Behaviors Identified with School Mascots or School Behavior Acronyms
 - a. Jefferson Forest *Cavalier Code*
 - b. Liberty High School's *PATH* and *Three R's*
 - c. Staunton River High School's *Golden Eagle Behaviors* framed by the *High Fives*
- 2) Focused Less on Referral Reduction Numbers Reducing Staff Misinterpretation of the Message of PBIS
- 3) Enhanced Pride in the School Is Integral to Changing Behaviors
- 4) Ensured all Students are in Attendance
- 5) Created a Proactive Strategy to Ensure the School Setting is Positive, Safe and Engaging
- 6) Included Positive Language Raised Positive Behaviors
- 7) Established Consistency in Rule and Behavior Modification as an Essential Belief
- 8) Supported the Mindset of We are Problem Solvers

- 9) Insured that We will Teach Positive Behaviors and Change the Belief that All Students Should Know Positive Behaviors

Anecdotal Evidence from Transcripts of Key Principles

Create fewer positive behavior rules that reflect the school's expectations and believe these behaviors will encourage student academic success. A staff member from Jefferson Forest revealed that their simple rules were established in “The Cavalier Code.” Pictorially represented in a poster displayed throughout the school and found in every classroom, the code began as a simple college-type honor code that evolved into an all-encompassing pledge of behaviors that exemplify the positive behaviors established inside and outside of the school. Jefferson Forest participants constantly referred to stating behaviors in a “what to do” way, rather than “what not to do way” was a shift in the culture and a foundational principle for the entire community of students, parents, faculty, and staff. The code, related here, comes directly from one of the posters:

Cavaliers lead lives of integrity. We value personal responsibility in everything we do. We believe in being honest in our actions, and words. Our actions and words show that we respect ourselves. We support and protect one another. We strive to do the right thing simply because it is the right thing to do. We give our best effort in all endeavors we undertake. We graciously celebrate our successes and learn from disappointments. We expect and even demand that Cavaliers lead lives of integrity.

Both staff members from Jefferson Forest related the ideas of reducing suspensions as another focus that girded the introduction and inclusion of the Cavalier Code.

Likewise, both staff members from Liberty High School were very specific about the three tenets that discipline targets: [being] respectful, responsible, and reliable. In fact one interviewee cited,

If our students respect themselves, each other, and property, they will also respect us. If they're responsible for their learning and about their actions, then we don't have as many referrals because they know [how to shift a negative behavior into a positive behavior]. If they're reliable then they're on time, they're here to learn. It's three easy words for them to actually encompass the whole school environment.

Another person interviewed also emphasized the key tenets and related that they had developed an acronym, Pride, Achievement, Teamwork, and Heart (PATH) that their administration used as a cornerstone for discussing the correct “paths” to take if teaching discipline.

Staunton River High School participants related that the entire school community focused on the “Staunton River Golden Eagle” by adhering to five succinct rules. The “High Fives” consisted of the following five rules:

- 1) Respect yourself and others.
- 2) Obey the cell phone or the electronics device policy at all times.
- 3) Hand-holding is the only form of [Public Displays of Affection] PDA.
- 4) Obey the dress code.
- 5) Be on time for class.

Staunton River High School’s interviewed team responses were centered on improving the actions as indicated by the data. These data indicators resulted from the most referred rules broken. The pride of being a “Staunton River Golden Eagle” was further explained by one participant as she recounted what the staff stated to students, “No matter where you go in this county, or where you go anywhere, you’re a Staunton River Golden Eagle. You want to represent yourself accordingly. I think that’s resonated a lot with our kids. They feel some more pride with our school.” These High Fives centered on the five rules that were commonly broken at Staunton River High School and both respondents felt that, “If you fix those small things, behavior overall will improve.”

A Bedford County Public Schools Division team member, who fosters a networking system in the division through meetings and establishing a shared Google Drive Folder for sharing practices, shared a guiding principle of the division. “[...] it is our goal to ensure all students are in attendance and we use a proactive strategy to ensure the school setting is positive, safe and engaging.” He also commented on how the focus of tiered interventions for discipline was shaping the future steps for all secondary schools in the division. Teaching the behaviors was another foundational principle he shared as important to the success of PBIS framework implementation.

Improving school climate for staff improves student behaviors. Jefferson High School interviewees stated that increasing “school spirit and teacher morale” was an effective

element to encourage changing the school's climate. They reported that this climate shift was a necessity for behavior to change. One respondent revealed that discussing the overall reductions or increase in ODR numbers was not as important as reporting the categories of the numbers so staff could focus on teaching better behaviors to the most common referrals. She emphasized that her team emphasized the number of ODR as a part of the outcome, not the process. "Instead of focusing on referral numbers, which is really just a symbol of what we want, it's just a marker. Let's talk about the whole thing." Another interviewee also supported this assertion as both revealed that the shift in thinking of positive ways to approach behaviors yielded higher results in climate and ultimately behavior changed. The administration team then started changing their language from "don't do," to "what to do." Staff members also began correcting each other in shifting language. "It is a kind of thing where you catch yourself, you catch each other, and you say things like, "Did you mean to say [do this] ..." instead of the "don't do" statements. Interviewees from Jefferson Forest commented how shifting the language shifted the focus to describing outcomes of behaviors and backwards prevention planning. Both claimants related the shift while describing questions that became a part of the culture of discipline planning: "What do we want? What are the positive things we want?"

By the same token Liberty High School participants correlated the change of climate in changing thought patterns when they stated, "That's the whole thing about PBIS. You have to be solution minded. You cannot be problem focused. You have to think about how to fix the problems that you already have." She further expanded on this concept of problem solving about the significance of approaching students personally and without a power struggle. "It's all about how you approach the kids. If you approach [their negative behaviors] positively and you approach it personally, you're going to get a [positive] reaction."

Staunton River High School participants also discussed the need to change the climate in the school as a key principle for success in reducing ODR. One participant claimed, "This is the tightest knit family that I've ever been in. I know that I can pick up the phone and call anybody here if I needed something." This family unit was described as being essential for changing student behavior. "If [students] don't feel the love from us being in this building, then they're not going to feel the love to learn in this building. I think that's huge, as far as building the staff morale and making this campus like a family."

Additionally, an interviewee from the division level connected the climate shift as a connecting lost instruction time and student achievement to discipline problems. He reported that his focus on shifting ideas of PBIS from this frame. “That amount of time that we have in school is a set amount and if you are using it for discipline, you are not using it for instruction. That's why we link this with the academic and behavior outcomes because they are tied together. We are now seeing PBIS [as] bringing in academic support for students. They go right hand in hand, it's not separate. That would be the biggest thing. You have to [frame PBIS] as this is going to benefit us on the academic end because we are going to focus more on that and less on the discipline.” By doing so, he explained that staff members were more inclined to participate in PBIS when the teams at each school directly linked PBIS with changing behaviors that reduced ODR and led to student success.

All school staff must be consistent with application of rules. While the climate was shifting, the interviewees found that consistency was a key standard to ensure reductions in ODR. Jefferson Forest High School’s team focused on language within their community. One respondent from Jefferson Forest High School revealed that all faculty members needed to consistently focus on positive language. Behaviors that are posted for areas in Jefferson Forest High School, including classrooms, no longer say, “Don’t do”, but are written in positive “what to do” language. The interviewees commented on the shift from reacting to behavior to preventing negative behaviors. They recounted many discussions that focused more on prevention rather than reacting which included posting how to behave rules that many of the staff thought should be known. One participant clarified as she described, “[rules are posted in the building]...like in the cafeteria, that they don't cut in line, but it just says, “Wait patiently,” instead of, “Don’t cut in line.” “There are a lot of things that we can say [like], "Don't do such and such,” and they find something else that's a ‘don't do’ thing that they substitute it with.” Both respondents agreed that teaching each other and the staff to respond to negative behaviors with “how to behave” language was integral in applying discipline consistently. By focusing on consistent positive language, the Jefferson Forest team interviewed connected acceptable behavior language to successful academics by stating, “We want as much as on-task time as possible. We want teachers teaching from bell-to-bell, and we want kids behaving from bell-to-bell, and here are some things we can do to reinforce that.”

Liberty High School participants interviewed echoed the consistent use of positive behavior language as a necessity to implementing consistent behaviors but shed the light on consistent teaching of behaviors as being fundamental. “We believe that good behavior is taught. It's not automatically known. You can't punish a kid for something they don't know that they're doing wrong. We have those discussions those little talks with our students, and we really like to focus on them making it personal, making it their own decision,” added one individual interviewed.” Another person interviewed from Liberty High School specified the same ideas of consistent teaching when she said, “Instead of punishing them we're really teaching them this is not appropriate behavior and this is why, because school behavior and home behavior don't necessarily coincide with one another...”

Staunton River High School also presented that consistently teaching acceptable behaviors was a major factor in reducing ODR. In fact, one member of the Staunton River High School staff emphatically stated, “Consistency with rules. That’s huge.” She talked about all staff members and more importantly students knew all administrators were adhering to the same discipline matrix they had established. One respondent went on to say that the consistency began in the neighboring middle school where the discipline matrix originated and was applied consistently from middle school to high school to ensure uniformity at all grade.

A member of the division level added that consistent teaching of behaviors was a guiding belief employed in PBIS and reducing negative behaviors district wide. “One of the big things that we've looked at is teaching students expectations. Many times, especially at the middle school and high school, people assume students know what expectations are. We are in the business of education, so we want to teach those students what positive behaviors look like [...]. I think that's been the biggest push for us. To get teachers and educators to teach students what their expectations are and what good behavior and positive behavior looks like.”

Key Practices

- I. Jefferson Forest High School:
 - a. Trained at Faculty Meetings on How to Teach Positive Behaviors and Examined Classroom Rules for Positive Language
 - b. Created Grade Level Competitions for Positive Behaviors at Pep Rallies
 - c. Held Canned Food Drive Competitions

- d. Planned Spirit Stick Competitions
 - e. Empowered Student- Created Spirit Days Dress Themes
 - f. Created an Instagram School Account
- II. Liberty High School
- a. Created *We Are* Bulletin Boards for Students With Positive Behaviors
 - b. Held [Grade] A Days Programs
 - c. Created Mentor Program for Repeat Behavior Offenders
 - d. Established Pride Achievement Teamwork Heart (PATH) Program
 - e. Held Student Sponsorship of Special Olympics Program
 - f. Created STOP Program
- III. Staunton River High School
- a. Gave Cookie Passes
 - b. Planned Field Day Activities
 - c. Established Middle School Administration Partnership
 - d. Established(Middle and High School) Behavior Matrix
 - e. Created Bus Driver Training and Partnership
 - f. Established Saturday School for Community Service
- IV. Division-Wide
- a. Involved the Local Juvenile Court Judge who Recognized and Awarded Schools' Efforts
 - b. Established a Division-Wide Sharing through Google Drive
 - c. Created and Shared Lesson Plans for Teaching Behaviors in Secondary Schools
 - d. Held Division-Wide Face-to-Face Meetings Quarterly
 - e. Created a Division PBIS Manual to Sustain PBIS when Administration Changed

Anecdotal Evidence from Transcripts of Key Practices

Practice: Recognize and define the expectations of the school. Supporting the principles led to common practices that the schools and division level staff employed to reduce negative behaviors. All Bedford County Public Schools members who were interviewed discussed specific examples of recognizing and teaching positive behaviors. Jefferson Forest observers interviewed commented about employing teaching behaviors as part of faculty

meetings, examining the rules in every classroom for positive language, and refusing to believe “Students should know [what to do].” The use of positive referrals was also a common theme throughout the interviews in Bedford County Public Schools:

- Jefferson Forest High School gave coupons for ice cream purchased by the school.
- Liberty High School put names in a drawing for a monthly reward from Chick-Fil-A, created a “We Are” bulletin board in the school lobby with pictures of students receiving positive referrals, and their School Council Association (SCA) sponsored “A” Days a program that gave students with “A’s” on their report cards chances to win prizes like televisions and other electronic devices.
- Staunton River High School awarded cookie passes with every positive referral. They also supported positive behavior by placing students without any referrals for the previous month (restarted monthly to allow students to change) in a drawing for prizes from the community or school spirit items. Every spring they held a field day for students exhibiting positive behaviors all year. Local radio stations came, they added an obstacle fun course, provided snow cones while the students played corn hole and listened to music for the last part of the day.
- Division wide: The local Juvenile Domestic Court Judge annually awarded all schools that reduced ODR and promoted positive behaviors.

Practice: Involve other learning community members and empower students.

Involving parents in the community was equally important to all people interviewed. Jefferson Forest High School focused their efforts in the community by “engendering school spirit.” They created competitions between the grade levels to ensure participation and support in pep rallies. The class that showed the most school spirit at the pep rally won the “spirit stick” and received doughnuts the next week in the cafeteria. Another idea to involve the community was to provide canned goods for a local contest to help combat hunger. While the competition in the region was promoted by a local radio station, the team at Jefferson Forest High School initiated a completion within the school by grade level and then collectively Jefferson Forest High School competed with other schools to win the canned drive. Both interview participants felt that this canned drive promoted school spirit and fostered a sense of gratefulness by the student body thus teaching another positive behavior. Additionally staff and students took photographs and posted (moderated by a staff member) on social websites like Instagram to broadcast to the community,

“Hey, this is coming up, “but purely recognizing things that are going on in the school.” Furthermore, one interviewee revealed that they try to make everything an event because, “[...] everybody here [feels] that if gets the kids connected to the school behavior improves.” Youth of Virginia Speak Out (YOVASO), a student organization, also created the themes of dressing up to support the athletic teams. One such theme was held for their Homecoming football game: *Guys in ties and Girls in Pearls*. This student-led theme fostered a sense of community and involved students in the practice of promoting school spirit in the school which Jefferson Forest High School respondents both agreed helped reduce negative behaviors.

