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SUPPORTING INNOVATION, HONORING STABILITY,
AND ACHIEVING COHERENCE WHILE IMPLEMENTING MULTI-TIERED
SYSTEMS OF SUPPORT FOR BEHAVIOR AT THE MIDDLE LEVEL

By

Dr. Chelsea S. Krebs, Ed.D.

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of

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In Fulfillment of Requirements

For the Degree of Doctor of Education

Major: Educational Leadership

Under the Supervision of Dr. Tamara Williams, Ed.D.

Omaha, Nebraska

March, 2020

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University of Nebraska, 2020

Advisor: Dr. Tamara Williams, Ed.D.

Abstract

Negative-feeling variables not only distract schools from reform initiatives but make system change matters almost impossible. Paired with increased student behavior and managing school discipline needs, educators can feel frustrated and alone. This study looked at one middle's school initial implementation of a Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Behavior program through the lens of Fullan and Quinn's Coherence Framework. The constructs of stability and innovation were also explored. The research design for this study was a mixed-data program implementation case study. Survey results from staff regarding program implementation practices were used, as well as field notes and document analysis. A mixed-data design offered the best approach to fully analyze how all four components of the Coherence Framework. A sign test was used to analyze quantitative data, and in all four systems within the survey instrument, the data showed a significant difference after the MTSS-B implementation. A network display was created to analyze the qualitative data and show the full story of all five semesters of programming. The study provided recommendations for further research and may provide insight to building and district leaders hoping to support school leadership during any behavior program implementation.

Acknowledgements

The journey of implementing MTSS-B at my current school has been the best milestone of my career. Not because of the success of the programming, but because of all the people I've met along the way. Working backward on my own professional timeline, I'd like to thank as many of you as possible.

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To Rachel and Jay, I am beyond grateful and supremely thankful for the two of you. On day one of our committee's journey, both of you approached me and asked if you could co-chair the committee – much to my delight! From the point on, we have been compadres and confidants, and you have both blessed me beyond words. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

To my leadership mentors, including but not limited to, Tracy, Joannie, Kelly, Jule, and Sandy, there is no doubt in my mind that I am who I am today because of the strong women all of you are. You have championed me in every way, even when I was a

bright-eyed, 20-something novice to the profession. Each of you saw something in me that kept me going, and I am incredibly grateful. It was often because of one little thing that you said to me that I was able to keep propelling myself on my leadership journey. Those moments are cherished and will never be forgotten.

To my two sweet girls, Penelope and Clementine, you are my greatest treasures. There is a part of me that wishes you were a bit older to have seen your mom both trudge and fly through all the different milestones of this journey. The idea that the journey is the destination is so very interesting because you truly find who you are along the way. Through times of greatness and times of struggle, lean on those you love. Keep persisting, no matter what, and I know, without a doubt, that you can be anything you desire.

To my husband, Patrick, thank you for being our rock throughout this journey. When life has thrown us more curves than we expected, you were (and always will be) the compass that gets us through. You are the steady hand and heart to my wild hopes and dreams, and without you, none of this would have been possible. I will always remember each of our sacrifices that are ultimately helping us design the life we want for our girls. I am grateful for your love and companionship, and there is certainly no one else with whom I'd rather be on this journey.

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Chapter 1

Introduction of the Problem

For the first time ever documented, the majority of Americans say they do not want their children to become a teacher (Phi Delta Kappan, 2018). For the last decade, teacher satisfaction has declined year after year, and more than half of teachers report feeling under great stress every day of the week (MetLife, 2013). Increased student behavior as well as difficulty managing school discipline needs are major issues placing significant demands not only on teachers but on administrators alike. Paired with confusion and overload from initiative-itis and top-down bureaucratization (Fullan & Quinn, 2016), educators are more burnt out than ever. Arguably, even trying to approach this problem with a solution often just adds to or creates another problem. Michael Fullan teaches us that these negative-feeling variables, also known as Wrong Drivers, not only distract schools from reform initiatives but make system change matters almost impossible (Fullan, 2011a, p. 3; Fullan & Quinn, 2016).

