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School-wide Discipline Plan: Teachers Perceptions as to how it Effects School Climate

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SCHOOL-WIDE DISCIPLINE PLAN:
TEACHERS PERCEPTIONS
AS TO HOW IT EFFECTS SCHOOL CLIMATE

A Field Project

Presented to the

Department of Educational Administration

and the

Faculty of the Graduate College

University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Educational Administration Specialist

University of Nebraska at Omaha

by

Karen Hayes Butler

November, 1989

UMI Number: EP74164

UMI®

Dissertation Publishing

UMI EP74164

ProQuest®

SCHOOL-WIDE DISCIPLINE PLAN

TEACHERS PERCEPTIONS AS TO HOW IT EFFECTS SCHOOL CLIMATE

Acceptance for the faculty of the Graduate College, University of Nebraska, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Education Administration Specialist Degree, University of Nebraska at Omaha.

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November 27, 1998

Date

Acknowledgements

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The organizational climate of elementary schools has been
extensively studied since the early 1960s. Much publicity has recently
been given to methods of student management in the public schools.

The goals of this study were to explore teachers' perceptions of
school climate and school discipline in the Omaha Public Schools and to
describe relationships between climate, discipline, and the
implementation of unified citizenship-discipline programs.

A school climate instrument was written, based on teachers'
perceptions of teacher behavior, principal behavior, student behavior
and parent behavior was used in pursuit of these goals. Questions were
written concerning discipline in the elementary school, and related to
unified citizenship-discipline programs being implemented in some Omaha
Public Schools. An attempt to combine climate and discipline questions
into one instrument was also made.

Over the past ten years, Americans who have responded to opinion
polls have named poor discipline as the number one problem plaguing
American Schools. According to a recent survey by Gallup (1989),
discipline was the number two problem with which Americans feel the
schools should be more responsive. Between 1969 and 1989, Gallup Polls
(Annual Gallup Poll Of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public
Schools. . .) reported that Americans viewed discipline as the most

important problem in the public schools. Discipline has continued to rank high in recent Gallup Polls. The public believes good discipline is a "law and order" stance educators should take to reduce or eliminate the physical violence, vandalism, and disrespect shown by students that many believe is pervasive in the schools. (McRel, 1983)

Schools do have discipline problems. However, the discipline problems school officials most often handle are actually much less serious than those that concern the public. Such misconduct as truancy, heckling, failure to complete assignments, and unwillingness to participate may seem minor, but they require valuable instructional time and interfere with learning.

How can discipline problems be solved? Research shows that the often-advocated crackdowns on misbehavior, "get-tough" attitudes, and harsh punishment do little to solve the problems. A positive learning environment can go much farther towards reducing behavior problems and helping students learn. Good discipline is a process to be taught; it is not synonymous with punishment. One of education's goals is to teach students self-discipline and responsibility. (Effective Schools, 1983)

In schools with effective discipline, students learn that discipline is the responsibility of everyone in the school. The effective schools research reveals that certain schools, teachers and classroom characteristics contribute to effective discipline.

It is important that individual school educators, central office officials and Local Education Agency board members establish unity on

some type of discipline management system. While the definition of a safe and orderly environment depends to some extent on one's physiologic orientation, few would contest its importance to achieving the goals of education. However, it seems reasonable to examine the relationship between a discipline code and a safe and orderly environment. Properly formulated and disseminated, a discipline code communicates clearly to students, teachers, and parents those behaviors that are a necessary prerequisite to a school fulfilling its mission.

A positive school climate is both a means and an end. A good climate makes it possible to work productively toward important goals, such as academic learning.

Many school-wide discipline programs have developed through the cooperative work of staff, students, parents, the central school office and the community, within the Omaha Public School System. Twenty out of fifty six elementary buildings possess a school-wide discipline plan.

The plans are similar in that they are developed in a cooperative effort between central office, community, staff, and students or any combination of the above. The plans are developed with the idea of being fair, firm, positive and a consistent approach to student discipline. Once the plans are developed within a building, thorough written and oral communication is disseminated to all staff, students and parents. The district, central office, board of education members, staff, and parents are considering expanding the existing school-wide discipline plans into the remaining thirty elementary schools. As of

this research no data has been compiled as to teacher perceptions of the school-wide discipline plans and their effects on school climate.

Statement of the Problem:

Is there a discernable difference in the level of positive perceptions of school climate of teachers who teach in schools that have a unified school-wide discipline plan compared to teachers who teach in schools that have no unified plan?

Significance of the Problem:

According to Bob Trumbauer, Student Services Assistant, Student Personnel, Omaha Public Schools, "within the Omaha Public Elementary Schools, twenty (20) schools out of fifty-six (56) have been identified as schools possessing a school-wide discipline plan".