Liberty High School respondents questioned also saw a need to involve the larger community in practices to model and teach positive behaviors. They were currently designing a mentor process which linked tier three (the students with most repeated negative behaviors) students and tier 2 (students who repeated some behaviors) to faculty that were compatible to develop a check in check out system for behaviors. This relationship afforded the students who struggled with behaviors opportunities to discuss with a trusted adult how they were feeling and behaving. Another event that Liberty High School supported was a student supported Special Olympics of Bedford. Liberty High School hosted the yearly event. One interviewee praised the students on model behaviors exhibited at the event when she stated, “We have brought in the Special Olympics, and our kids have just really thrown themselves into that project and are willing to open their arms to our special education students.”

Yet another aspect of reducing ODR and encouraging more positive behaviors was the use of their program called STOP. STOP was a program designed to prevent referrals by deescalating student behavior. By allowing students to go to the ISS room and work with the coordinator there, the respondents reported students were able to adjust negative behaviors. One claimant reported that the relationship between the ISS Coordinator and students exercising STOP moments prevented many referrals and taught the students how to self-manage their behaviors: “He is wonderful. [For] the students who are placed in ISS, he understands that a relationship can help change behavior, and so he is of that mindset. [He asks questions like], what happened? What could you have done differently? Let's talk about this. How does it relate to the student code of conduct that you have violated this?”

Staunton River High School's staff members interviewed discussed the involvement of the middle school community in their process to reduce ODR. The collaboration between the

administrators at both levels led to sharing resources and creating consistent behavior matrices. Specifically each level had the same positive behaviors being rewarded and negative behaviors being redirected with similar discipline. This uniformity provided students clarity and consistency in rules for all seven years (6th grade-12th grade).

Furthermore, the Staunton River Zone interviewees, led by their principal at Staunton River High School, also recognized a pattern of increased referrals from bus drivers. “We approached [these behaviors] as if [bus drivers] were teachers, because they’re an extension of an educator.” They revealed how they changed posting how to behaviors from while students were in the classroom to while students were on the bus. Then they gave drivers’ suggestions for what they could do in response to negative behaviors. “We taught them how to write a referral properly, and what to do before writing a referral. We also provided them with positive referrals for the first time.” In fact, their bus drivers, as well as their classroom teachers, were both writing positive referrals. One member of the staff expounded on this practice of training bus drivers for an entire day and commenting on how this training led to better communication between the administrators at both levels with the bus drivers. At the time of the interview, they had just completed the training a little over two weeks prior, and she had already participated in more prevention conversations with individual bus drivers. She revealed that bus drivers were talking more about methods of prevention which they hoped would lead to increased positive behaviors during student transport.

Another program that was created to involve the community was a Saturday School that students attended who displayed negative behaviors. Students were required to come from 8 -11 a.m. and do community service on the campus of Staunton River High School. Both respondents discussed how the Saturday work session would deter negative behaviors. Both people also thought turning a negative behavior into community service was modeling another way for students to channel negative behaviors into positive actions.

At the division level, the focus for practice was to combine and share resources. One division staff member interviewed discussed the practices he was leading by combining resources and data to support school efforts. “One of the big things we’ve done is we’ve created a central office PBIS team which incorporates special services, technology, and The Director of Instruction, the Deputy Superintendent, myself, and even transportation [leaders].” This division

team of problem solvers sought to suggest solutions and to support each individual school team's efforts while maintaining open lines of communication between the entire division communities.

Practice: Analyze and disaggregate data. All participants from Bedford County Public Schools mentioned practices revolving around data analysis and disaggregation. For example, one participant from Jefferson Forest High School spoke of looking at the data as an indicator of the other practices working. She cautioned that the message of reducing discipline referrals prompted their staff to interpret the program incorrectly by sending a message that the administration will not allow referrals, so she emphasized, "Instead of focusing on numbers and referral numbers, which is really just a symbol of what we want, [we stated that] it's just a marker."

Liberty High School's interviewees communicated that their practice was to review the data monthly and post the results on a board outside the principal's office "... so every time we go check our mail we can look at the data and see, and we have, we're working toward changing the whole environment of the school." Staunton River High School's PBIS team also met monthly to "[...] analyze the data for discipline, which is important for us because we can't come up with strategies to give the staff if we don't know what discipline ... Where the problems are." One member interviewed related that the administration took the lead in analyzing the data when she said, "That's one thing that we do as administration, is we actually share that with the team. Then they share it with the faculty at the faculty meeting."

The division-wide interviewee had access to all the school's data generated in a monthly report that the Deputy Superintendent of Bedford County Public Schools collected from each school. This data he indicated, "...[are] one of the things we are [analyzing to identify] the needs of each school and help support them. I think that's one of the big things that I've noticed, is that the central office support [is present...]." The Central Office support has promoted networking and sharing so that all staff are, "[...] working together to streamline [programs based on the data]."

Practice: Train staff and promote school message. Training staff and promoting the principles of the school also resonated with the persons interviewed from Bedford County Public Schools. At Jefferson Forest promoting school spirit and teacher morale resulted in the understanding that, "rewards that are not announced are more effective. You know what I mean. They're more appreciated." The interviewee also reported she believed that the publishing of the

Cavalier Code by the school's principal to segue between high school honor codes and the honor codes at colleges was an instrumental practice that trained the staff and shaped the school's message.

Liberty High School's participants thought the use of their STOP programming (students allowed to self-monitor and go see the In-School-Suspension Coordinator to deescalate and learn management skills), "taught our teachers that in a classroom is not where you want to have a battle." The interviewee also recounted the need for students to learn professional behaviors for not only the classroom but for establishing positive behaviors for settings after high school. "Even in the workforce you're going to have to go to training and you're going to have to sit through training, and you're going to have to learn how to be appropriate. When we work with these kids it's really [...] It's really crucial that they understand that school doesn't end when you're 18." Another member of the staff added to the idea that these are life-long lessons as she discussed the practice of extending homerooms to teach differentiated lessons on appropriate behaviors was vital to the successful reductions of school-wide inappropriate behaviors.

Staunton River High School's participants collectively agreed that training the staff endorsed the idea of preventing behaviors was better than reacting to behaviors. "We work with the teachers to talk about things that are minor, things that are major, and when it's minor, what can you do before you fill out that piece of paper [referral]? What steps can you take before that becomes something that gets the kid out of class, and has him in here with an assistant principal for twenty minutes, where they could be [learning in your classroom]."

One person interviewed found that training the teams at the division level became a successful practice to support the community of learning positive behaviors. He also encouraged the teams to share resources via technology as well and set up a Google Drive Folder shared among all PBIS teams at the secondary level. "They drop in their agendas, the highlights from their [school-based] meetings. The other schools can piggy-back off each other they will take little pieces and parts of another school's plan and modify it for their use. They don't want to reinvent the wheel and if something has already been successful, it's easier to pull that in and use it. That's been a big help this year."

Analysis of Case II: Chesterfield County Public Schools

Table 5

Division Demographics of Chesterfield County Public Schools

| School Board Office Physical Address | Grade Span | Locale | Total Schools | Total Students | Classroom Teachers (FTE) | Student/Teacher Ratio | ELL Students | Percent ELL Students | Students with IEPs | Percent of students with IEPs |
|--|------------|---------------------------|---------------|----------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|----------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| 9900 Krause Rd Chesterfield, VA 23832-0001 | PK-12 | Suburb : Large (21) | 62 | 59186 | 3839.73 | 15.41 | 3012 | 5.1% | 7170 | 12% |

Chesterfield County Public Schools' participant was the PBIS Division Coordinator. Her transcript reflected the entire division perspective not only Monacan High School that was selected as a high school to study since they demonstrated reductions in ODR from the years 2011-2014. Below was the demographic information for Monacan High School.

Table 6

Demographics of Monacan High School

| School Name | Total Students 2013-14 | Total Free and Reduced Lunch Students 2013-14 | Grade 9 Students 2013-14 | Grade 10 Students 2013-14 | Grade 11 Students 2013-14 | Grade 12 Students 2013-14 | Male Students 2013-14 | Female Students 2013-14 | Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Teachers 2013-14 | Pupil/Teacher Ratio 2013-14 | Reduction Rate of ODR from 2011-2014 Overall |
|---------------------|------------------------|---|--------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|---|-----------------------------|--|
| MONACAN HIGH SCHOOL | 1381 | 0 | 375 | 359 | 318 | 329 | 677 | 704 | 87.97 | 15.7 | 10% |
| | | | | | | | | | | | 49 |

* October 18, 2015 from website: <http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/districtsearch/>.

Key Principles

- 1) All CCPS Community Had Four Core Values: Responsibility, Respect, Accountability, and Honesty
- 2) All Practices Grew from Training and Teaching the Four Core Values
- 3) Partnerships were the Key to Creating a Positive Environment for Students and Staff
- 4) Building Relationships was Necessary to Change the Climate
- 5) Frequent Communication and Guidance to the Leadership was Essential
- 6) Professional Learning Communities were Central to the Success of Schools

Anecdotal Evidence from Transcripts of Key Principles

Create fewer positive behavior rules that reflect the school's expectations and believe these behaviors will encourage student academic success. Chesterfield County Public Schools was investigated by the researcher to see what common core values the division held that transferred to the high schools that a staff member at the division level (Similar to PBIS Division Coach) provided. She stated that Chesterfield County Public Schools held four core values: responsibility, respect, accountability, and honesty. She further elaborated on these concepts as she explained,

I would say the division-wide model is part of the design of excellence. It's PBIS, Positive Behavior and Intervention Support, is the third leg in our three prong design of excellence, along with core values and citizenship for our twenty-first century citizens. That's our county-wide version.

We are committed to ensuring that all learners will develop characteristics to demonstrate the four core values of respect, responsibility, honesty and accountability and practice the responsibilities of citizenship within their community. By incorporating Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) within our school communities we have built systems and practices of support to teach, reinforce and acknowledge appropriate behavior skills in various school settings as well as support students as they develop problem-solving skills, communication skills and work in various collaborative settings. These are skills they must have as they develop and transition to be a responsible productive citizen within their community and the global 21st century workplace.

Improving school climate for staff improves student behaviors. The interviewee emphasized the combined efforts of many members of the community to create a partnership climate. "When all the partners working with our children are on the same page we build a positive successful supportive community and learning environment for our students. Our data trends confirm the steps taken have made a positive impact and we are on the right path together." Her thoughts focused on building the relationships necessary to facilitate the change in climate. She emphasized the importance of providing constant support to sustain the shifts in climate and to monitor from the division level that cultural shift. "To support the cultural shift each school is given on-going support with additional mini trainings, implementation of circles, proactive and responsive, and restorative conferences. Frequent communication and guidance is

provided to their school team [Professional Learning Community] PLC leaders and the division level team participates in their monthly meetings.”

Out of these beliefs grew the need for practices that supported the schools changing climates. In Chesterfield County Public Schools, these practices were led by the district, and reinforced in the schools.

Key Practices

- 1) Provided Restorative Practices Training for all Staff and Students
- 2) Established a Sense of Community
- 3) Changed Discipline Procedures to Include Guidance on Better Behavior in Dealing with Conflicts for Staff and Students
- 4) Trained Students to Write Apology Letters when Behavior Infraction Occurred
- 5) Created Small Group Behavior Training for Students
- 6) Created a Discipline Review Task Force
- 7) Analyzed and Changed their Code of Conduct to Reflect Change in Discipline Approach to Positive Language
- 8) Established Monthly Meetings for Teams to Share and Problem Solve Together
- 9) Built Shared Resources for All Schools

Anecdotal Evidence from the transcripts of Key Practices

Practice: Recognize and define the expectations of the school. The staff member from Chesterfield County Public Schools recognized that the principles of setting fewer rules and monitoring school climates took a great deal of coordination at the division level. With 38 out of the 63 schools in Chesterfield County Public Schools implementing the PBIS strategies, the division sought practices that would provide support for these changing dynamics. Some of the practices she employed from a division level focused around rebuilding relationships through the program called “restorative practices.” “The aim of restorative practices is to develop a sense of community and to manage conflict by repairing harm and building relationships. Effective implementation increases prosocial competencies in students, empowers community members to take responsibility for appropriate behavior and provides opportunities for offenders to build empathy, problem solve and be accountable to their community.” She reported that students by

rebuilding the relationships, students reentered the classroom without being bound by previous actions.

Practice: Involve other learning community members and empower students. By engaging in the program of “Restorative Practices,” students were not only asked to problem solve the situation to prevent repeating the same behaviors, but asked to determine their own solutions to negative behaviors. Furthermore she stated that administration asked questions during discipline situations to help guide the students. She added that students were able to self-reflect on their behaviors when administrators guided them to examine their actions, reflect upon the outcomes, and determine preventative steps. She stated the students formed actions they could take to repair the relationship. Some students wrote apology letters, but others, less comfortable with that approach joined very small groups led by building administrators. These administrators, she reported, guided them through the process of identifying the inappropriate behavior and provided the students with strategies to apply should a similar situation arise.

Practice: Analyze and disaggregate data. Pieces of datum were extracted from a division-wide “Discipline Review Task Force” who reviewed the student conduct codes and policies surrounding discipline. This team was made up of multiple stakeholders: principals, assistant principals, and psychologists. The data led the team to establish a matrix of “[...] proactive strategies within six levels of interventions and is broken down by infraction. The levels of intervention start with suggested strategies for teachers in the classroom to support student success and encourage self-regulation of positive behavior.” Data were also the driving force behind school specific action plans created at the school levels by school PBIS teams. The PBIS Division Coordinator related how teams use the *PBIS of Virginia: Benchmarks of Quality Resources* established by the Virginia Department PBIS Training and Technical Assistance Center, consisting of 53 areas to self-assess the quality of PBIS implementation. By utilizing these benchmarks, PBIS School teams were able to identify their strengths and weaknesses to inform their plans for ODR and further implementation of PBIS frameworks. “Having this [process] in place has been valuable to support the cultural shift efforts and ensure consistency of implementation as school’s experience transitions of administrators, PBIS team coaches and members.”