So, what should schools do when the system itself feels broken? How do school leaders change the system to empower students and teachers in ways of culture and behavior? And even then, how can leadership do this in a way that balances honoring the stability of the system while also supporting the much-needed innovation to actually sustain change? It seems as though the world of education needs a concrete foundation on which to begin building the answer to these difficult questions – a foundation that provides a framework within which to tackle and layer the answers to these questions. There is certainly a call for leaders in the current system of education to provide cohesion

amongst all stakeholders and to give form to the systems that are attempting to tackle these school-fragmenting difficulties.

One such difficulty is addressing school discipline issues. Methodologies to addressing student behaviors are still widely based on exclusionary and punitive policies developed when public education began in the early 1900s. Unfortunately, such a punitive view of discipline results in approaches that have questionable and harmful effects (Skiba & Peterson, 2000; U.S. Department of Education, 2014). Effective schools realize that it is far easier and better to build adaptive behaviors through proactive instructional approaches than to try to decrease behaviors through punishment (Greenwood, Delquadri, & Bulgren, 1993). One example of an instructional approach is a Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Behavior program, also known as MTSS-B. Paired with a foundation of coherence, which is defined as “a shared depth of understanding about the purpose and nature of the work in the minds and actions individually and especially collectively” (Fullan & Quinn, 2016, p. 1), approaches to student behavior would be proactive and structured.

This case study looked at one middle’s school initial implementation of an MTSS-B program through the lens of the Fullan and Quinn’s Coherence Framework. To make this study even more meaningful and to truly analyze successful program implementation practices, the constructs of stability and innovation were also explored.

Purpose

The purpose of this mixed-data case study was to evaluate how middle schools approach coherence when implementing Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Behavior (MTSS-B).

Theoretical Framework

In 2011, Fullan wrote a paper titled, “Choosing the Wrong Drivers for Whole System Reform.” As mentioned, Wrong Drivers of change actually hinder sustainable system change, distracting from reform initiatives and often adding a layer of frustration (Fullan, 2011a, p. 3; Fullan & Quinn, 2016). The answer to these Wrong Drivers are the Right Drivers, which Fullan defines as policies that end up achieving better measurable results for students (2011a, p. 3). In 2016, Fullan & Quinn developed the Coherence Framework, which uses these Right Drivers to combat the Wrong Drivers (Fullan & Quinn, 2016). The theoretical framework for this study was Fullan and Quinn’s

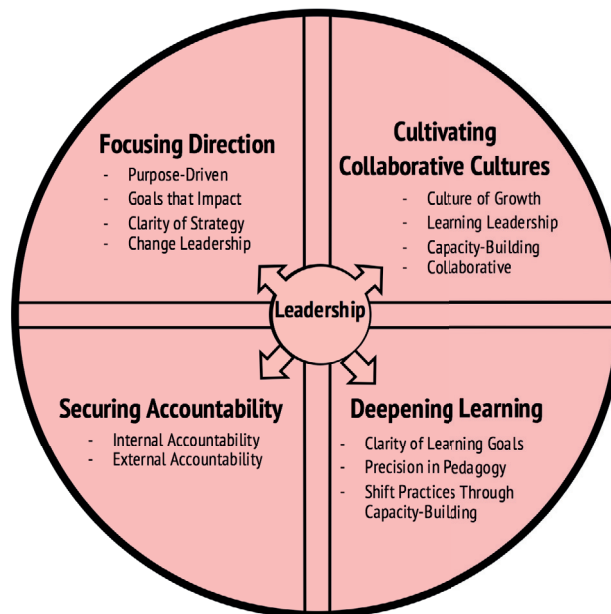


Figure 1.1 from Fullan & Quinn, 2016, p. 11.

Coherence Framework (Figure 1.1), which is a comprehensive method to produce strong system coherence, capacity, and commitment resulting in sustained improvement (2016).