There is a question as to whether these plans make a difference to the overall school learning environment or school climate. By surveying teachers within non-unified and unified buildings, this research will attempt to gather results of teachers feelings as to how they perceive their discipline plan and its effects on school climate.

Assumptions:

It is assumed that schools that possess a school-wide discipline plan had a unified approach in using input from staff, parents, central office staff, students or any combination of the above when drafting and composing their discipline plan.

It is assumed that schools which possess a school-wide discipline plan have a greater level cooperation, collegiality and involvement with the input of the plan.

It is assumed that there is a greater level of consistency among administration, and staff of schools where school-wide discipline plans have been established.

It is assumed that schools that possess a school-wide plan establish and identify to students clear, concise and consistent expectations and positive and fair school rules.

Limitations

This study was limited to forty (40) out of fifty-six (56) total elementary schools. Out of the forty (40) schools selected twenty (20) schools with a school-wide discipline plan were carefully matched with twenty (20) schools that do not possess a formalized school-wide discipline plan. Schools were matched according to location, membership, and demographics.

This study is limited by randomly selecting one hundred sixty (160) teachers. Eighty (80) teachers were selected from schools possessing a formalized plan and eighty (80) teachers were selected from schools without a formalized plan. Twenty-five percent (25%) of teachers from each school were surveyed. This percentage was chosen so as to ensure numbers for secured validity of findings.

This study is limited to the Omaha Public School District.

Definition of Terms

School-Wide Discipline. A total, unified school approach to establishing good discipline, as opposed to disjointed attempts to deal with student misbehavior. Components to the school-wide plan are staff, student, and parent, and central office input, or any combination of the above, in designing the plan.

Unified School. A school that has been identified as possessing a school-wide discipline plan.

Non-Unified School. A school that has not been identified as a school possessing a school-wide discipline plan.

School Climate. A term used to describe how people feel about their school. It is a combination of beliefs, values, and attitudes shared by students, teachers, administrators, parents, and support staff, as well as others who play an important role in the life of the school. (Levine, 1988)

Discipline. Orderly or prescribed conduct or pattern of behavior. A rule or system of rules governing conduct (Webster, 1984).

Citizenship Plan. Synonymous with school-wide discipline plan or unified school. This term is often used to describe a school-wide discipline plan within the Omaha Public School System.

Purpose of the Study

The purposes of this study are to explore OPS teachers' perceptions of a) elementary school climate, b) student discipline (the management of students, and c) the Unified Discipline Programs.

Specific research questions to be addressed are:

1) What differences are there among teachers' perceptions of the climate in their different schools? 2) What differences are there among teachers' perceptions of students discipline (the management of students) in their different schools? 3) How does the implementation of a Unified Discipline Program relate to teachers' perceptions of school climate?

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Related Research and Literature

Administrators, teachers and parents are becoming more concerned with discipline in the public schools. School personnel are searching for the most appropriate methods, which support their school curriculum, while maintaining an effective discipline management system. Principals are coming to realize that they will have to take more responsibility for the creation of a safe school environment which is conducive to learning. Teachers are attempting to teach and tailor their disciplinary procedures accordingly. Parents want to be included in any problem-solving effort and should be involved in establishing policy and philosophy for a clearer understanding. Ultimately, it is the classroom teacher who must ensure student success through appropriate classroom management. The validity of any school-wide discipline plan rests, to some degree, upon teacher perceptions of that plan.

Evidence continues to mount which establishes a relationship between student behavior and higher student achievement. Although discipline remains one of the primary problems of school administrators, it is inextricably tied to successful classroom management. Higher student achievement has been shown by students who express positive feelings about learning when their behavior is limited (Brookover, 1978; Evertson and Emmer, 1982; Fisher, Berliner, Filby, Marliave, Eaken, and Dishaw, 1980; Purkey and Novak, 1984). Studies by Stallings (1980),

Brophy (1979), Bloom (1980), and Evertson (1980) indicate a strong relationship between student achievement and such variables as time spent on management problems, student on-task behavior, and teacher involvement in direct instruction. Dobson (1979) believes a child's first six (6) teachers will largely determine the nature of a child's attitude toward authority in junior and senior high school.

Emmer and Evertson (1980) found that effective classroom managers laid out expectations on the first day of class and that the best teachers were observed explicitly teaching their rules early in the year. Hair and others (1980) stress the importance of letting students know the teachers' expectations and routines and the students responsibilities. Several studies provide empirical evidence of the effectiveness of making the consequences of behavior clear and consistency in the use of punishments (Emmer and Evertson, 1980; Brophy, 1979; Evertson, 1980; Hair, 1980). Moore and Cooper (1984) found that more experienced and educated teachers preferred confronting students about misbehavior, while less educated teachers rated physical or verbal punishments more favorably. They also found the grade or age of students to be positively associated with teacher perceptions of more verbal impertinence, failure to do homework, and truancy. McCroskey and Richmond (1983) undertook a study to determine the degree to which teachers and students have shared perceptions of the use of power in the classroom. The results indicated that both teachers and students saw the overwhelming proportion of power use to stem from reward, referent

and expert base. In other words, students behavior could be changed based on positive reinforces.