Practice: Train staff and promote school message. The clear message conveyed to the researcher was the ever-changing practices of Chesterfield County Public Schools to provide

support for the successful implementation of PBIS strategies. “We hold numerous team training sessions yearly to address focus areas of implementation for both new and returning schools. Each school holds mini training sessions based on their needs for their staff throughout the year. They provide monthly updates to keep their faculty informed of their school’s progress, best practices and systems put in place to support both the students and staff.” Additionally, the division team member interviewed facilitated division-wide meetings to collaborate and “[...] brainstorm on individual school and division-wide supports needed to ensure positive implementation of next steps.” The participant described how collaboration at the division level between school PBIS teams also changed the culture of discipline analysis. “We find that often the answer is in the room and best practices can be easily tweaked and adapted between elementary and secondary levels. Building resources and supports between schools have been key [elements] to keeping an energetic positive division-wide focus on PBIS.”

Analysis of Case III: Pulaski County Public Schools

Table 7

Division Demographics of Pulaski County Public Schools

| School Board Office Physical Address | Grade Span | Locale | Total Schools | Total Students | Classroom Teachers (FTE) | Student/Teacher Ratio | ELL Students | Percent ELL Students | Students with IEPs | Percent of students with IEPs |
|--|------------|--------------------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 202 N Washington Ave Pulaski, VA 24301-5008 | PK-12 | Rural: Fringe (41) | 8 | 4470 | 328 | 13.63 | 17 | 0.4% | 736 | 16% |

Pulaski County Public Schools’ participant was the Principal of Pulaski County High School. Below are the demographics of Pulaski County High School.

Table 8

Demographics of Pulaski County High School

| School Name | Total Students 2013-14 | Total Free and Reduced Lunch Students 2013-14 | Grade 9 Students 2013-14 | Grade 10 Students 2013-14 | Grade 11 Students 2013-14 | Grade 12 Students 2013-14 | Male Students 2013-14 | Female Students 2013-14 | Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Teachers 2013-14 | Pupil/Teacher Ratio 2013-14 | Reduction Rate of ODR from 2011-2014 Overall |
|----------------------------|------------------------|---|--------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|---|-----------------------------|--|
| PULASKI COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL | 1368 | 170 | 351 | 358 | 342 | 317 | 712 | 656 | 86.57 | 15.8 | 45% |
| | | | | | | | | | | | 231 |

* October 18, 2015 from website: <http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/districtsearch/>.

Key Principles

- 1) Integration of Multiple Systems to Provide Intervention was Essential
- 2) Counselors, Teachers, Case Managers were a part of the Administrative Team
- 3) Students were Collectively Everyone's Responsibility
- 4) Graduation was Defined as Our Ultimate Student Achievement
- 5) We were a Team
- 6) Teams Solved Problems
- 7) Examining Reasons Behind Negative Behaviors (in and outside of school) Prevented Negative Behaviors
- 8) Creating a Complete Behavioral Manifestation Picture was Vital
- 9) We were Flexible and Striving to Find More Avenues for Students to Succeed

Anecdotal Evidence from Transcripts of Key Principles

Create fewer positive behavior rules that reflect the school's expectations and believe these behaviors will encourage student academic success. The person interviewed from Pulaski County High School related through the interview that his team focused on one key principle of integrating systems to provide intervention supports to reduce the ODR. "Prior to last year we did not have a tiered system of analyzing these things and getting together. We got a core team so a lot of what VTSS, RTI, positive behavior intervention supports, mental health, first aid frameworks, we just call it CORE." He added that his CORE team reflected a joined effort between all staff like the school counselors, specific teachers, and case managers meeting to establish patterns and determine methods to assist students.

He also reported his team supported the idea that the students were collectively everyone's responsibility. He added that they all worked to shift the culture into thinking that "No, we're all in this together. We need to do this together," and that's sort of a hard, very long process to ingrain within the faculty. That we'll stand together and we're going to support their kids together and our ultimate goal is graduation." Guiding the teamwork was another principle that the team constantly was searching to discover more ways to assist students and building the capacity to find those resources. In fact, he said he found, "Once we understand [the behavior origins] and get all these members together and talk through it, the problem that seems so daunting for one or two people to work on, when you get it among the committee it's like, 'Well here, let's try this' and start moving forward.'"

Improving school climate for staff improves student behaviors. Shifting the school climate to a sense of "we" was also a foundational principle that he recounted would lead to graduation. The respondent stated the importance of, "[...] building climate, not just for faculty and staff." He included every student and every staff member in the climate-building process. Additionally he revealed the significance of changing the way the team reviewed information from isolating one point of datum, to looking at multiple points of data. "I mean, to look at truancy issues, behavioral issues, mental health issues, and mental health has been the big [shift in thinking] for us." He further added that helping team members to combine parts into an effective point of information allowed the team to understand and think about behavior differently. The team investigated what stressors students may be experiencing that exhibited certain behaviors. That change from reaction to prevention created opportunities to move beyond examining one classroom incident to examining the reasons behind the behavior display.

Shifting to more prevention allowed the staff at Pulaski County High School to create more positive environments and reduce suspension ODR. Through conversations with students and staff, the mentality changed from suspensions to, "We keep them here. We keep them moving forward. We find routes and we work with the student to say, 'Okay, what are you capable of? Because here's how we can support you.'"

All school staff must be consistent with application of rules. In Pulaski County High School, the application of rules in consistency was important to the respondent, but changed from rules to consistent support. "[...] there was a little bit of shake up to get everybody thinking in same direction." He informed the researcher that after the CORE team understood

the idea that team contributions were essential, meetings became more productive. In fact he added that solutions came from everyone. Some of those solutions that were new approaches and the respondent stated that consistent professional development for staff was essential. He also related the time struggle he encountered as he sought to embed Professional Development (PD) about these student support mechanisms into the daily and weekly schedules of his CORE team.

Key Practices

- 1) Created a Core Team
- 2) Promoted Bystander Appropriate Behaviors
- 3) Supported County-Wide Continuous Bullying Training, Starting in Pre-K
- 4) Created More Student Clubs and After School Programs
- 5) Utilized a Bully Box App for Student Reporting of Negative Behaviors
- 6) Reviewed All 1500 Students with Core Team
- 7) Created Time in School Schedule for Professional Development on Interventions

Anecdotal Evidence from Transcripts of Key Practices

Practice: Recognize and define the expectations of the school. Focusing on the principle of providing students with support encompassed most of the practices at Pulaski County High School. The person interviewed further asserted that practices across the division have supported the expectation that the school community helped one another. He stated that Pulaski County Public Schools promoted the ideas of not being a bystander when something bad occurs to a student. He further described that the culture recognized students who will help each other. This recognition of positive behaviors afforded Pulaski County High School gains in defining the culture of helping others as a guiding principle. He mentioned the training of all students Pre-K through 12th grade with anti-bullying messages division laid a foundation of helping others. He noted this anti-bullying training benefitted the high school when students arrived with that training in 9th grade. “So it's [kind of] going back to what the heart of it all is, and the more we get them in tune to what they're doing academically, we hopefully, will see fewer discipline problems because they're involved here with a purpose.”

Practice: Involve other learning community members and empower students.

Empowering students through increased offerings of school-related and community-related activities were another practice the interviewee from Pulaski County Public Schools discussed. Moreover he added that the school found ways to encourage more participation in clubs and societies across their campus. Another student-empowering practice he explained was establishing a bystander intervention model. This practice, he added, focused on what students could do to support one another and modeling that behavior asserted the belief “I don't have to stand by and watch [bullying/harassment] happen to somebody else.” Furthermore, the respondent recounted that the school used a mobile app (<http://bullyboxreport.com/>) that students could download to their cell phones. This App, he clarified was called “Bully Box” providing students a method to directly reach out for help should they encounter a bullying situation.

Practice: Analyze and disaggregate data. While looking at student data for over 1500 students seemed daunting, the person questioned explained that the “[...] discussions are very individualistic about specific needs for kids and what resources we can put in place of them and we still see flaws in our system.” This disaggregation of program analysis he added led him to schedule more professional development to assist the CORE team in supporting more students.

Practice: Train staff and promote school message. As mentioned above the division provided training for anti-bullying message division wide from Pre-Kindergarten until 12th grade. The interviewee also mentioned training during the day as a practice he utilized to support his staff. He additionally commented on researching and allowing staff members to research new resources, strategies, and interventions as part of his school’s approach to reducing discipline problems. He made mention of the importance of training teams to work continuously together. He also stated that he did not shy away from constantly promoting the work on discipline as a school-wide effort. He further stated how he sought to reduce the belief that my hard work will only benefit the next teacher. Pulaski County High School operated on a 4X4 block where students shifted classes after a semester rather than a year. The interviewee referred to the brevity of the calendar as a deterrent for some interventions to be utilized since rewards for the hard work may go to the next semester teacher.

Analysis of Case IV: Rockingham County Public Schools

Table 9

Division Demographics of Rockingham County Public Schools

| School Board Office Physical Address | Grade Span | Locale | Total Schools | Total Students | Classroom Teachers (FTE) | Student/Teacher Ratio | ELL Students | Percent ELL Students | Students with IEPs | Percent of students with IEPs |
|--|------------|--------------------------|---------------|----------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|----------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| 100 Mount Clinton Pike Harrisonburg, VA 22802 | PK-12 | Rural: Fringe (41) | 23 | 11883 | 872.13 | 13.63 | 589 | 5.0% | 1045 | 9% |

Rockingham County Public Schools was the next division that agreed to participate in the study. Two people were interviewed together: One was the Special Services Supervisor who functioned as the PBIS Division Coach and the other was the Principal of Turner Ashby High School. The chart below reveals the demographics of the high school.

Table 10

Demographics of Turner Ashby High School

| School Name | Total Students 2013-14 | Total Free and Reduced Lunch Students 2013-14 | Grade 9 Students 2013-14 | Grade 10 Students 2013-14 | Grade 11 Students 2013-14 | Grade 12 Students 2013-14 | Male Students 2013-14 | Female Students 2013-14 | Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Teachers 2013-14 | Pupil/Teacher Ratio 2013-14 | Reduction Rate of ODR from 2011-2014 Overall |
|--------------------------|------------------------|---|--------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|---|-----------------------------|--|
| TURNER ASHBY HIGH SCHOOL | 1027 | 304 | 283 | 265 | 223 | 256 | 527 | 500 | 70.57 | 14.55 | 40% |
| | | | | | | | | | | | 46 |

* October 18, 2015 from website: <http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/districtsearch/>.

Key Principles

- 1) Turner Ashby was a Community School
- 2) Involved Students Had Fewer Behavior Problems
- 3) Involved Students Immediately at the High School
- 4) Involvement in the School Allowed Students to Discover Interests and Talents
- 5) Suspensions Did Not Prevent Negative Behaviors
- 6) Connecting Students and Staff was Essential

- 7) Restorative Practices were Important
- 8) Students were Allowed to Correct their Behaviors

Anecdotal Evidence from Transcripts of Key Principles

Create fewer positive behavior rules that reflect the school’s expectations and believe these behaviors will encourage student academic success. Rockingham County Public School’s division representative and a principal of Turner Ashby High School focused on one key belief that both referred to as the foundation of Turner Ashby High School and Rockingham County Public Schools: “Turner Ashby is a community school.” One interviewee discussed the role of encouraging students to get involved as a key strategy to achieve this singular principle.

One of the things we try to do with ninth graders is have them take ownership in the school and buy into everything we do and promote the success of those people that became before them and things that they’ve done. Now, we’ve won awards nationally for being [one of] the top-rated high schools in the country, so we give that as a selling point.

We want students to take advantage of those opportunities and become part of the school and take ownership in this school and make it a special place for them. Somewhere they feel like where they belong and they succeed. By getting those ninth graders to buy into that they take pride in ownership in the school and I think that cuts down on a lot of the negativity that can happen in other places.

He further expounded on the notion of getting involved in the school by emphasizing the idea that the philosophy of involvement in the school community allowed students to find their interests and he encouraged the students not to be “anonymous” for the four years at Turner Ashby High School.

Improving school climate for staff improves student behaviors. Improving the school climate was another key principle that both people from Rockingham County Public Schools revealed in responses. The respondents comments focused on changing the belief that suspensions prevented negative behaviors but recognized the district policy utilized suspensions for certain behaviors. One respondent reported that as their team pondered the ideas surrounding suspensions, one member researched school connectedness and discovered that “The research

shows that if students can be connected to one individual or one adult that it's made a huge difference for their success in school. It's, again, that full connectedness and the fact that they're building a relationship." The principal expanded on the idea of building relationships between all staff and, "finding a place for every student here is...a seed that's planted in their minds." In fact, both respondents noted that they attempted to create a climate of belonging and strong relationships and related that these two factors were equally important for PBIS implementation.

All school staff must be consistent with application of rules. While the focus on school climate was the strongest message conveyed from Rockingham County Public Schools participants, they also discussed a process that they are trying to introduce to provide consistency throughout the school and the division. One respondent spoke about the idea of restored practices and restored discipline as the division's major PBIS theme. She reported that they were in the process of utilizing this common message in efforts to combat inconsistency and provide a specific framework for action. Both interviewees related that they were focused on the principle of creating positive relationships between students and staff. One member interviewed stated that these relationships flourished when students who had displayed negative behaviors were given opportunities to correct their behaviors.

Key Practices

- 1) Established Positive Referral Programs
- 2) Created Positive Videos Where Students and Staff Lip Sync
- 3) Listed on the Website their Mission, Vision and Core Values
- 4) Created Videos Across the District Relating Core Values
- 5) Created Humorous Videos About Simple Behavior Expectations
- 6) Reviewed Pre-Referral and Pre-Suspension Interventions
- 7) Held Monthly Data Analysis Meetings of PBIS Teams

Anecdotal Evidence from Transcripts of Key Practices

Practice: Recognize and define the expectations of the school. Key practices emerged around creating positive behavior expectations in Turner Ashby High School. The interviewees reported that these practices involved three areas: creating multiple tiers of responses, phrasing behaviors positively, and maintaining a positive school climate. For example, the respondent

reported that the school recognized appropriate behavior through positive referrals. Furthermore he added that they did many activities at the end of marking periods (6 weeks) for students without any discipline referrals. The respondents noted they also utilized technology to enhance the positive relationship between staff and students. One participant spoke about videos they staff and students created to promote positive behaviors. First the video format was used to promote positive behaviors encouraged in the school. The interviewee stated, “[...] students could see and appreciate [the behaviors in the video]. I think that was the first step in us cutting down a lot of the penny ante, so to speak, behavior that was going on.” Furthermore, he added that their school’s website contained their mission and vision of core values. The division participant discussed how the school’s website hosted videos of staff members across the division who elaborated on the core values of positive behavior.