The Coherence Framework contains four components, that when used simultaneously, lay the groundwork for sustainable systematic change. The four components are 1) Focusing Direction; 2) Cultivating Collaborative Cultures; 3) Deepening Learning; and 4) Securing Accountability (Fullan & Quinn, 2016). Within the framework, Leadership connects and activates the four components.

The Four Components of the Coherence Framework

Focusing Direction. Effective change leaders must find what will hold everyone together and increase coherence in the school. If leaders can provide direction by analyzing their responsibility to the system, a focused and purposeful plan can be created and highlighted. Fullan and Quinn's work (2016) stresses the idea that the issue

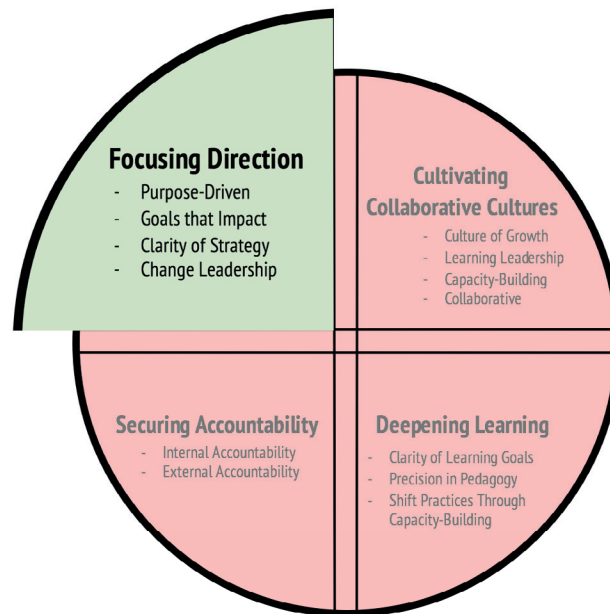


Figure 1.2 from Fullan & Quinn, 2016, p. 18.

in systemness is not the absence of goals in schools, but instead it is the presence of too many goals that seem to only offer the feeling of chaos and inconsistency (p. 28).

Leaders can offer a more cohesive approach by reducing the overload of initiatives, reframing a plan to develop interconnectedness, and removing unnecessary distractors (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009; Fullan & Quinn, 2016).

Clarifying the strategy that will be taken during a systems change approach can not only offer a focused direction, but it can also be a large variable in new culture development. “The role of the leader is to ensure that the organization develops relationships that produce desirable results” (Fullan, 2004, p. 68). To offer clarity is to also shine a light on bettering the culture and therefore bettering the relationships of all people involved. True change leaders do this work using clear intention and giving to others in a servant-leadership capacity.

Cultivating Collaborative Cultures. Change leaders understand that what pulls people in is meaningful work in collaboration with others. They “use the group to change the group” (Fullan & Quinn, 2016, p. 56), developing collective capacity.

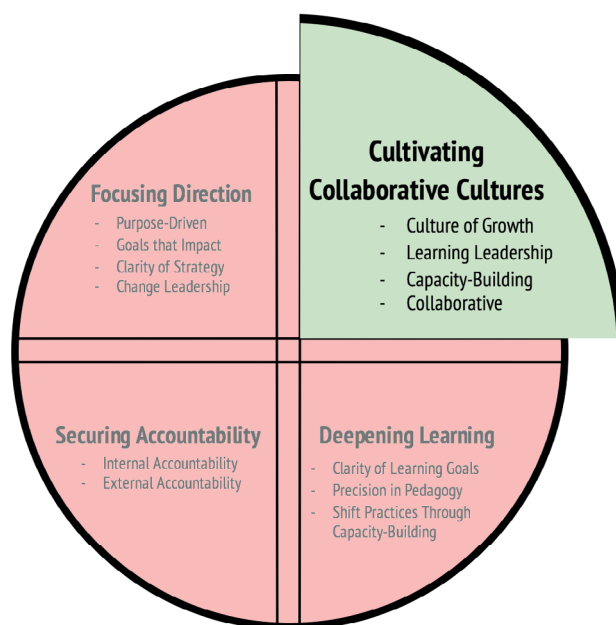


Figure 1.3 from Fullan & Quinn, 2016, p. 48.