Knoff (1984) argues that there is no comprehensive model for the principal that conceptualizes discipline as a psychoeducational problem and provides a framework for teachers, administrators, and other school staff such as psychologists, social workers, and mental health workers. According to Wolfgang and Glickman (1980), literature attempting to translate psychological theory into practical human relation models can be grouped into three schools of thought: 1) Relationship-Listening, 2) Confronting-Contracting, and 3) Rules, Reward, and Punishment. Wolfgang and Brudenell (1983) suggest a series of questions be answered before settling on one of the six models within the three schools-of-thought categories. These six models focus on: 1) training the child for the later adult society, 2) approaches helpful for later childhood, 3) teaching style, 4) principal versus teacher selection, 5) keying on the child's needs, development and/or severity of behavior, and 6) designing a model based on pieces from several models.

While the definition of a safe and orderly environment depends to some extent on one's philosophic orientation, few would contest its importance to achieving the goals of education. However, it seems reasonable to examine the relationship between a discipline code and a safe and orderly environment.

Properly formulated and disseminated, a discipline code communicates clearly to students, teachers, and parents those behaviors that are a necessary prerequisite to a school fulfilling its mission.

A positive school climate is both a means and an end. A good climate makes it possible to work productively toward important goals, such as academic learning, social development, and curriculum improvement (Martens 1986).

Robert S. Fox (1973) defines humane school climate as a school climate that possess goals, those being: "An environment throughout the school which is wholesome stimulating, and a productive learning environment conducive to academic achievement and personal growth of youth at different levels of development." He further states that "a positive school climate provides a pleasant and satisfying school situation within which young people can live and work. These primary goals focus on the young people for whom schools exist."

Fox, Boies, Brainards, Fletcher, Huge, Martin, Maynard, Monosmith, Oliver, Schmuck, Shaheen, and Stegeman, (1973) suggest that eight (8) factors which comprise the schools climate and determine its quality. Those eight climate factors are as follows:

> Respect: Students should see themselves as persons of
> worth, believing that they have ideas, and that those ideas
> are listened to and make a difference. Teachers and
> administrators should feel the same way. School should be a
> place where there are self-respecting individuals. Respect
> is also due to others. In a positive climate there are no
> put-downs.

Trust: Trust is reflected in one's confidence that others can be counted on to behave in a way that is honest. They will do what they say they will do. There is also an element of believing others will not let you down.

High Morale: People with high morale feel good about what is happening.

Opportunities for Input: Not all persons can be involved in making the important decisions. Not always can each person be as influential as he might like to be on the many aspects of the school's programs and processes that affect him. But every person cherishes the opportunity to contribute his or her ideas, and know they have been considered. A feeling of a lack of voice is counterproductive to self-esteem and deprives the school of that person's resources.

Continuous Academic and Social Growth: Each student needs to develop additional academic, social, and physical skills, knowledge, and attitudes. (Many educators have described the growth process as achieving "developmental tasks." Educators, too, desire to improve their skills, knowledge, and attitudes in regard to their particular assignments within the school district and as cooperative members of a team.)

Cohesiveness: This quality is measured by the person's feeling toward the school members who should feel a part of the school. They want to stay with it and have a chance to exert their influence on it in collaboration with others.

School Renewal: The school as an institution should develop improvement projects. It should be self-renewing in that it is growing, developing, and changing rather than following routines, repeating previously accepted procedures, and striving for conformity. If there is renewal, difference is seen as interesting, to be cherished. Diversity and pluralism are valued. New conditions are faced with poise. Adjustments are worked out as needed. The "new" is not seen as threatening, but as something to be examined, weighed, and its value or relevance determined. The school should be able to organize improvement projects rapidly and efficiently, with an absence of stress and conflict.

Caring: Every individual in the school should feel that some other person or persons are concerned about him as a human being. Each knows it will make a difference to

someone else if he is happy or sad, healthy or ill.
(Teachers should feel that the principal cares about them
even when they make mistakes or disagree. And the principal
should know that the teachers -- at least most of them --
understand the pressures under which he or she is working
and will help if they can.)

Baker (1983) describes a good climate for learning as a climate

with good discipline. Fundamental improving the quality of the schools

is the maintenance of a degree of civil behavior sufficient to allow

educational improvements to have a chance to succeed.

Baker continues with stating that although many schools have taken

steps to improve their disciplinary climate, many schools have failed to

establish even minimal procedures for dealing with discipline problems.