Practice: Involve other learning community members and empower students.

Building relationships through the use of this technology to publicize their mission also afforded the Turner Ashby High School community opportunities to unite for a common purpose of prevention of negative behaviors. One respondent noted that, “We got students, teachers and administrators involved and we created a video. We’d create a scene or scenario and try to make it entertaining, but at the same time get the point across that these are expectations that we have.”

One participant added that she was reviewing more research and that invited more systems of support to come together. “We’ve been focusing more on that with PBIS being under the umbrella of that integrated systems of structure and support trying to look at our pre-referral intervention or pre-suspension interventions.” By uniting the multiple interventions, the division respondent discussed how the school staff reached out to the community and families of students. She reported that Turner Ashby High School established a need of belonging that reached into the homes of students to disband the distrust some parents felt toward education in general. The interviewee recounted that this relationship building with parents improved parental perceptions of the school. “[The family members] maybe had a bad experience while they were in school, so they don’t really emphasize the value of education to their kids. Those are the kids that are the more difficult ones to reach.” The participant emphasized the importance of the connection of families to school. He also added they were constantly reflecting on how to increase building relationships in Rockingham County Public Schools. He further commented that the division provided many after-school opportunities to supplant

negative behaviors and further connect students to the school community. “[We want to] build those relationships so that when the thought about breaking a rule crosses [a student’s] mind they think that how important school is to them or how important belonging to something at this school is.”

Practice: Analyze and disaggregate data. Both members of Rockingham County Public Schools talked directly about data driving their decisions on practices to employ. They talked about having a school-wide PBIS team that met monthly to look at data as “[...] a system of acknowledgement.” This system of data analysis would determine if their efforts were successful and inform future actions to reduce ODR.

Practice: Train staff and promote school message. Training for Turner Ashby High School students was a focus for the school and the division. One participant recounted how teaching all of the school community was transformed into positive statements about what appropriate behavior looked like and what it didn’t. Additionally, he added that a training video was created with short skits that illustrated these appropriate behaviors that was shown yearly to remind students what the expectations were at the high school. The PBIS Division Coach reported that all of the schools in Rockingham County Public School posted their mission statements with positive expectations listed for each school. She informed the researcher that they felt this public display trained all students and helped keep their students focused on the high expectations for behavior.

Analysis of Case V: Shenandoah County Public Schools

Table 11

Division Demographics of Shenandoah County Public Schools

| School Board Office Physical Address | Grade Span | Locale | Total Schools | Total Students | Classroom Teachers (FTE) | Student/Teacher Ratio | ELL Students | Percent ELL Students | Students with IEPs | Percent of students with IEPs |
|---|------------|--------------------------|---------------|----------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|----------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| 600 N Main St, Suite #200 Woodstock, VA 22664-1855 | PK-12 | Town: Distant (32) | 10 | 6202 | 492.06 | 12.6 | 293 | 4.7% | 703 | 11% |

Shenandoah County Public Schools’ participant was the Principal of Central High School. The table below lists the demographics of Central High School.

Table 12

Demographics of Central High School

| School Name | Total Students 2013-14 | Total Free and Reduced Lunch Students 2013-14 | Grade 9 Students 2013-14 | Grade 10 Students 2013-14 | Grade 11 Students 2013-14 | Grade 12 Students 2013-14 | Male Students 2013-14 | Female Students 2013-14 | Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Teachers 2013-14 | Pupil/Teacher Ratio 2013-14 | Reduction Rate of ODR from 2011-2014 Overall |
|---------------------|------------------------|---|--------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|---|-----------------------------|--|
| CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL | 776 | 276 | 186 | 204 | 204 | 182 | 397 | 379 | 67.31 | 11.53 | 28% |
| | | | | | | | | | | | 24 |

* October 18, 2015 from website: <http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/districtsearch/>.

Key Principles

- 1) Staff Forged Relationships with Students, Especially those with Extensive Discipline Records
- 2) Individual Intervention was an expectation for her Staff that would Lead to Student Success
- 3) Students and Staff had Clear Roles Identified
- 4) One-on-One Communication with Staff and Students was Most Effective Form of Communication
- 5) A Culture of Team Existed
- 6) We Recognized Positive Behavior by Students

Anecdotal Evidence from Transcripts of Key Principles

Create fewer positive behavior rules that reflect the school's expectations and believe these behaviors will encourage student academic success. While interviewing the participant from Central High School, she focused on several principles when she first became a member of the administrative team. One principle she reported was to expect her staff to develop relationships with students. She added that her team also, "[...] spent a lot of time talking with individual students who had extensive discipline records to kind of lay some groundwork with these individuals." She made clear statements that individual intervention was an expectation for her staff that would lead to student success. For example she discussed what she called, "One-on-one time." The idea that spending time with staff and students face to face and individually was one of her key components to successfully reducing negative behaviors.

She also revealed that there needed to be clear role responsibilities defined for both students and staff so her team, “[...] established some clear guidelines for what students' rights and responsibilities were and what the rights and responsibilities of teachers were. We went through those things. We did not spend extensive time in our faculty meetings doing that kind of training. We spent a lot of time talking with people one-on-one about individual circumstances and concerns.”

Improving school climate for staff improves student behaviors. While the “One on One” time was directed at staff and students, she also found that spending time building a culture of team effort worthwhile. She reported that providing individual staff support changed the culture in the school. “Actually taking time and actually working with them one on one” reduced staff concerns, she specified. She modeled this daily she stated. “I am always out and around students and that is a [priority] with our administrators—[...] so we can have those one-on-one conversations. I think sometimes people underestimate the power of [speaking to people directly]. I think there is value in that core framework but beyond that you've got to go out and walk that walk with them, and you've got to go out and address their concerns as they come up in real life situations.”

All school staff must be consistent with application of rules. What she discovered in those individual conversations with staff members was “[...] a deficit area for folks [who were unable] to clarify lines between what types of things that faculty should be handling when it comes to students behavioral issues and the types of things that are actually a true office referral.” The confusion led to inconsistencies and she said she now started each year with “[...] opening days identifying the high expectations that we had and what those were and where the non-negotiables were. She sought to clearly identify the things that the team would address immediately and focus on. “I think we saw the biggest difference in having clarity and consistency among what was being done in the building.”

Key Practices

- 1) Celebrated Positive Behaviors of Students
- 2) Created *Push the Positive* Program
- 3) Sold Push the Positive T-Shirts
- 4) Made Daily PA Announcements of Positive Behavior Recognition

- 5) Kept Rules Simple
- 6) Involved School Resource Officer in Prevention Relationship Building
- 7) Asked Students Questions About Behaviors

Anecdotal Evidence from Transcripts of Key Practices

Practice: Recognize and define the expectations of the school. The interviewee related that the best practice she found was to celebrate the behaviors the students did correctly. She added that she created a program called “Push the Positive.” She revealed that they would make daily announcements over the PA system asking their staff to continue to reinforce positive behaviors. “We just did something as simple as, ‘Today as you move through the building, if you see somebody exiting or entering a doorway, take the time to hold the door for them.’” She described the importance of keeping the ideas simple in expected behaviors. She also stressed that creating intentional spotlighting of positive behaviors supported their efforts to reduce ODR.

Practice: Involve other learning community members and empower students. Another facet to their reduced ODR the interviewee recounted was the “Push the Positive” program. She stated the idea started in the school but quickly moved into the community as the team sported and sold staff shirts with “Push the Positive” on them. She discovered that promotion supported the positive behaviors. She reported she also pulled in multiple members of the community to support and guide students to positive behaviors. Additionally she added that the administration team expanded to include the guidance counselors and emphasized the use of the resource officer as a valuable community resource. “We’ve also shifted focus with him. In the past he was very much reactionary from his response, as for being responsible for what was happening in the building.” She told of how the resource officer became an essential part to their proactive responses in building relationships with students. “We ask him to be out and among the kids and talk with kids. When appropriate, we build him into individual meetings as well to help us out with that.” Every individual conversation opportunity is sought by multiple members of their school community to ensure that all students have the opportunity for that teachable discipline moment.

Practice: Analyze and disaggregate data. Still another practice employed by the school revealed the interviewee was the use of discipline data when several administration team members were dealing with repeat offenders. She specified that instead of reacting, the team

tried to focus on individual students and find specific ways to help specific students. While she did not mention standard discipline data analysis, she did describe that their administration team was proactive and even referred to meeting individually with repeat discipline offenders. She also discussed that her team created individual success plans personalized for each student. Lastly she stated that she knew who was a repeat offender which indicated to the researcher her team studied discipline data.

Practice: Train staff and promote school message. By creating a “Push the Positive” program the interviewee from Central High School reported that her admin team was able to unite the staff. She also added that her team trained them simultaneously to look for positive behaviors. She likewise informed the researcher that this recognition of positive behaviors led to more students wanting the recognition and more students exhibited positive behaviors.

Analysis of Case VI: Tazewell County Public Schools

Table 13

Division Demographics of Tazewell County Public Schools

| School Board Office Physical Address | Grade Span | Locale | Total Schools | Total Students | Classroom Teachers (FTE) | Student/Teacher Ratio | ELL Students | Percent ELL Students | Students with IEPs | Percent of students with IEPs |
|---|------------|-------------------------|---------------|----------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|----------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| 209 West Fincastle Tazewell, VA 24651-0927 | PK-12 | Town: Remote (33) | 16 | 6345 | 429.81 | 14.76 | 51 | 0.8% | 824 | 13% |

Tazewell County Public Schools was chosen because Richlands High School exhibited a significant reduction of ODR over the 2011-2014 school years. The interviewee was the Principal from Richlands High School. Richlands High School’s demographics are listed below.

Table 14

Demographics of Richlands High School

| School Name | Total Students 2013-14 | Total Free and Reduced Lunch Students 2013-14 | Grade 9 Students 2013-14 | Grade 10 Students 2013-14 | Grade 11 Students 2013-14 | Grade 12 Students 2013-14 | Male Students 2013-14 | Female Students 2013-14 | Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Teachers 2013-14 | Pupil/Teacher Ratio 2013-14 | Reduction Rate of ODR from 2011-2014 Overall |
|-----------------------|------------------------|---|--------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|---|-----------------------------|--|
| RICHLANDS HIGH SCHOOL | 719 | 332 | 212 | 203 | 152 | 152 | 385 | 334 | 48.77 | 14.74 | 65% |
| | | | | | | | | | | | 116 |

* October 18, 2015 from website: <http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/districtsearch/>.

Key Principles

- 1) Demonstration of Caring Started with Administration and Moved to Staff and Students
- 2) Every Action Taken Stemmed from Demonstrating Caring
- 3) Extended Caring to the Families of Students
- 4) Increasing Teacher Morale Assisted in Deterring Student Behaviors
- 5) Modeled Effective Relationship Building Techniques that Empowered the Staff to Develop Relationships with Students
- 6) We Never Wavered in Having High Expectations for Staff and Students

Anecdotal Evidence from Transcripts of Key Principles

Create fewer positive behavior rules that reflect the school's expectations and believe these behaviors will encourage student academic success. The interviewee from Richlands High School defined the simple rule of caring about a student's success as the key principle that helped student's succeed. She explained that the simple rule was to demonstrate caring from the top down. She added she found adhering to this foundational principle helped her shape her actions and also provided the relationships that she believed would lead to student success. More specifically, she wanted to make sure that caring extended to the families of students. She recounted that the families involvement was another outgrowth of her caring principle that she believed would lead to student success.

Improving school climate for staff improves student behaviors. The respondent also reported that the school climate, specifically staff morale, was connected to positive student behaviors. “[Teacher morale] is [connected to working with kids more effectively in the discipline process]. I think they're all interconnected. I don't think you can have one piece without the other.” She spoke of how building a staff climate of support started with her actions. She stated the climate was shifting to that model of relationship building and she felt it necessary to model relationship building for her students and her staff.

She also told of how she had to educate the staff to being receptive to data. She explained how she sought to relate the discipline data to academic success. She further expounded on how she believed that correlation helped forge more trust with her staff and created more successful relationships. She emphasized that when the data were viewed as what can be learned and implemented rather than a failure only, staff negative perceptions of PBIS changed. She explained how modeling positive reactions to the data also extended to her administration team. She revealed how her admin team worked overtime to model positive behavior intervention focusing on reducing staff stress and preventing negative student behaviors.

All school staff must be consistent with application of rules. The examinee also discussed the belief that the staff should set consistently high expectations. She also explained the relationship to setting high expectations for oneself was vital to promoting consistent positive behavior. Moreover, she emphasized that she believed the successful ODR reduction was centered in all staff and students participating in constantly defining personal achievement objectives that maintained improved growth.

Key Practices

- 1) Established a Mentor Program
- 2) Knew Every Student in the Building Personally
- 3) Extended First Period Every Time Report Cards are Distributed to Allow Individual Discussions
- 4) The Principal Wrote Encouraging Notes to Staff Every Monday and Brought Refreshments
- 5) Trained Staff to Understand Data, Interpret Trends, and Utilize the Data

- 6) Trained Staff to View School from a Teenager's Perspective
- 7) Created a Monster Bash for High Schoolers to Dress Up

Anecdotal Evidence from transcripts of Key Practices

Practice: Recognize and define the expectations of the school. The principles of setting and modeling high expectations led to one of the main practices the participant discussed: mentors. For instance in the 2015-2016 school year the teams were creating a mentoring program to increase modeling relationship-building opportunities for students. She reported that she felt all staff should understand the value of their role as teacher being synonymous with mentor. She stated that mentoring led to decreased behaviors in their school and she was determined to implement the practice school-wide.

Practice: Involve other learning community members and empower students. The person interviewed from Richlands High School also underscored how involved the staff and team were with every student in the building. "Every six weeks when their report cards are distributed they stay in their first period--we extend that for about twenty minutes. The teachers are talking to kids. Each one, looking at their report cards and "hey you did a great job... really, hey what can we do to help you here?" Again, she reported that the leadership team modeled this behavior for their staff in multiple ways. The participant recounted how every Monday (the same day we were speaking) she strived to bring in a special item for the staff with an accompanying uplifting handwritten note. The participant wanted to model how effective small gestures of caring were and believed that the staff would reciprocate in kind with the students. Furthermore, she felt if the faculty experienced what occurred when the leadership modeled caring, they may invest more time in affecting individual students with similar caring behaviors.