Every action a leader takes either cultivates coherence or fosters frustration. When an organization values the internal talent and expertise, it can create a leadership movement from the middle that creates the largest source of change energy (Hargreaves & Braun, 2010; Hargreaves & Ainscow, 2015).

When teachers become aware of this concept, they quickly see the potential because this strategy greatly values teachers as leaders. The new role of the school leader then becomes that of a lead learner, where the leader learns alongside the teachers instead of facilitating the learning (Muhammad & Hollie, 2011; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Fullan & Quinn, 2016). This learning leadership style fosters a deep relationship that leads to trust of the teachers, and this collaborative power is truly the machine behind a long-lasting culture of coherence.

Deepening Learning. In the change process, deepening learning will cultivate clarity and get the basics in place so that system change can occur. In the Coherence

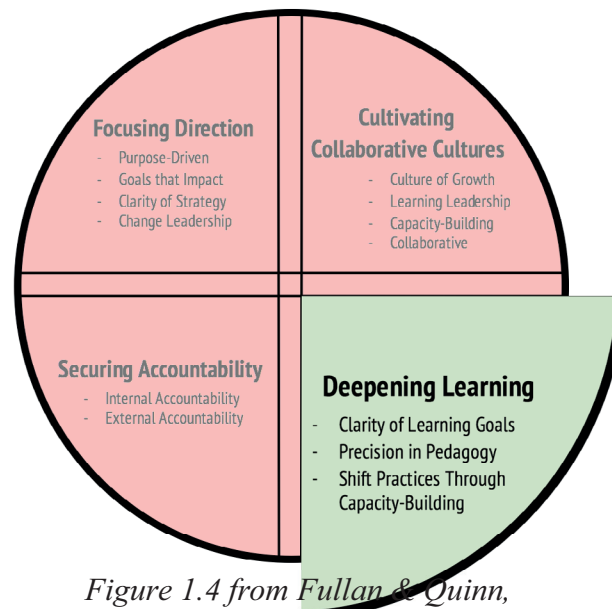


Figure 1.4 from Fullan & Quinn, 2016, p. 80.

Framework, Fullan & Quinn's (2016) exploration of 21st Century Skills looks at deep learning competencies through the lens of coherency. This specific pedagogical approach includes beliefs about having a common language and knowledge base and providing ways for learners to link their learning to ways of impact. Deep learning opportunities should be valued and put on a pedestal instead of feeling secondary to menial tasks. If the latter feels all-too familiar, schools must tackle the difficulty of shifting to a deep learning mindset. This kind of systems change happens through deep inquiry that examines practices and infiltrates relationships and decisions to propel the change.

Securing Accountability. The Coherence Framework draws upon Fullan, Rincon-Gallardo, & Hargreaves' research about an internal-external accountability dynamic for securing accountability during times of change (2015). Maximizing internal accountability and reinforcing with external accountability matches the

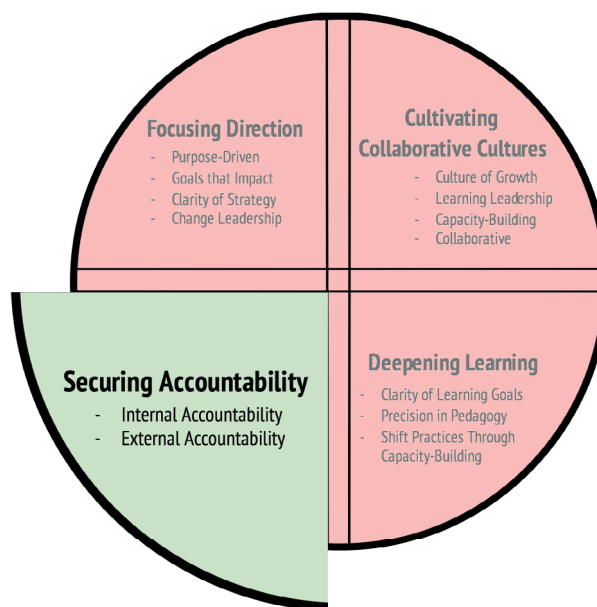


Figure 1.5 from Fullan & Quinn, 2016, p. 110.

collaborative nature of the rest of the Coherence Framework.