Howard, (1984), author of the "School Climate Improvement-Rationale

and Process" a nationally recognized authority on school climate and

discipline, describes the relationship in the following way:

Schools with positive climates are characterized by
people-centered belief and value systems, procedures, rules,
regulations, and policies. People care, respect, and trust
one another, and the school, as an institution, cares,
respects, and trusts people. In such a school, people feel a
high sense of pride and ownership which comes from each
individual having a role in making the school a better place
(p. 8-9).

Schools with positive climates are constantly changing as people

reshape them in accordance with human needs. In such schools, school

improvement is everybody's business.

As the climate of the school becomes more positive, some highly

undesirable symptoms of poor climate tend to disappear. Discipline

problems, vandalism, defacing property, and violence subside.

Attendance and achievement improve. The number of dropouts declines. People smile more, are more respectful and helpful to others, and assume more responsibility for well being of the school. (Nicholson, Stephen, Elder, Lewitt, 1989)

Safe and effective schools are always characterized as positive school climates. Six (6) factors are essential to the establishment and maintenance of positive climates: leadership, discipline, security, attendance, conflict management, and curriculum. Combined in creative ways, these factors provide the necessary framework for secure, peaceful and productive schools. (Nicholson et al 1985)

Ultimately, creating a curriculum that is consistent with a school's values is essential to creating a positive school climate and to fostering academic excellence. Brooks (1984) states that there is mounting evidence that the consensus values of honesty; integrity; respect for the law, others, and self; tolerance; and responsibility can be taught and can have a dramatic effect on decreasing incidence of crime in the schools.

Several strategies are readily available to further capitalize on these feelings of ownership and involvement:

(1) Establishing codes of conduct for entire schools, as well as for individual classrooms. (2) Requiring formal acceptance of the codes by parents and students. (3) Developing disciplinary and crisis intervention committees that include student members. (4) Adopting procedural safeguards for handling incidents. (5) Involving experts on

behavioral management and discipline in staff development activities
designed to insure that teachers can control their classrooms
effectively. (6) Establishing interagency policies and procedures that
respond to disruptive and criminal behavior by students.
(7) Collaborating with youth-serving agencies in developing special
student services, multidisciplinary as assessments, and case-management
strategies. (Nicholson et al p. 494)

It is imperative that we teach children to be good decision makers,
and to be well-disciplined. To determine if a school has adopted a
well-developed model for doing that it is recommended that the following
criteria be a regular part of the school environment:

> Class meetings held on a regular basis, for three purposes:
> To acknowledge class members, to make plans as a group, and
> to deal with problems and formulate classroom rules.
> Respectful behaviors between teachers and students, and
> among the children themselves. A list of class rules which
> has been made jointly. A sharing of classroom jobs with
> students. Time, energy, and training spent on
> acknowledgment, suppport, and helping each other; a strong
> group spirit. Students who show enthusiasm for, and
> involvement in, the classroom work. Problem-solving and
> negotiations activity -- a teacher who asks rather than
> tells, for example. (Network for Public Schools, 1988 Vol.
> 14 p. 4)

School staffs are becoming increasingly aware that their
professional work is done within an organizational and interpersonal
climate. The climate is dependent upon such variables: Communication
patterns. Norms about what's appropriate or how things should be done.
Role relationships and role perceptions. Influence relationships.
Rewards and sanctions (Canter 1983)

There are two basic indicators of a healthy school climate according to Levine, (1988) effective learning and personal satisfaction. In schools with healthy climate, innovations are easily developed and teachers feel good about their relationships. If the climate is not healthy, there may be low innovativeness, job dissatisfaction, alienation, lack of creativity, complacency, conformity, and frustration.

School personnel can affect positively the nature and wholesomeness of the school's climate. If it is inadequate, the fault rests with them, and the failure is a direct reflection upon the administrator as a climate leader (Nelson, 1988).

Although the teacher is not the only factor in classroom discipline the teacher is a primary influence in shaping the attitude and producing positive change in behavior. Dobson (1979) has stressed the key position of primary and elementary teachers in determining the nature of a student's attitude toward authority in later school years.

In an investigation of teacher perception of school-based interventions, Martens (1986) found greater support for use of rewarding rather than punishing consequences. Regular and special education educators completed a sixty-five (65) item questionnaire assessing their perceptions of the related effectiveness, case of use, and frequency of use of a variety of intervention strategies for the treatment of classroom behavior. Interventions that either redirected students toward appropriate behavior or that involved manipulation of rewards

were most frequently noted. Interventions rated as both least effective and least frequently used were strategies in which the student was removed from the classroom. Establishing a viable disciplinary management system at the elementary level is compounding concern.