Practice: Analyze and disaggregate data. In addition to creating a caring environment, the participant used discipline data to create plans to reduce ODR. She recounted the difficulty the staff had understanding the data. "You know that was a tough one for our teachers: 'I've never seen all [these] data and I don't really care. No, these are my kids this year. Those were their kids last year.'" Moreover, she reported that creating an environment where the students were viewed in totality rather than by classroom was an important practice in shifting the culture to analyzing all student behavior data. Her staff, she related, became accustomed to looking at behavior trends and what one can do to reduce those trends being interconnected with

building student relationships. She added she was determined to demonstrate and cultivate a need for the staff to understand the origins of negative behaviors. She contended that if staff understood the origins, they could determine methods of counteracting negative behaviors.

Practice: Train staff and promote school message. Besides continuing to train the staff on data analysis, the principal trained staff to see that students were learning behaviors as well as academics. The participant related to the researcher how the leadership team moved from the middle school and they really had to prove that the practices in middle school could be scaled for high school. She related how she promoted that students wanted to have fun in one way by allowing them to dress up for *Monster Bashes*. These costume oriented gatherings, seemed juvenile at first to the high school staff. The participant related the success of the event as a reward to positive behavior. Furthermore she told about her team passing out stickers for students and staff who were making positive behavior decisions. She reported she thought the staff was surprised when the students loved those practices. Moreover she reported those simple actions brought increased internal support.

Another practice she felt conveyed the message of the school and reduced ODR was the practice of all administration being visible as much as possible. She spoke strongly about how her entire leadership team modeled visibility by all being in the cafeterias and hallways. She also conveyed how the staff also began to model being more visible after her leadership team became more visible. In essence the participant from Richlands High School was constantly referring to modeling as a key practice to establish behaviors that reduced ODR.

Analysis of Case VII: Anonymous Division

There was no demographic table reported because the division superintendent requested anonymity for his school division if less than ten school divisions were sampled.

The anonymous school division analysis stemmed from two separate interviews: one with a division staff member who fulfilled the role of PBIS Division Coach and secondly a high school assistant principal who was identified by the PBIS Division Coach. The anonymous school division's total student population in 2014 was over 500 but less than 1000. Their reduction in ODR was 35% during the years 2011-2014.

Key Principles

1. Every Child will Succeed
2. Student Engagement Prevented Behavior Problems
3. Focused Intervention was the Best Negative Behavior Prevention
4. Mindsets About Behavior Changed

Anecdotal Evidence from the Transcripts for Key Principles

Create fewer positive behavior rules that reflect the school’s expectations and believe these behaviors will encourage student academic success. One interviewee focused on key components to a student’s success operating directly with the belief that students’ failure was not permissible being their key principle. “In terms of student success, we looked at student engagement. Were they involved in a club, an after-school activity? Did they have a teacher mentor? Did they have friends in the school building? Was there some type of connection that that student had in the building so that they would feel that they were a part of the community? We got parents involved.” When it came to suspensions, the respondent described how administrators considered multiple interventions and began with in-school suspension so that students would not miss instruction.

She further stated, “When you asked about conduct, we had very few rules. The rule was every child was going to succeed and every child will graduate. That’s the expectation.” She added that this key principle led to student empowerment conversations where all staff would ask students constantly, ‘What are doing so that you’re going to graduate--so that you’re going to be successful?’”

While one respondent focused on student engagement in the school as a foundation for their one rule of student success, another interviewee focused on intervention being the key principle. She believed student success was supported by intervention before a problem behavior occurred. “We want to head them off before [their actions] become problems, so what we do is we identify the behaviors early.” The participant related how when students disrupted class, the administrators would look to see the origin of the negative behavior to prevent recurrence. Furthermore she added that as the team determined the causal relationships, the team sought providing the student support through multiple means. She explained that administration encouraged teacher to student conferences or small group conferences that

included an administrator or counselor in attendance. The focus on the causes for the negative behaviors became a part of the discipline culture. She was also determined to clarify that no one encouraged negative behaviors or ignored them, but rather the collaboration between staff and students exhibiting negative behaviors led to creating plans and specific consequences that reduced the negative behaviors. ”

A participant also added that there was a shift in perspective for discipline that helped reduce ODR. “We came into basically a certain mindset about how discipline was held, but what we have done is try to change the way we look at why we discipline, when we discipline, and how we discipline, and try to look at it from student perspectives.” In delving into the logistics of why behaviors occurred, the participant revealed that the students were dealing with other issues that when eradicated, the behaviors improved. “What we did was try to use intervention to deal with the other issues, which in turn ended up reducing the number of actual referrals.”

Improving school climate for staff improves student behaviors. Improving the school climate permeated the comments across both participants’ transcripts. One person interviewed emphasized how a new, clean building changed the behaviors because of the climate changing to pride in the appearance of the new school. She elaborated, “I know that people think that that really doesn’t matter, but what it will tell you is that kids took a lot of pride when the building was really, really clean. The custodians would comment about kids are taking better care of the building. They don’t throw trash on the floor. We don’t have gum on the floor to scrape up. They really care about the environment.”

This entire shift in school pride led to more student involvement. In fact she added that the administration started asking students for feedback to established programs. Furthermore, she accented in her interview how the administration started looking to other staff members as resources for school behavior improvement ideas. She related that the idea of success grew to involve every member of the staff. “[...] everyone would be successful whether it was a student, a teacher, a custodian, a cafeteria worker. We were going to make it a nice environment so everyone could thrive.” To do this she stated that behavior interventions for discipline focused around a model she called, “community restitution.” Making amends in any situation where behaviors caused problems were transformed into learning situations where community environment restitution was a key component to maintaining the shift in climate. These restorative moments came as the administrators “table hopped” during lunchtime supervision

where all admin were visible in every lunch service, building those relationships and asking questions like, “What do you like about school? What do you dislike? What are you learning? What would you like to do?” to further identify areas where the students could plug into the school community and increase their positive feeling about school. Another participant interviewed referred to the shift in culture by conveying how changing mindsets for all the staff was challenging, but instrumental in changing the school climate and culture. She further explained that the administration was careful to maintain a balance between supporting the staff and encouraging the staff to work with students to create individual plans for success before writing a referral. She additionally expressed that the challenge lay in doing both simultaneously at times, but that balance was a constant priority to the administration.

All school staff must be consistent with application of rules. While both respondents alluded to the concept of consistency in behavior interventions, each came from different frames of perspectives. One interviewee sought to engender multiple methods of supporting discipline at the high school. In fact she referenced Yanek’s (2013) “triangle logic” that explained that 80% of all students will follow the rules, 15% will need secondary interventions, and 5% will need third level interventions. The five percent were the focus of her comments in regards to consistent application of rules. She also related how the data also included reviewing attendance and academics to triangulate more data that would create personal discipline plans. Her idea was to bring the data to the table so that consistency in intervention prevailed and discipline was administered dependably. The other respondent focused on how the administration found changing the inconsistent reasons behind referral writing related directly to the mindset that behaviors could not be prevented. She also stated that when the administrative team clarified how to enact preventative measures, staff members employed those strategies with students and reduced ODR.

Key Practices

1. Gathered Student Feedback to Behavior Problems/Practices
2. Established a Community Restitution Program
3. Created a Team Approach Involving Administrators and Teachers
4. Applied Rules with Consistency
5. Called Home with Positive News about Student Performance

6. Developed Student Adult Relationships
7. Constantly Questioned the Plans of Success Students Have
8. Viewed Attendance and Academic Achievement in Dealing with Behavior
9. Created Check-In Situations with Students who Repeat Behaviors
10. Created Training for Teachers to Teach Behaviors and Apply Rules Consistently
11. Recognized Positive Behavior of Staff and Students

Anecdotal Evidence from the Transcripts for Key Practices

Practice: Recognize and define the expectations of the school. Out of principles grew practices. For one person interviewed she elaborated on how establishing student and parent relationships became a team effort by both the teacher and the administration. To establish this relationship, administrators focused on recognizing the positive behaviors students were doing. Many phone calls were made to identify the positive behaviors. For example, the interviewee recalled an example where an administrator called home and said, “I wanted you to know that I’ve sat at lunch today with Johnny and he told me that he’s passing English, and we’re so proud of him. Thank you, as a parent, for what you’re doing at home.” She revealed that then students began coming to the administrators and thanking them for calling home.

Practice: Involve other learning community members and empower students. Involving parents in the community were equally important to both participants. One respondent created paths to get the parents involved. She explained a practice called “overnight suspension” where a student stays in school for the day rather than immediately leave. The varied ability of parents to leave their jobs to come pick up the students was a reason the suspensions evolved to overnight suspensions. Another reason was to enhance parental involvement. While the student remained in the school, the administration called the parent in the afternoon. The administrator would state that in order for a student to return to school the parent, the child, and an administrator would meet and create a behavior plan together. Likewise another interviewee focused on parental involvement practices through making more phone calls ahead of discipline instead of in response to discipline. She also stated that the conversations with both parents and students focused on empowering students by asking them to create plans to ensure graduation and to being successful.

Practice: Analyze and disaggregate data. Both people interviewed analyzed and disaggregated data to the staff within the school. Both commented on how the high school scheduled meetings for groups, grade levels, departments, and reviewed student data on a weekly basis. Each meeting focused on individual students in relationship to the overall discipline data. The interviewees discussed the power of meeting with repeat offenders to jointly determine success plans that were not only based on academics. Most plans included the behaviors that supported academic success such as attendance and classroom positive actions. One person interviewed explained that the administration prioritized checking periodically to see how individual students were doing. She explained that the administration met with students prior to having any discipline occur in order to establish administration-student relationships which she felt prevented any significant issues from appearing.

Practice: Train staff and promote school message. Staff training was an essential practice to both participants. One participant stated that in order to promote the school, a teacher recognition program became a practice. In fact, the administrators were responsible to submit articles each week to be published division-wide extolling the faculty for accomplishments in lesson delivery and relationship building with students. Complete with pictures, teachers across the division were celebrated and she said that recognition made a huge difference for the staff. She further expanded on this practice relating that the district sent staff biographies as press releases to a local paper. These biographies were published further lifting their staff members. Another respondent interviewed, put into practice a requirement for all staff to write in the Student Information System the prevention tactics practiced before a referral was written. By focusing on documented interventions by teachers, she stated administrators were able to promote the importance of prevention measures taken to avoid negative behaviors.

Cross-Case Analysis

To review across all divisions, the researcher once again referred to the chart of categories and common propositional statements on the next page. The data were then organized with a divisional word cloud generated from all the respondents' conversations coded from that category placed into Taggedo word cloud generator to visually interpret any key repeated words throughout the interviews. Additionally the key proposition statements were then used to deliver the overarching ideas present for the schools that reduced their office

discipline referral rates. The analysis listed the highest recurring proposition statement to lowest in each category to assist schools that wished to examine which category statement that was present in the most schools that reduced office discipline referral rates. Additionally the researcher sought to connect these proposition statements' evidence back to the body of literature that discussed the process of implementing PBIS frameworks in schools.

Table 15

Common Principles across All Cases

| Common Principles in Schools Proposition Statement | Number and Percentage of Interview Transcripts that were Coded with this proposition statement |
|---|---|
| Create fewer positive behavior rules that reflect the schools' expectations and expected these behaviors will encourage student academic success. | 12/12 100% |
| Improving school climate for staff learners improves student behaviors. | 12/12 100% |
| All school staff must be consistent with application of rules. | 11/12 92% |

Create fewer positive behavior rules that reflect the schools' expectations and expect these behaviors will encourage student academic success. All 12 interview transcripts reflected this proposition statement. According to Sugai and Horner (2002) there are six shared components of implementing the framework of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports in their review of research. The researcher found that only two respondents focused on Sugai and Horner's second rule of Clearly Defined Expectations of behaviors. Four respondents interpreted principles to mean the list of positive behaviors and listed no more than five positive rules to follow. There were two common words in the rules listed: respect and responsibility. Both words were listed in two interviews as positive behaviors. All four participants adhered to creating a minimal list of behaviors, which used positively framed language and short, clear and common words.

Nine participants interpreted principles to mean expectations for the school community and related those expectations directly to student graduation or academic achievement.

Interviews with three persons all held to the “statement of purpose” that there was an environmental influence of student involvement and the administration reviewed the school culture or climate surrounding those beliefs. One participant promoted *We’re in this together* and interventions similar to another division respondent revealing prevention intervention meetings, while still another person interviewed focused on instilling expectations of caring across the school. Five schools participants mentioned: using creative phrasing which may involve their school mascot. Examples include *Being a Staunton River Golden Eagle*, or adhering to the *Jefferson Forest Cavalier Code*, and *Pride, Achievement, Teamwork, Heart* (PATH) for Liberty High School, and Central High School’s *Push Positive* and Pulaski County High School’s *CORE* to indicate systems of interventions. The vast difference when examining the transcripts across the division was whether the participant identified guiding principles as a listing of the positive behaviors, or whether they interpreted the principles as what can students and staffs can achieve as their guiding principles.

Improving school climate for staff learners improves student behaviors. While changing school culture and climate supported by the research of Williams (2009) and Koth, Bradshaw, and Leaf (2006), the shift was evident in all 12 of the interviews. The researcher found that the most prominent theme of shifting culture and climate focused on building relationships (Chard, Harn, Sugai, & Horner, 2008; Sugai, Horner, & Gresham, 2002) with students and faculty were key elements to improving the culture. Additionally another subset coding of improving school climate discussed presenting perspectives that shifted focus to creating positive statements of discipline and creating positive environments like Skinner (1953), Sugai (2008), and Sugai and Horner (2002).

Four interviewees specifically discussed changing the environment to promote connected communities revolving around increased school spirit, school unity, and teacher morale. Whether students became interconnected to the school community through involvement in clubs and school organizations, or students found pride in a new renovation to the physical structure, the climate shifted and brought about positive behavioral change.