Accountability provides consistency for all teachers and students during times of sustainment and change. Internal accountability happens when teachers willingly take on a collective responsibility for improvement and success simply because it's the right thing to do and because they want to do it (Byrk & Schneider, 2003; Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009). If internal accountability can be cultivated and prioritized by lead learners within the system, sustainable change is inevitable. On the opposite end of the accountability spectrum is a completely top-down approach, which all but guarantees discord, mismanagement, and failure. When leaders invest in internal accountability, external accountability can take on a secondary role, encouraging people to work with each other instead of against each other.

Leadership. Change leaders can always come back to the Coherence Framework and its four components for direction to meet the varying needs of changing schools. As the system becomes stronger and stronger, teachers will show

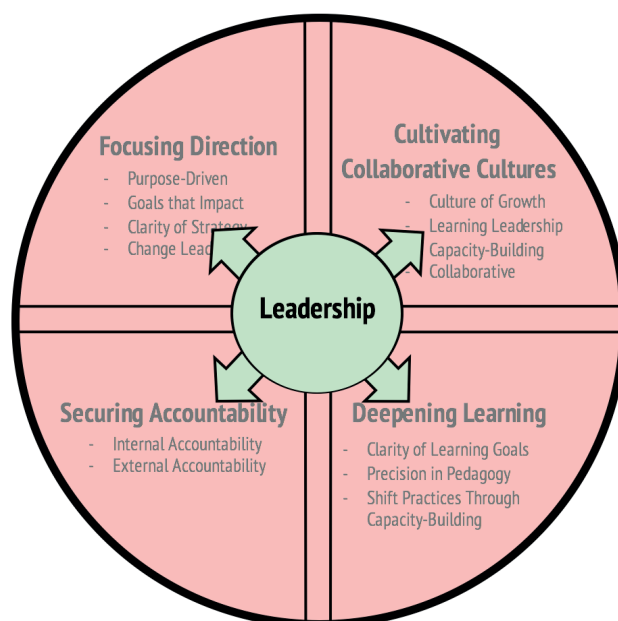


Figure 1.6 from Fullan & Quinn, 2016, p. 129.

greater enthusiasm; this spurs better and better results that motivate people to accomplish even more. Forming a building-owned plan based on the four components of the framework is the best starting point for teams wanting to assess and build coherence in schools. When administrators can simultaneously implement the framework components with high levels of intention, change leaders can work alongside teachers to move the organization forward (Fullan & Quinn, 2016). This is the power behind the collective capacity machine that is The Coherence Framework.

Research Question

The overarching research question of this study was, how do middle schools pursue coherence when implementing Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Behavior?

Operational Definitions

- **Coherence.** Defined as “a shared depth of understanding about the purpose and nature of the work in the minds and actions individually and especially collectively” (Fullan & Quinn, 2016, p. 1).
- **Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Behavior (MTSS-B).** Defined as a district or school’s process for teaching social and behavioral skills so its focus can be on teaching and learning (Nebraska Department of Education, 2019; Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2015).
- **Case Study.** Defined as “a method for learning about a complex instance, based on a comprehensive understanding of that instance obtained by extensive description and analysis of that instance taken as a whole and in its context” (Morra & Friedlander, 1999, p. 3)

Significance of Study

In his work regarding competency-based education in the late 1970s, William Spady argued that all school systems contend with two competing sets of forces: forces that focus on system productivity and forces that stress preservation of the organization (1978, p. 17). For schools to focus on productivity requires a stress on innovation, requiring open-mindedness and a sense of adventure. On the other hand, teachers are constantly being asked to work faster and more competitively (Wheatley, 2002; MetLife, 2013), and if approached without unconditional support, these values cannot lead to anything healthy and sustainable. This is where the preservation component comes into play. Cultivating a secure and stable environment where trust is a cornerstone of all activity is perhaps the most important calling of a leader. The challenge to leadership is to manage and support both perspectives without impairing the impact and effectiveness of either (Spady, 1978; Knoff, 2002).