In 1988, the Student Personnel Department of the Omaha Public Schools conducted a study aimed at identifying qualitative aspects of school-wide discipline plans. The survey was intended to seek information about comparative levels of teacher frustration with discipline. Using a nineteen (19) question survey instrument the Student Personnel Department found a positive perception by teachers as they considered the effectiveness of a unified school-wide discipline plan (Trumbauer, 1989).

CHAPTER THREE

Research Design

Subjects and Setting

Subjects of this study were elementary teachers in the Omaha Public
Schools (OPS). Teachers in the participating schools included certified
preschool through sixth grade teachers, special education teachers,
librarians, and art, music and physical education specialists.

Some OPS schools have been implementing a school-wide discipline
program for years. Other schools began implementing newly developed
school-wide programs in the Fall of 1988. In another group of schools,
faculties were not studying, developing nor implementing such a program
as of the Fall of 1988. It was planned to include schools from each
category in this research: schools studying but which have not yet
implemented a school-wide discipline plan paired with schools possessing
a unified plan.

This study was conducted by surveying teachers in the Omaha Public
School District. Forty (40) elementary buildings were selected to be
involved in this study. Twenty (20) of the forty (40) schools are
identified as possessing a unified school-wide discipline plan. The
other twenty were schools selected as not possessing a school-wide plan,
but were paired with the unified schools. Careful consideration of
membership, location and demographics were used when "pairing" the
schools. The purpose of this study was to determine if there is

significant difference in the level of positive perceptions of school climate of teachers who teach in schools that have a unified school-wide discipline plan as compared to teachers who teach in schools that do not possess a unified plan. One hundred and sixty (160) teachers were systematically, randomly chosen to represent their schools.

Setting

The Omaha Public Schools is considered a large urban district consisting of forty-one thousand (41,000) students; twenty-three thousand eight hundred eighty-four (23,884) of these which are elementary (K-6) students. There are fifty-six (56) elementary schools within the Omaha Public Schools District.

Procedure

A twenty-two (22) item questionnaire to access teachers perception to school climate as it relates to school discipline was developed for the study (Appendix A).

The questionnaire was generated from numerous staff development, effective schools, and school climate assessment tools that have proven to be effective in the past. Using a 4 point scale: (A) Always Agree, (U) Usually Agree, (S) Sometimes Agree, and (N) Never Agree, teachers were randomly selected from two (2) lists. Input from Dr. Irv Young, Department of Research, OPS and Dr. Blaine Ward, UNO assisted in the development of the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was developed by using questions from previously proven effective, diagnostic instruments. The purpose of the

questionnaire is to determine strengths and weaknesses as perceived by respondents.

Prior to contacting selected teachers, correspondence was sent to all building principals communicating that a questionnaire would be sent to randomly selected teachers within their buildings (Appendix B). A letter was then sent to each selected teacher (Appendix C).

Two groups were identified that possessed a unified discipline program and schools that did not possess a unified discipline program (Appendix D). The schools in each group were carefully "paired" according to demographics, location, population, and grade level.

A listing of eighty (80) teachers from the schools that possessed a unified discipline plan and a listing of eighty (80) teachers from the schools that do not possess a unified plan were selected. From each paired school, twenty-five percent (25%) of the teaching staff were randomly selected. The process of random selection was achieved by selecting every fourth teacher's name.

Questionnaires were sent to each group of teachers. The questionnaire was written and data was compiled in the Likert scale technique.

Results were tabulated and data will be shared with school personnel in the staff and student personnel department(s), Omaha Public Schools. The results will be available to others as they consider the possibility of designing a unified school-wide discipline plan for their individual school.

CHAPTER FOUR

Presentation and Analysis of Data

Of the one hundred sixty (160) teachers surveyed, one hundred thirty-three (133) responded and were entered into the study. This represents eighty-three percent (83%) of teachers surveyed. Of the eighty-three percent, forty percent (40%) of the respondents were from non unified disciplined schools and forty-three percent (43%) of the respondents were from unified disciplined schools.

Table I shows a comparison analysis of the unified discipline plan versus the non unified discipline plan based on frequency of percentages to the twenty-two questions asked by survey respondents.

Table I indicates the question asked and the frequency percentages between always agree, usually agree, sometimes agree and never agree. Teachers responses were divided as to whether they are teaching within a non unified discipline plan school or a unified discipline plan school.

The twenty-two item questionnaire was designed to give attention to the behaviors of administrators, teachers, students and parents.