All school staff must be consistent with application of rules. Sugai and Horner (2002), Virginia Department of Education’s *PBIS of Virginia: Benchmarks of Quality Resources*, both support the use of consistency in applying Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports.

Eleven of 12 interview transcripts referenced the importance for staff to be consistent in applying discipline measures and following school rules consistently.

Table 16

Common Practices across All Cases

| Common Practices in Schools Proposition Statement | Number and Percentage of Interview Transcripts that were Coded with this proposition statement |
|--|--|
| Recognize positive behaviors and define the expectations of the school | 12/12 100% |
| Involve other learning community members and empower students | 11/12 92% |
| Analyze and disaggregate data | 11/12 92% |
| Train staff members and promote school expectations | 12/12 100% |

Practice: Recognize positive behaviors and define the expectations of the school.

The most common practice that schools reducing ODR employed focused on using positive referrals and/ or recognizing positive behaviors. All twelve interviews replicated this common practice. In fact, ten respondents made direct references to practices involving recognizing student/teacher positive behaviors that were related to the expectations or rules of the schools. Curwin (2007) and Mendler (2007) also agreed that creating an intrinsic empathy and promoting positive behaviors would also be instrumental forces to implementing PBIS. Five interviewees recounted that practices involved teaching good behaviors to all students.

Practice: Involve other learning community members and empower students. Still 11 transcripts contained wording about involving community members, but the ways in which they involved the community members or empowered students were slightly different. Seven transcripts contained language about inviting the community in such as Special Olympics a canned food drive and community service Saturday. Two transcripts contained wording utilizing other staff such as guidance counselors/resource officers while two different transcripts had phrasing involving parents and establishing Restorative Practices in the community.

Still three transcripts had respondents that listed tiered interventions similar to Sugai and Horner (2009), the Virginia Tiered System of Supports (2013), and the Virginia Department of

Education's *PBIS of Virginia: Benchmarks of Quality Resources*, all refer to prevention strategies being part of the successful implementation of PBIS. Similarly the research shows that the four of 12 transcriptions contained references to creating early behavior interventions.

Practice: Analyze and disaggregate data. Eleven of twelve interview transcripts revealed the practice of analyzing data. Only one interview did not contain any reference to data and the respondent did not directly refer to the practice of analyzing data. The Virginia Department of Education's PBIS Training and Technical Assistance Center stated in the Virginia Department of Education's *PBIS of Virginia: Benchmarks of Quality Resources*, the importance of using discipline data to inform the decisions made by any school implementing PBIS frameworks. Others like Smith (2009), Horner, Sugai, and Anderson (2010), Colvin (2007), and (Irvin et al., 2006) also believed that data needed to be the underpinning for implementing a PBIS framework. While all schools reviewed data, two interviewees were adamant about not making the referral reductions the main goal of implementing PBIS frameworks in their schools. Both felt strongly that the reductions in ODR should be a summative evaluation, measuring the program as an indicator not a goal.

Practice: Train staff and promote school expectations. Mendler (2007) and Mendler and Curwin (2007), The Training and Technical Assistance Center for PBIS in Virginia, Richter, Lewis, and Hagar (2011), and the Virginia Department of Education's *PBIS of Virginia: Benchmarks of Quality Resources*, recommended that ongoing training continue for staff and students to reinforce the school messages about discipline. All twelve interviews had respondents that listed this common practice. The data collected by the researcher supported training staff as a key element to success, and data were collected to suggest training students was also important.

While training students was paramount to four persons being interviewed, two participants added details that supported practices that continuously trained teachers on how to prevent behaviors in the classroom which research indicated as a marker of success. Still two division personnel discussed training staff as sharing ideas with one another in monthly meetings as vital to creating a collective culture for solving behavior challenges. Two other people interviewed stated the use of technology to train the staff and community was equally vital to their success with PBIS. Lastly, two other interviewees referenced using social media and other

technologies to provide training and demonstrating positive interactions to promote a positive behavior environment.

Chapter 5

Findings, Implications for Practice, Recommendations for Further Study, and Summary

The focus of this research was to examine and explain the principles and practices of selected Virginia high schools that employed Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) frameworks that led to the reduction of office discipline referrals (ODR). Additionally, the researcher sought to curate digital resources from these high schools that may guide other high schools to reducing their office discipline referral rates at the following website: <https://sites.google.com/site/pbisdissertation/pbis-dissertation-home>. Each case was selected by pre-determined criteria investigated through the reported findings of the Safe Schools Information Resource Database (SSIR) from the Commonwealth of Virginia's Department of Education's website. There were twelve interviews: three group interviews with two respondents each and nine individual interviews. The twelve interviews involved 15 people:

- four division level personnel: three were division leaders who were also PBIS Division Coaches and one who was titled PBIS Division Coordinator
- eight school administrators (five principals and three assistant principals)
- three teachers who also were designated as PBIS School Coaches

Each interview was digitally recorded and transcribed. Transcriptions were then analyzed using the constant-comparative method (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994) and using grounded theory (Cresswell, 1998) to summarize a set of theoretical propositions.

Findings from this Study and their Relationship to Literature

Results from the study both uphold the research findings and identify other areas for further study not found in the literature review. Overall common principles and practices were identified through the narratives and resources that may assist high schools in understanding implementing PBIS frameworks to reduce ODR. Data from across the cases supported common principles and practices found in the literature and also identified obstacles and successes that led to implications of the practices utilized to reduce ODR in high schools.

All data were extracted from the recorded transcripts and then charted for common elements in principles and practices. The researcher found that PBIS leaders that reduced ODR followed three common principles and four dominant actions.

Three Common Principles:

1. PBIS leaders created a minimal set of school-wide rules.
2. PBIS leaders believed improving school climate for staff learners improved student behaviors.
3. PBIS leaders asserted that all school staff must be consistent with the application of rules.

Four Dominant Practices:

1. PBIS leaders recognized positive behaviors and defined the expectations to the school.
2. PBIS leaders involved other learning community members and empowered students.
3. PBIS leaders analyzed and disaggregated data to inform their procedures.
4. PBIS leaders trained staff members and promoted school expectations

Initial Obstacles Encountered and Successes Resulting from Employing PBIS Frameworks:

Additionally, the data collected yielded common obstacles and successes in the nine high schools where PBIS frameworks were implemented and ODR were reduced. These data were obtained in response to two questions asked by the researcher:

1. What was your greatest obstacle to reducing ODR?
2. What do you think has been the greatest success resulting from reducing your ODR?

As stated in the limitations, by asking a qualifying question rather than a more generalized question the researcher found the obstacles and successes more difficult to code for qualitative commonality. The researcher found that limiting the question by the word “greatest” caused respondents to mainly focus on one obstacle or one success. That focus on a singular incident reduced the strength of data derived. Some researchers may question the reason to report lower numbers, but this researcher’s intention was to inform the schools of obstacles and successes consistent with the intent to make the findings of this study a practical resource for potential implementers of PBIS.

Noted Obstacles:

1. Nine interviews had respondents who listed the top obstacle to successful PB IS implementation as establishing consistency in both staff participation and rule

application. In essence, nine interviewees believed that consistency in both staff participation and rule application hindered PBIS success in their schools.

2. Six interviews also had respondents that listed finding time to train staff to implement PBIS strategies and interventions was their greatest obstacle.
3. One interview had a respondent who also stated finding funding was his main obstacle.

While all respondents listed a single greatest obstacle, four transcripts were coded for two obstacles. Many participants explained the issues they felt caused the challenge and then revealed ways they were using to overcome the obstacle(s).

Strategies for Overcoming Obstacles

For example, in dealing with the obstacles, respondents stated that there were four main efforts on which PBIS leaders should focus:

- 1) PBIS leaders should be aware there were miscommunications of PBIS expectations
- 2) PBIS leaders should plan to train all staff in the application of school-wide rules and consequences to combat inconsistency
- 3) PBIS leaders should focus on changing negative school climates first.
- 4) PBIS leaders should plan to address the Lack of Time and Funding to Implement PBIS

PBIS leaders should be aware there are miscommunications of PBIS expectations.

While all respondents tried to be clear about expectations, nine respondents listed inconsistency as their single greatest obstacle. Notably, five out of nine participants who listed inconsistency as a problem related inconsistent staff participation in PBIS implementation as their greatest obstacle. These participants added that miscommunications of PBIS expectations associated with writing referrals were the greatest reasons for the challenge. In other words placing emphasis on the reduction of ODR led to the myth that PBIS meant *do not write referrals*. The myth existed due to the collection of referral data and the literature establishing the number of referrals measured the success of PBIS implementation. Thus, by counting referrals every month and sharing the results, one respondent explained that her staff heard the unintended message: Do not write referrals. Two other people interviewed decided to publicly state that they were not counting referral rates but using the categories of referrals to guide their PBIS

implementation next steps. Moreover, the team separated the total amount of ODR into the categories of the referrals and reported the areas that needed improvement rather than the ODR total number. Then the staff was able to relate referral numbers to categories and change behavior instruction to focus on those areas. In fact, most PBIS leaders, while they appreciated the reductions of ODR, were not focused on the monthly numbers to report to the staff. Instead they focused on the constructive collective environment the positive behaviors promoted and found staff participation increased once the miscommunications were corrected.

Staff participation wavered due to another miscommunication of PBIS expectations, namely, all students knew and understood the concept of acceptable versus unacceptable behaviors. Actually, eight respondents of the nine who listed inconsistency as their greatest obstacle recounted a specific story about a challenge in getting the staff to commit to teaching positive rules and behaviors. Two of the eight respondents who listed inconsistent staff participation as their greatest obstacle recounted that teachers felt students should already know certain behaviors, and some teachers balked at teaching behavior at all. One interviewee emphasized, “[...] that ignoring this obstacle would be detrimental and stressed the “[...] importance of ensuring the school teams understand the importance of staff buy-in in the process.” Participants further reported that this staff attitude had to be addressed directly. These respondents added that their most challenging obstacle was convincing staff that good behavior must be taught. Respondents stated they focused on training staff by having teachers examine behavior explanations by students who were asked what behavior would be appropriate for the situation. These responses demonstrated to the staff that all students did not have the positive behavioral backgrounds the staff first assumed. In other words, positive behaviors, while basic to the staff members, were new topics to selected students and thus those self-management behaviors had to be taught. Moreover, this shift from teaching content knowledge to teaching positive behaviors placed some staff out of their content-comfort zones. Respondents reported that they knew some staff wanted to only be content specialists so those staff members resisted the idea of teaching positive behaviors. All nine participants also added that staff members were unclear on how to teach students positive behaviors. Two of the nine participants reported staff members had to correct themselves and each other from listing behavior in terms of what not to do.

To combat this disassociation between teaching subject-matter content and teaching behaviors, the PBIS leaders conveyed they drew correlations between behavior and student achievement results. While focusing on behaviors that kept students in the classroom was essential to all PBIS leaders, another person interviewed informed the researcher he also dealt with inconsistent staff participation in the form of good teaching strategies. He studied the classrooms in which most of the behaviors were occurring. He discovered the behaviors came from several classrooms where staff members delivered poor instruction. He questioned that, “If the students are engaged academically, should we have as many class management issues and if we have fewer classroom management issues, are we dealing with fewer office referrals? Those questions led to discussions about staff consistency in preparing engaging academic lessons.

PBIS leaders should plan to train all staff in the application of school-wide rules and consequence to combat inconsistency. Inconsistency in staff participation also resulted from a second problem: a lack of staff training. The Virginia Department of Education’s *PBIS of Virginia: Benchmarks of Quality Resources* highlighted that teachers should be involved in the teams, in the creation of rules, and in creating the plan for implementation. During the study, the researcher found that staff inconsistency in applying the school-wide rules and administrative consequences, also contributed to the reduced participation of the staff. Five interviewees described variations in applying the rules problematic and a focal point of training. Another interviewee suggested that “[...she thought] the lack of consistency [in rules and consequences] confused students and thought that [this inconsistency] led to more referrals.” Clearly all respondents thought more training of their staff members would be helpful in the implementation of PBIS frameworks.

Two of nine respondents who listed training as a key component to inconsistency of staff participation affirmed that they trained staff by creating specific behavior and consequence matrices for all to follow. By providing the specific behavior and consequence, both staff and students were equally informed. More importantly, behaviors were curbed when discipline was consistently applied. Two other respondents took time during the day to go over behaviors and consequences with staff allowing staff to not only diagnose the behaviors and consequences, but to problem-solve, preventing recurring behaviors. These two participants also stated the importance of the professional development being done during the day. Both stated that during

school training, rather than after school training, stressed the importance of the training and more teachers participated. Still, one respondent indicated the importance of re-training teachers to address behaviors problems by intervening early and to adopt prevention attitudes was challenging. This PBIS leader further explained that she felt her job was to teach her staff to examine the reasons behind the behavior in efforts to prevent recurrence.

Interviewees were also concerned about the inconsistency in leadership being an obstacle to PBIS implementation. Two of the respondents, who defined inconsistency as their greatest obstacle, alluded to the difficulty with consistency in implementation of strategies if leadership staff changed. One PBIS leader explained his school teams created a handbook for PBIS administrators to follow so new administrators were aware of PBIS processes. The intention, he stated, was to provide continuity when administration changed. The other respondent discussed how she trained new administration and staff during the summer to reduce the learning curve delay in implementing PBIS.

PBIS leaders should focus on changing negative school climates first. Changing school climate was important to analyze as supported by the research of Williams (2009) and Koth, Bradshaw, and Leaf (2006). The participants interviewed similarly reflected the importance of having a positive climate to increase staff participation consistency. Six respondents discussed the challenge of changing their staff's negative perceptions towards implementing the PBIS strategies. Five interviewees related the negative attitudes toward the PBIS strategies stemmed from the idea that PBIS was too demanding in addition to the pressures of state mandates and testing. This stress, the respondents contended, made the PBIS initiative less than well-received by staff and reduced the willingness of staff to commit to the tenets of PBIS implementation. One participant referenced the stress of state-wide mandates as pressure building as well. However, she chose to establish a culture of linking her school's declining state academic scores as a reason to implement PBIS frameworks. She outlined to her staff that including PBIS frameworks in the academic recovery plan was a way to ensure more academic success by reducing the time out of class for referrals. Thus, by linking academic performance to teaching behaviors, she stated her teachers saw the program as less of an alternate initiative and more of part of academic teaching. Another PBIS leader also placed emphasis on publicizing the amount of instruction time missed when students were involved with discipline situations. This direct relationship between students gaining more instruction time instead of losing time due to

office-referred behaviors made PBIS programming more acceptable to the staff. This change in perspective led to more active staff participation and a more positive climate toward the execution of PBIS.

While the respondents found that changing the perceptions around PBIS frameworks led to more staff participation, they also agreed that PBIS was not a single-minded effort but instead it must be a group effort. Fundamentally, asking teachers to view all student behaviors as every teacher's issue was a paradigm shift. This cultural shift while indeed challenging, was a necessity according to two PBIS leaders. One PBIS leader achieved creating team collaboration by using more cloud based technologies to share ideas in addition to face-to-face meetings. Connecting the division PBIS leaders digitally, allowed all teams to participate in creating solutions for behavior problems across the district. For instance, one division PBIS Coordinator would have monthly face-to-face meetings to problem-solve PBIS implementation issues. Those solutions, all agendas, and minutes of the meetings, were then placed in the Google Drive Folder to be accessible regardless of the time of day or the location of the viewer. This digital PBIS resource folder also allowed team members to use other schools' solutions for similar discipline problems. The teams could use the information stored in the folder as a resource to find solutions in between meetings. By creating the collaboration digitally, the climate toward facing PBIS implementation was transformed into the culture of a concerted division-wide effort. The participant reported the staff viewed this digital collection as an effective resource, and the interviewee recounted staff also felt workload was decreased since each school shared solutions.

Another PBIS leader also listed a negative climate as a reason for her claim that consistency was her main obstacle. To combat the obstacle of participation consistency resulting from a negative school environment, she held monthly brain-storming sessions with staff to create a collaborative culture. Two other people interviewed created positive behavior messages they posted on social media to extend the positive school climate into the community. Another person interviewed discussed the shift of climate from negative to positive by explaining to all staff the benefits to the entire school when one student changed his/her behavior. He explained how the 4X4 block schedule deterred teachers from working to end negative behaviors in students if the school were near the end of the term. He found he had to communicate with his staff how important changing one student's negative behaviors impacted the next classroom, and the value in allowing the next teacher to benefit. In conclusion, the

PBIS leaders conveyed that to have successful programs of PBIS and reduce ODR, each had to work with staff members to change the climate to positive if negativity existed. This change, respondents emphasized, was necessary to foster staff consistent participation.

The researcher, correspondingly, found that the most prominent theme of shifting climate focused on building relationships like the research of Chard, Harn, Sugai, & Horner, (2008) and Sugai, Horner, & Gresham, (2002) reported. While all interviewees touted relationship-building as integral, six people interviewed added that developing relationships were absolutely crucial. Two respondents reached beyond the traditional classroom. One participant informed the researcher she trained bus drivers to identify positive behaviors on the buses and established processes for writing bus referrals. She specified that the bus drivers had become a part of the school administration and that involvement led to more PBIS participation. Likewise, another respondent interviewed commented on how they sought to use every member of their staff to build positive relationships between students and the school staff. She specifically related the shift of the role of their school resource officer and how he became another resource to use in enhancing staff and student interactions. Clearly, improving the relationships between students and staff helped change the climate and was a priority to those interviewees. The researcher learned that if PBIS leaders ignored the climate of the school, the negative behavior culture that existed may never change regardless of PBIS implementation.

PBIS leaders should plan to address the lack time and funding to implement PBIS. Schedules for high schools are packed with graduation requirements, state mandates, and division initiatives, so finding time to add another program, was a challenge for PBIS implementation. While all interviewees would have liked more funding and time, two people interviewed identified time and one identified funding as top issues blocking reductions in ODR. Two respondents identified finding time for more professional development as a common obstacle to overcome. Specifically, one participant found recognizing positive behavior was instrumental to the success of PBIS implementation. Her belief focused on the idea that time decreased for promoting positive behaviors as graduation neared. Another respondent struggled to find time for all teachers to meet to plan interventions to prevent referred behaviors. She summed up the importance of taking time when she said, “[...] we're finding that time on the front end saves us a bit of time on the back end. If we can head off some of the issues that are minor, they don't really become those major, major issues.” One other PBIS leader expressed

funding was a challenge. He explained that while he was able to get some funding for lesson plan work during the summer, the funds were limited and he felt the work was unfinished. Those lessons were then shared with other educators throughout the division through cloud-based technology.

With change came obstacles, but overcoming those obstacles led to school-wide successes in reducing ODR. All participants shared multiple accounts of successes that they attributed directly to implementing aspects of PBIS frameworks. Again the researcher would note to the reader that the phrasing of the interview question as “what was your greatest success in reducing ODR” limited the scope of the coding. However, in reporting each participant’s greatest success resulting from reduced ODR, high school staff members can see the benefits of reducing ODR. While all 12 transcripts contained references to a singular success that respondents believed led to the decrease of ODR, four transcripts were coded for two successes.

Other than Reducing Office Discipline Referrals, Respondents Noted Successes:

1. Six interviews had respondents that reported enhanced relationships between students, teachers, and administrators (within the school).
2. Seven interviews had participants that described how student successes enhanced school pride and school promotion.
3. Three interviews had respondents that discussed the improved relationships with community partners and parents.

Enhanced relationships between students, teachers, and administrators (within the school). While shifting school climate continued to challenge some respondents, the positive climate changes that had occurred in their schools or divisions were a source of pride for eight respondents. The successes these respondents reported ranged from: creating a safe and positive school to discussions of stronger staff and student relationships resulting in more favorable school connectedness for students.

Creating a culture of “We” was another direct reference in the shift of school cultures that enhanced relationships between staff and students. One participant expressed how as positive relationships between students and staff grew, referrals were reduced, and he was jubilant that he was no longer “just a disciplinarian, but an instructional leader once again.” Another respondent cited the increased level of school spirit because relationships were built between the staff and

students. One interviewee summed up the success from building relationships when she said, “I feel like our students genuinely care about this place. You see it with...it’s the small things, but it’s the small things that lead to the larger successes--even if it’s even picking up trash or opening the door or helping a teacher who is struggling to move a cart--grabbing the cart. There isn’t a child on this campus that if you ask them to do something for you to help, that they would say no.” Other interviewees commented on the enhanced relationships between staff and students when staff started recognizing positive behaviors in simple acts. These actions may be a post card home about a student’s achievement, a positive call to a parent, or a recognition of improvement directly stated to the student by the teacher and administration.

Enhanced school pride and school promotion. As referral rates reduced, other school personnel related successful stories about PBIS strategies leading to increased pride and school promotion. Six participants’ stories related to school pride being increased. Hearing the passion in the voices of respondents as they related how PBIS discipline strategies increased academic success was very inspiring. Each person interviewed had a different frame for success when speaking about school or division pride growing from reducing ODR. Both division participants spoke of how reducing ODR created a successful element in promoting division and school pride. In fact, one participant explained that reducing the number of criminal situations in the courthouse was his greatest account of success. Another division member reported her division pride success was the schools working together to solve behavior problems.

Still another interviewee specified that her success story involved her staff members’ pride in reducing suspension rates. However, as much as the reduced ODR were a source of school pride, six interviewees responded how the strategies of good behavior recognition increased the support for PBIS by both the school staff and the school community. Of the six interviewees, two participants explained how technology was used by staff and students to promote school pride resulting from the positive climate when ODR was reduced. One participant cited her school’s negative behavior reductions led to a unity in the school that was publicized using an Instagram account. She noted that all school events were promoted on social media like their in-school contest on who could bring the most canned food for charity. Reaching out to students through social media postings allowed even more positive interactions and promoted more positive behaviors. Another interviewee’s students and staff created lip-synched videos about positive behaviors and then posted these messages on their school’s

website. This respondent indicated this social media postings demonstrated the positive behaviors within the school.

Moreover one division leader interviewed related how implementing personal behavior plans for 13 students in danger of failing resulted in all 13 of those students graduating. She found that because they were disaggregating all data, discipline and academic, they were able to identify these struggling students early and provide personalized support. She further specified that while implementing a positive behavior plan for each of these students was daunting initially, the entire school staff supported the students and went to extreme lengths to demonstrate that support. The efforts included the high school principal who:

[...] went up the side of a mountain in a jeep to get him out of bed, to get him to school. When that young man graduated, his father called in tears, just crying, saying, ‘Thank you for doing what I couldn't do. I couldn't reach him, but you all did get him through. He's employed and has a job and he made the changes he needed to make in his life to be successful.’ Once [he had that personalized support], I think [his lack of motivation] changed for him.

The graduation success from implementing those positive behavior plans engendered a school pride and unity that rallied resistant staff to become more involved with PBIS implementation.

Improved relationships with community partners and parents. As the programs matured, the participants interviewed were focusing on intervention strategies and were finding success as they utilized the support from community partners and parents. One PBIS leader spoke specifically of working directly with the juvenile justice judge in the division who was a PBIS framework advocate. The interviewee reported that the judge equated the reduced number of court room appearances to the success PBIS framework programs at the schools. “He supports the division, he comes to PBIS meetings, [and] he does awards [to the schools...]. When you have a juvenile domestic court judge that has taken an interest in it and taken his time to come and be supportive, that's where we've seen a lot of success. People understand that this is something that pays dividends, even all the way through the court systems.” Another person interviewed related that “[PBIS] has been a collaborative effort engaging all levels of stakeholder support. One division specifically referenced his greatest success occurred when he invited parents to become partners in the efforts to reduce negative behaviors. “I think parental support

[has been increasing]. We're always looking for that. We have a high population of economically disadvantaged kids and with a [high] special [education] population. [Additionally we have] a lot of grandmothers raising kids. [...] we found [success in] just trying to have that relationship [with all families].” Indeed PBIS implementation resulted in fewer ODR, but the success at school created relationships deep within the communities from the court system to the dynamic family structures that existed within each community.

This Researcher’s Perspective on PBIS Implementation and Support

As a former assistant principal of a middle school and advocate for PBIS frameworks, this researcher was able to examine the data and make the following assertions.

This research supported the findings of the Training and Teaching Assistance Center (TTAC) of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports from the Virginia Department of Education. TTAC members documented the procedures of implementing PBIS frameworks in the *PBIS in Virginia: Benchmarks of Quality Resources*. However, the literature found school personnel were struggling to implement the entire process of PBIS frameworks with fidelity. Staff was challenged by time and dedicated training to implement the *PBIS in Virginia: Benchmarks of Quality Resources*. Schools in this study were challenged to find time amid a demanding schedule of state mandates, state testing, and graduation expectations. One school member interviewed stated her division analyzed their PBIS programs with the *PBIS in Virginia: Benchmarks of Quality Resources*. Using this validation instrument to measure the PBIS program’s effectiveness will assess the strengths and weaknesses of a program and guide the next steps of further implementation.

Data from the study also indicated an obstacle of staff inconsistency in applying the rules. While one school member reported her staff addressed this inconsistency by providing behavior matrices, others were more challenged to find the exact solution for consistency in the creation and application of behavior expectations.

To address the inconsistency problem stated above, colleges and universities should be offering more pre-service training for classroom behavior management aligned with the PBIS frameworks. Teachers must be prepared to create classroom management plans where they understand and apply discipline data, and be aligned with the PBIS framework procedures before they enter educational settings. Future research could focus on exploring why more pre-service

training is not offered as part of teacher preparation programs and how pre-service training could be implemented in existing teacher preparation programs. Data from this study clearly indicated an absence of continuous training in behavior management. Determining how colleges and universities can provide pre-service training in PBIS frameworks may provide beginning teachers specific plans in preventing negative behaviors in their classrooms.

Data from this study also indicated that establishing a positive climate at the school and forging relationships between students and staff members helped curb discipline and reduce the number of behavior problems. Future research should focus on creating methods that would establish and teach the entire learning community how to create the positive climates aligned with positive relationships in and outside of school.

Lastly, these data points support that a paradigm shift in staff attitudes is important to the successful implementation of PBIS frameworks. Discipline problems in schools can hinder academic improvement. From students being removed from academic environments, to staff instruction time spent managing behaviors, teaching positive behaviors becomes another way for staff to increase academic achievement. Schools must combine academic instruction to include positive behaviors so that students are clear about what behaviors are expected. Without those expectations clearly established, PBIS implementation will struggle. While the views of the researcher are rooted in these data, practitioners beginning PBIS implementation should consider the following:

Implications for Practice

- 1) Guidelines exist for implementing PBIS frameworks in the Commonwealth of Virginia.
- 2) While PBIS in the Commonwealth of Virginia does have supported practices and procedures for implementation entitled *PBIS of Virginia: Benchmarks of Quality Resources* that might assist schools in reducing ODR, each PBIS application should be uniquely school specific.
- 3) Implementing PBIS school-specific plans could have a profound effect on reducing ODR in high schools.

- 4) While effective PBIS programs show reductions in ODR, a school's singular focus on reducing ODR might be counter-productive in that teachers may feel dissuaded from referring students for administrative discipline.
- 5) Effective and consistent PBIS programming for behavior expectations and consequences may lead to improved student/teacher/administrator relationships.
- 6) Effective PBIS programming could enhance students' pride in their school and foster stronger school and community partnerships.

Recommendations for Further Study

Further research is necessary to add to the findings of this work. This research was conducted in nine Virginia high schools utilizing PBIS frameworks that had reductions in ODR. Recommendations for future research are presented for consideration.