Principals are coming to realize that they will have to take more responsibility for the creation of school-wide safety and environments conducive to learning. Teachers are attempting to deliver content and tailor their disciplinary procedures accordingly. Parents should be included in any problem solving efforts and should have a clear understanding of the school's policy and philosophy. Students should be

TABLE I

Unified Discipline Plan Vs. Non Unified Discipline Plan

Question*	Discipline** Approach	Always	Usually	Sometimes Agree	Never Agree
1	U	3.2	50.00	47.1	--
	N	2.9	47.6	49.2	--
2	U	8.6	35.7	55.7	
	N	7.9	34.9	55.6	1.6
3	U	2.9	10.00	67.1	11.4
	N	4.8	15.9	73.0	6.3
4	U	5.7	55.7	37.1	1.4
	N	9.5	46.0	44.4	--
5	U	1.6	5.7	27.1	62.9
	N	4.3	4.8	41.3	52.4
6	U	1.4	8.6	38.6	51.4
	N	3.2	1.6	31.7	63.5
7	U	27.1	57.1	11.4	1.4
	N	22.2	61.9	12.1	3.2
8	U	38.6	34.3	18.3	8.6
	N	4.8	23.8	52.4	17.5
9	U	25.7	37.9	1.4	37.1
	N	17.5	22.2	1.6	58.7
10	U	--	4.3	32.9	51.4
	N	3.2	9.5	28.6	54.0

* Questions are listed in Appendix A, Survey

** U = Unified Discipline Plan
      School possesses a Unified Discipline Plan
   N = Non Unified Discipline Plan
      School does not possess a Unified Discipline Plan

TABLE I - Continued

Unified Discipline Plan Vs. Non Unified Discipline Plan

Question*	Discipline** Approach	Always	Usually	Sometimes Agree	Never Agree
11	U	47.6	39.7	6.3	3.2
	N	67.1	22.9	5.7	2.9
12	U	11.1	11.1	42.9	34.9
	N	1.4	7.1	25.7	64.3
13	U	67.1	24.3	7.1	1.4
	N	31.7	7.9	55.6	1.6
14	U	15.9	12.7	27.0	39.7
	N	7.1	8.6	15.7	61.4
15	U	12.7	25.4	19.0	36.5
	N	5.7	17.1	24.3	48.6
16	U	65.7	20.0	8.6	2.9
	N	36.5	33.3	17.5	9.5
17	U	41.3	31.7	12.7	9.5
	N	38.6	35.7	15.7	4.3
18	U	11.1	12.7	22.2	49.2
	N	4.3	7.1	24.3	51.4
19	U	31.7	3.2	31.7	22.2
	N	57.1	5.7	7.1	7.1
20	U	6.3	25.4	36.5	27.0
	N	2.9	25.7	50.0	7.1
21	U	60.3	22.2	9.5	7.9
	N	61.4	4.3	28.6	1.4
22	U	52.9	27.1	11.4	6.3
	N	47.6	27.0	17.5	1.4

students. This involvement seems to have an effect on parents
continuing to show support to the schools.

Question nine (9), "I feel that many ideas are listened to and used
in this school."

Twenty-five percent (25%) of the unified teachers responded that
their ideas are always listened to compared to seventeen percent (17%)
of the non unified teachers. Thirty-two percent (32%) of the unified
teachers responded that their ideas are usually listened to as compared
to twenty-two percent (22%) of the non unified teachers.

Within the Omaha Public Schools, Monday afternoons are set aside
for staff meetings. Teachers have the opportunity to discuss issues in
reference to their district and their individual buildings. However, a
unified discipline plan does require that staff have input into the
planning and structure of their discipline plan. A regular time to
reevaluate the plan is also necessary to assure success of the plan.
This may have some bearing on respondents feeling that they have an
active part in the decisions being made within their building.

Question thirteen (13), "Rules are consistently explained to
students, and displayed within the classroom." Sixty seven percent
(67%) of the unified teachers stated that rules are consistently
explained and displayed to students as compared to thirty one percent
(31%) of the non unified teachers.

In order for a school-wide plan to be effective and stay effective
it requires that students are aware and know specifically what is

an integral part of the discipline plan, they should be taught the approach and be included from the beginning in its development.

Ultimately, it is the classroom teacher who must ensure student success through appropriate classroom management. The validity of any school-wide discipline plan rests, to some degree, upon the perceptions of that plan.

Teacher perceptions indicated general support for a school-wide discipline plan. The results indicate that the discipline plan enabled students to travel safely in the school building, be actively engaged in assigned tasks and receive praise, reward, and recognition regularly. As a result of instituting a discipline plan; teachers reported they had a written behavior code posted, as a structured plan to follow when misbehavior occurred and parents were included for improving student behavior.

Several questions represent contrasts between the unified and the non unified teacher respondents:

Question eight (8), "support is given to our schools by parents."

The Unified teachers stated that at least thirty-eight percent (38%) of the time parents always give support to their schools. This is in contrast to the non unified teachers who responded that four percent of the time parents are in support of their schools.