- Further research could utilize *PBIS of Virginia: Benchmarks of Quality Resources* evaluation instrument to measure if all items present in PBIS implementations. By doing so, this instrument could become a validated instrument for schools to measure their program implementation.
- A study be conducted analyzing the fidelity of the PBIS process in high schools in Virginia implementing PBIS frameworks. This study would help the TTAC for PBIS implementation determine better training procedures.
- A study of the best practices for finding time and funding for PBIS implementation. This study could provide schools with avenues for adequate funding for PBIS program implementation.
- Research all middle schools using PBIS frameworks in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Compare how the applications of PBIS differ, depending on the age group of the students.
- Research all elementary schools using PBIS frameworks in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Compare how the applications of PBIS differ, depending on the age group of the students.
- Research all high schools, implementing PBIS frameworks that have middle and elementary feeder schools using PBIS frameworks. Study the ODR reductions to

measure if earlier PBIS training leads to more success in PBIS programs in high schools.

- A national study of PBIS implementation in high schools. By reaching beyond the borders of Virginia, richer resources for success may be found.
- A study of all high schools using PBIS implementations to determine if student diversity affects ODR reduction.

Summary

In summary, examining the common principles and practices employed by nine high schools that were able to reduce office discipline referral rates was important because reductions in discipline may help students achieve success both academically and socially. The researcher contends that if students are behaving they will remain in classrooms for more instruction and increase their academic performance. As more high schools seek to implement PBIS frameworks and reduce ODR, the principles and practices here provide those schools a pathway for implementation. Examining the principles and practices of schools that are reducing referral rates will clarify processes high schools can duplicate.

The Commonwealth of Virginia's Department of Education created a method of employing PBIS frameworks to assist Virginia schools *PBIS of Virginia: Benchmarks of Quality Resources*. Out of this framework, personalized behavior plans, positive behavior instruction, and the need to share practices grew. In conducting this study, the researcher sought to publish the specific principles and practices nine high schools used while reducing the ODR in their schools. Furthermore, the researcher gathered obstacles to avoid and successes to replicate. The researcher's intention was to provide a summation rich with research of those school or division practices that may help others build better PBIS programs.

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Appendix A

Initial Contact to Superintendent Requesting Permission to Conduct the Study

Hello, my name is Caroline Wray and I am doctoral candidate in the Educational Leadership and Policy Studies program at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University working under the direction of Dr. James Sellers and Dr. John Gratto.

The topic of my dissertation study focuses on the principles and practices _____ high school used to reduce their office discipline referral rates over the years 2011-2013. _____ High School was selected because from 2011-2014 according to the Safe Schools Information Resource (SSIR) of Virginia your high school reduced office discipline referral rates the most over those three years. Additionally, your high school participates in the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports Framework Initiative of Virginia. Information collected in this study may be useful to other high schools with regard to implementing principles and practices which will reduce the office discipline referral rates.

I am requesting permission to conduct part of this study within _____ County at _____ High School. The study will be descriptive in nature and involve interviews of at least one school board office member and one school-based member you feel were successful to the reduction of office discipline referral rates in each high school.

Would you be willing to grant permission for me to conduct part of this research in _____ County at _____ High School?

*If superintendent agrees to the study, proceed with the following.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I will email a brief explanation of the study today. I would like to include the school name, division name, your name and email and the names of the members with whom I interview so schools could contact them to learn more about the principles and practices the high school used to reduce office discipline referral rates. You may consent or decline to share any information. On the email, I will ask whether you wish to allow this information to be published. If not, codes will be used in the published work and no identifying information published in the findings.

Should you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me via the telephone number or email address listed in the email you will receive. Again, thank you for this opportunity.

*If the superintendent declines to provide permission to conduct the study, proceed with the following.

Thank you for speaking with me today and giving consideration to my study. I appreciate your time.

Very truly yours,
Caroline J. Wray
Supervisor of Instruction
Doctoral Candidate
Virginia Tech
pbisdissertation@gmail.com

Appendix B

Dissertation Proposal Information

Caroline J. Wray

130 Woodlake Drive, Moneta, VA 24121

Phone (540)328-0555 Email: pbisdissertation@gmail.com

Dissertation Study Title: The Principles and Practices of Virginia High Schools which Implemented Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports Framework to Reduce Office Discipline Referrals

Overview of the Study: The purpose of this study is to examine and explain common principles and practices of nine high schools in Virginia that have reduced office discipline referrals the most using positive behavioral and intervention supports framework. The methodology used in the study is qualitative. Participants are superintendent dictated individuals who, by his/her designation, were instrumental in the successful reduction of office discipline referrals (ODR) from the top nine high schools in seven divisions located in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Information collected in this study may be useful to (a) influence how high schools align their principles and practices when implementing PBIS, (b) influence school leaders of practices that result in reducing office discipline referral rates, (c) influence current practices those high schools hoping to reduce ODR, (d) influence what staff does to support and implement the PBIS principles and practices in their schools, and (e) develop an understanding of personal and situational variables that may influence the implementation of PBIS frameworks successfully for all personnel involved in PBIS implementation in high schools.

Additional Information: Participation by staff will be completely voluntary and confidential. No identifying information for any participant, school, or division will be mentioned within the report of the study without consent by

the superintendent and the participant(s). Participants will be fully apprised of the study and the risks and benefits of participation before proceeding. Upon completion of the study, any identifying information or data collected for the study will only be shared with consent from both the superintendent and the participant. If contact information is declined, the subjects will be coded and the data with the key to the codes will be destroyed after the successful defense of the dissertation.

Appendix C**Email to Superintendents who Agree to Allow the Researcher Access to the Division**

Date

John Doe, Superintendent
Anywhere County Public Schools
1234 Maple Street
Anytown, VA 24000

Dear Superintendent Doe,

Thank you for allowing me to conduct part of my dissertation research in ____ County. As discussed, would you be willing to list those staff members who you feel were key to the successful reduction of office discipline referral rates in _____ high school. Again, please accept my sincere appreciation for your willingness to support this work through Virginia Tech.

Would you be willing for me to list the School Division, Your Name and Email, the High School's Name and would you allow the participants to list their contact information so that interested readers may contact the for further follow-up? _____yes _____no.

If you decline, no identifying information will be reported in the findings. I will share with your participants you have declined and will not use any identifying information.

Most sincerely,

Caroline J. Wray
Doctoral Candidate
Virginia Tech
pbisdissertation@gmail.com (540) 328-0555

Appendix D**Form for Superintendents Listing Possible Study Participants**

Please complete the following form. Once completed, you may return it via email. Selection criteria suggestions for potential participants but may be any staff member the superintendent feels was instrumental in the successful reduction of discipline referral rates.

| Name of possible participant | Current position | School and phone number of school | Email address |
|------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------|
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Appendix E

Phone Call Script for Superintendent Designated Individuals Participation in Qualitative Study

Hello, my name is Caroline Wray and I am doctoral candidate in the Educational Leadership and Policy Studies program at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University working under the direction of Dr. James Sellers and Dr. John Gratto. The topic of my dissertation study focuses on obtaining key principles and practices of nine high schools using PBIS frameworks that resulted in the reduction of office discipline referral rates.

I have contacted Dr. ____ (superintendent) who has given me permission to conduct this research with staff members who are currently employed with _____ County. I have also contacted your human resources contact, ____ who is aware of this research.

Your name has been submitted to me by _____, (superintendent) because you have been identified as instrumental in the reduction of office discipline referral rates in _____ High School. Your participation in this study would involve a thirty minute interview via traditional or using technology (Google+On Air, Facetime, SKYPE or other) time and place convenient to you and your participation is completely voluntary. Schools and participants will not be identified in the report of the study without consent from the superintendent and consent from you. I would like to publish information so schools can use the findings to contact you to learn more how your team reduced office discipline referral rates. However, if you wish to participate and do not wish to share your contact information, all identifying information provided will be held in strict confidence.

Your participation will be greatly appreciated. The identity of all individuals contacted as possible tentative participants will remain absolutely confidential. At this time, would you be willing to be a participant in this study? (If individual declines, proceed with the following.) Thank you so much for your time and consideration of this study.

(If individual agrees, proceed with the following.) I truly appreciate your willingness to be listed as a participant in this study. I will email you a brief explanation of the study today and set the date and time of the interview. Which technology do you feel comfortable with and which technology would you like to use to complete the interviews? Should you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me via the telephone

number or email address listed in the email. I look forward to speaking with you soon. Thank you. I very much appreciate your willingness to be listed as a tentative participant in this study.

Appendix F**Thank You and Confirmation Email to Study Participants**

Date

Dear

Thank you so much for agreeing to participate in this study. This email is to confirm our interview on _____ at _____ (a.m. or p.m.) by phone/email/Facetime/Google+ On Air/Other technology_____. I look forward to meeting with you at that time. Attached to this email is a brief explanation of the study, the three questions I plan to ask, your own website where you can add artifacts you wish to share that contributed to the principles and practices your school implemented to reduce office discipline referral rates. You may reply to me and state: I consent or decline to publish my name and contact information. If you have any questions or would like to speak with me prior to our interview, please feel free to contact me at the phone number or email address listed below.

Very truly yours,

Caroline J. Wray
Supervisor of Instruction
Graduate Candidate
Virginia Tech
pbisdissertation@gmail.com
(540) 328-0555

Appendix G

Interview Protocol Script for Individuals Listed by the Superintendent as Key to the Successful Reduction of Office Discipline Referrals in _____ High School

Thank you for agreeing to be a participant in this study. The title of my study is The Principles and Practices of Virginia High Schools which Implemented Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports Framework to Reduce Office Discipline Referrals. I would like to explain the purpose of this study before we begin.

The purpose of my work is to study what principles and practices are employed in high schools that have reduced their office discipline rates the most that use PBIS frameworks. I will gather information from the top nine schools that have reduced office discipline referral rates starting with the first participant designated by your school superintendent and working through his/her list until complete.

Once our interview is completed, it will be transcribed verbatim as soon as possible. A copy of the transcription will be emailed to you for your review. When you review the transcript, you are free to make any changes in the transcription you believe are necessary. No one will have access to our interview data, your identifying information, or the transcripts from your interview except my advisors and me. All data documents from our interview will be stored in my home in a locked file. All digital recordings of our interview will be stored on a DVD in my home and destroyed after the successful completion of the dissertation defense.

You will not be compensated for your participation in the study and I make no promise or guarantee of benefits in order to encourage you to participate. The risk to you as a participant in the study is minimal. There could be some risk that you could be identified through the content of your response, but this risk to you is minimal. There are no mental, social, financial, physical, or legal risks to you that I am able to identify. The benefit of your participation in this study is that your participation, combined with that of the other participants, will help me gain a deeper understanding of how schools using PBIS are successfully reducing office discipline referral rates through the principles and practices discovered.

At any time, you are free to withdraw from this study. You are free not to answer any questions.

Do you have any questions? ____Yes ____No

Are you willing to become a participant in this study? ____Yes ____No

If your superintendent consents, will you share your contact information in the published study in order that other schools may contact you and gain more insight if they have questions?

Yes No

If you are willing to participate, but you answer no to the above question of releasing your contact information, then no mention of you, your school, or your school division will be used in the report of the study. Any of your identifying information, such as your name, gender, and school affiliation will be through a previously established code. All codes for the research are only available to my advisors and me. When not being used, the codes will be kept in a locked file in my home.

I greatly appreciate your willingness to participate in this study.

May I digitally record our interview? Yes No

Do you have any questions before we begin? Yes No

Appendix H

Three Interview Questions Sent to the Participants Prior to the Interview

- 1) What are the guiding principles that your high school used to reduce office discipline referrals?
- 2) What are the practices that your high school employed to reduce office discipline referrals?
 - a) What was your greatest obstacle to reducing ODR?
 - b) What do you think has been the greatest success resulting from reducing your ODR?
- 3) Are there any artifacts that your high school will share that supported your successful decrease in office discipline referral rates?

Appendix I

Participant Information Organized Alphabetically by District

12 Interviews: three group interviews of two respondents and nine individual interviews.

| School Division | Participant Name and Email Information | Location and Position | Interview Number | Individual or Group Interview |
|------------------------------------|---|---|------------------|-------------------------------|
| Bedford County Public Schools | Mrs. JeanMarie Johnston jmjohnston@bedford.k12.va.us | Jefferson Forest High School Assistant Principal and PBIS Administrator | 1 | Group |
| | Mrs. Nancy Brasure nbrasure@bedford.k12.va.us | Jefferson Forest High School Teacher and PBIS School Coach | | |
| Bedford County Public Schools | Mrs. Kelly Miller kmiller@bedford.k12.va.us | Liberty High School Assistant Principal and PBIS Administrator | 2 | Individual |
| Bedford County Public Schools | Ms. Amy Hamm ahamm@bedford.k12.va.us | Liberty High School Teacher and PBIS School Coach | 3 | Individual |
| Bedford County Public Schools | Dr. Tony Francis tfrancis@bedford.k12.va.us | Bedford County Public Schools Division Personnel: Director of Elementary and Secondary Services and PBIS Division Coach | 4 | Individual |
| Bedford County Public Schools | Mrs. Rebecca Pierce rpierce@bedford.k12.va.us | Staunton River High School Assistant Principal and PBIS Administrator | 5 | Group |
| | Mrs. Jennifer Boyd jboyd@bedford.k12.va.us | Staunton River High School Teacher and PBIS School Coach | | |
| Chesterfield County Public Schools | Mrs. Jeanean Phelps Jeanean_Phelps@ccpsnet.net | Chesterfield County Public Schools Division Personnel: PBIS Division Coordinator | 6 | Individual |
| Pulaski County Public School | Mr. Michael Grim MGRIM@pcva.us | Pulaski County High School Principal | 7 | Individual |
| Rockingham County Public Schools | Ms. Rebecca Hill-Shifflett rhillshifflett@rockingham.k12.va.us | Rockingham County Public Schools Division Personnel: Supervisor of Special Education and PBIS Division Coach | 8 | Group |
| | Mr. Phil Judd pjudd@rockingham.k12.va.us | Turner Ashby High School Principal | | |
| Shenandoah County Public Schools | Ms. Missy Hensley mdhensley@shenandoah.k12.va.us | Central High School Principal | 9 | Individual |
| Tazewell County Public Schools | Ms. Kim Ringstaff kringstaff@tazewell.k12.va.us | Richlands High School Principal | 10 | Individual |
| Anonymous School Division | Respondent A | Division Employee and PBIS Division Coach | 11 | Individual |
| Anonymous School Division | Respondent B | High School Assistant Principal | 12 | Individual |