The unified plan specifically requires parent support and involvement to encourage positive behavior. It also allows parents to have an active part in creating a plan that outlines what is expected of

expected of them. By displaying five to six brief, fair, rules, that have been unanimously agreed upon by staff, students and parents, students know what is expected of them. Students know that if they choose to follow the school rules, certain rewards are given for good citizenship. On the other hand, if students choose not to follow the school rules, certain consequences will also be followed.

Rewards such as praise, a smile, a wink, a pat on the back, a handshake, free reading time, school assemblies, stickers, positive notes home, phone calls home, a "good" visit to the principal's office, etc. can all be used as the staff deems necessary, to encourage students to be good citizens, and to choose to follow posted school rules.

A unified discipline plan requests that a specific plan of action is written for the entire school to follow. This written document allows for a firm, fair, consistent approach to student behavior.

Consequences such as an activity being withheld, a discussion, or an oral or written reprimand, a call home, a reprimand by the principal, a detention, or a suspension are all forms of consequences that the students should know could be given, if they choose not to follow school rules.

Question sixteen (16), "Our school-wide discipline plan gives me a fair consistent approach to discipline."

Sixty-five percent (65%) of the unified teachers responded with "always agree" This percentage represents a significant number of teachers believe that a school which possess a unified discipline plan

allows them to have a fair consistent approach to discipline. A fair consistent approach to discipline, according to research, has a positive effect on school environment or climate.

using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to obtain

frequency percentages.

Principal Findings and Conclusions

Examination of the results of this study indicate that there are

eighteen (18) substantial differences between the level of positive

perceptions of school climate of teachers who teach in schools that have

a unified school-wide discipline plan compared to teachers who teach in

schools that have no unified plan. On the basis of displays of

descriptive data, it appears that there are three (3) aspects of planned

discipline development that would be helpful in Omaha Public Schools.

It appears from the results of this investigation, that schools

possessing unified school-wide discipline plans have an increased

involvement of parents in their child's education. It would also appear

that teachers feel that they have an active part to play in maintaining

a positive atmosphere not only within the confines of their classroom

but throughout the school building.

In light of the evidence in the literature indicating an increased

concern with discipline in the public schools, the development of

unified school-wide discipline plans have an increased importance.

The findings of this investigation support the theory reported in

the literature that principals, teachers, parents and community should

be actively involved in a teamwork approach in solving poor discipline

in the schools. The findings of this research seems to also support the

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary and Conclusions

Restatement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to determine if there is a discernable difference in the level of positive perceptions to school climate of teachers who teach in schools that have a unified school-wide discipline plan as compared to teachers who teach in schools that have no unified plan.

Description of Procedures Used

Forty (40) OPS elementary schools were selected for this study. Twenty (20) were identified as schools that possessed unified discipline plans and twenty (20) were selected as non unified schools, or schools not possessing a unified plan to discipline students.

Teachers were randomly selected from the forty (40) schools to represent their schools and respond to the survey. A starting point was selected on an alphabetical listing of names from certified teaching staff, every fourth name thereafter was chosen. A representative number of primary, intermediate, regular education, and special education was chosen.

Out of the one hundred sixty (160) teachers surveyed one hundred thirty-three (133) teachers responded to the survey. This represents eighty-three percent (83%) of respondents surveyed. Data was calculated

idea that unified school-wide discipline plans make a difference to the overall school learning environment or school climate.

Several recommendations are offered which may provide some general guidelines for principals, teachers and administrators who wish to initial a program, or modify an existing program in ways that will provide for optimum school management, discipline and instruction.

First, establish a conducive learning environment, the principal as the operations manager of the school must ensure and safeguard the education of each student. This includes developing a comprehensive strategy that is inclusive in scope. The use of outside consultants, that is representatives from the district office, human relations personnel, other school principals, educational specialists and parents, will ensure opportunities for developing a disciplinary plan that is sensitive to the self-direction and personal growth of all students.

Second, to promote a positive self-concept, it is essential that any discipline plan accommodate the motivation and teaching of children so they can excel to their fullest potential. Through activities geared to improve self-concept, students will believe in themselves, choose high expectations, display self-confidence and build enthusiasm for learning. Teachers must be mindful of keeping students "on-task" and seeing to it that they engage in classroom activities that are varied, relevant to their personal growth and assignments they are motivated to complete.

Third, to utilize parents and community members as valuable

resources, parents should be kept informed of their child's educational

progress. Parents should be included in activities improving school

effectiveness. Parents and community should be made to feel welcomed

into the school and made to feel comfortable within the school

environment. Invite parents and community members to take an active

part in school activities both academic and social.

Recommendations for Future Research

Evidence derived from this study indicates that teachers perceive a

unified school-wide discipline plan to be a means of achieving positive

student behavior, positive learning environment, increased parental

involvement, a fair, firm, consistent approach to student behavior, and

a feeling that their ideas are listened to and used.

A prospective study as to school-wide discipline plans usefulness

on the Junior and Senior High level would be useful in further

documentation on the significant differences in student behavior and

school climate.

It is recommended that the results of this study be shared with

Student Personnel Services, OPS, as further decisions are made in

reference to student discipline and expanding the implementations of

unified school-wide discipline plans.

Schools that decide to develop a school-wide plan need to involve

staff, parents, students, and central office in order for their plan to

qualify as a unified one, All or some of the above groups of

individuals need to play an active part in brainstorming and writing a

plan that best fits the needs of a particular school community.

Appendix A

Survey

**(Teacher perceptions as to how
School-Wide Discipline Plans effect school climate)**

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-----------------------------------------------------
                    PERCEPTION KEY
    A = Always Agree          S = Sometimes Agree
    U = Usually Agree         N = Never Agree
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		TEACHER PERCEPTION
1.	Teachers treat students as persons.	A U S N
2.	Parents are considered by this school as important collaborators.	A U S N
3.	Low achieving students get lost in the shuffle.	A U S N
4.	Teachers in this school are proud to be teachers.	A U S N
5.	Students do not feel important.	A U S N
6.	Students cannot count on teachers to listen to their side of the story and to be fair.	A U S N
7.	This school makes students enthusiastic about learning.	A U S N
8.	Support is given to our school by parents.	A U S N
9.	I feel that my ideas are listened to and used in this school.	A U S N
10.	Parental involvement is minimal and little is done to encourage parental participation.	A U S N
11.	Our school rules are not effective in developing positive student behavior.	A U S N
12.	Staff uses agreed upon school rules for each class within our school.	A U S N

Appendix A - Continued

Survey

**(Teacher Perceptions as to how
School-Wide Discipline Plans effect School Climate)**

				TEACHER PERCEPTION			

13. Rules are consistently explained to students, and   A   U   S   N
displayed within the classroom.

14. Our school possesses a unified discipline plan that   A   U   S   N
is followed.

15. In developing our school-wide discipline plan,   A   U   S   N
staff, parent, and/or student input was used.

16. Our school-wide discipline plan gives me a fair   A   U   S   N
consistent approach to discipline.

17. At this school there is minimally an annual process   A   U   S   N
for deciding in which areas students are successful
and which areas need improvement.

18. There are frequent disruptions within the class-   A   U   S   N
room that deters from an effective instructional
environment.

19. We do not possess a school-wide discipline plan   A   U   S   N
but I have managed to maintain a well disciplined
classroom.

20. The administration alone has established a work-   A   U   S   N
able discipline plan that is designed to meet their
leadership style.

21. It is safe for students and staff to go anywhere   A   U   S   N
in or around the building.

22. The building is well cared for and maintenance of   A   U   S   N
the building is done regularly.

Appendix C

(Letter to each Teacher)

February, 1989

Dear Educator:

The purpose of this correspondence is to ask for your help and support in a research study accessing your perceptions of school climate as it relates to school discipline.

You were chosen to respond to the enclosed questionnaire through a true random selection process. The findings of this study will be reported by total numbers, not by individuals.

Because you were selected randomly, your perceptions represent many teachers within the District so your response is essential to this study.

Your prompt attention to this request is greatly appreciated.

Date Due: March 3, 1989

Please return to: Karen Hayes Butler
                    General Administration

Thank You!

                              Most Sincerely,

                              Karen Hayes Butler
                              General Administration

Appendix B

(Letter to each Principal)

February 15, 1989

Principal
School
Street
Omaha, Nebraska   68

Dear Principal:

The purpose of this correspondence is informational in nature. I am
presently conducting a research study accessing teacher perceptions to
school climate as it relates to school discipline.

Schools and teachers have been randomly selected to participate in
completing a brief questionnaire. Teachers will be receiving their
questionnaire within the next few days.

I would like to thank you and your teachers in advance for your
cooperation and their assistance. If there are any questions please
call 554-6219.

Thank you.

                                        Sincerely,

                                        Karen Hayes Butler
                                        General Administration

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Appendix D

(School List)

UNIFIED	NON-UNIFIED
Adams	Western Hills
Bancroft	Jefferson
Belvedere	Fontenelle
Benson West	Druid Hill
Boyd	Dodge
Chandler View	Gilder
Edison	Rosehill
Field Club	Central Park
Harrison	Dundee
Hartman	Masters
Highland	Ashland Park
Indian Hill	Beals
Kellom	Conestoga
Lothrop	King Primary
Minne Lusa	Miller Park
Mount View	Walnut Hill
Pawnee	Columbian
Pinewood	Wakonda
Spring Lake	Yates
Springville	Sunny Slope

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