This study is significant because it provided a lens to look at the idea of stability and innovation in a way that offers understanding and cohesion. Systems change initiatives can be frightening; however, with Fullan and Quinn's Coherence Framework (2016), schools can strategically scaffold program implementation to provide both innovation and stability, offering the best solution to needed change.

Methodology

The research design for this study was a mixed-data program implementation case study. Survey results from certified staff regarding program implementation practices were used, as well as field notes and document analysis. Because the use of quantitative data alone would have been limiting in the analysis of successful

implementation (Creswell, 2014; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998), a mixed-data design offered the best approach to fully analyze how all four components of the Coherence Framework were effective in providing coherence during initial phases of program implementation. The combination of quantitative and qualitative clarified how the different program elements fit together (Balbach, 1999; Rogers, 2014).

Data Sources. The quantitative data source used as part of this study was archived data generated from the school district's individual school Self-Assessment Survey (SAS) to determine fidelity of implementation of all buildings' Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Behavior programs. As the study focused on current staff perceptions of implementation, a survey was the best tool to gain baseline insight regarding staff beliefs (Sugai & Horner, 1999; Sugai, Horner, and Todd, 2003; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The qualitative data source for this case study included field observation notes, digital communication, and original program documents. Each of these items were collected and organized chronologically and coded using the deductive coding method. Using Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña's ideas about coding (2014), codes were developed using the four components of Fullan and Quinn's Coherence Framework (2016). The sequential organization was written in a semester timeline format, spanning the course of 17 months. After all timeline items were coded based on document analysis and researcher perspective, the most prevalent components of the framework were highlighted for each of the semesters.

Delimitations. This study was conducted in one middle school in a Midwestern state that has a total of 12 middle schools of varying sizes and demographics. The convenience sample of certified staff in one middle school is also

a delimitation of this study as the results are not necessarily generalizable to other schools. Though one school was studied, the results are not generalized but the results of the school's journey could be helpful for other schools in similar pursuits.

Outline of the Study. Chapter one introduced the problem and described the theoretical framework, study's significance, purpose, research questions, and the methodology. Chapter two of this study includes a review of the professional literature related to Innovation, Stabilization, and Coherence, while Chapter three is a review the professional literature about Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Behavior. Chapter four outlines the quantitative and qualitative research design. Chapter five includes the results of the statistical analyses along with an interpretation of the research results. The final chapter contains an overview of the study, discussion and considerations, as well as implications for further research.

Chapter 2

Review of Stabilization, Innovation, and Coherence Literature

The purpose of this mixed-data case study was to evaluate how one middle school pursues coherence when implementing Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Behavior (MTSS-B). Chapter 2 begins by describing the intricacies of change leadership regarding the balance of being a stabilizer and an innovator at the building level. This chapter continues by introducing the research regarding coherence. Following sections include a summary of the five elements that emerged from the research regarding how to approach coherence. Literature studied will tie back to the Coherence Framework described in Chapter 1. Literature that supports Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Behavior will be presented in Chapter 3.

The Balance Between Stability and Innovation

In 1978, William Spady made a daring claim that all school systems must always grapple with two competing sets of forces: “those focused on system productivity and those that stress maintenance and preservation of the organization” (p. 17). The productivity component, of course, demands a response to ever-changing times, requiring flexibility and responsiveness, whereas the maintenance component is always concerned with routine activities and procedures. The amalgamation of stability and innovation has often created a volatile environment, leaving teachers feeling like they lost their love and joy of teaching. Fullan (1993) writes that we are faced with a dilemma:

On the one hand, schools are expected to engage in continuous renewal, and change expectations are constantly swirling around them. On the

other hand, the way teachers are trained, the way schools are organized, the way the educational hierarchy operates, and the way political decision makers treat educators results in a system that is more likely to retain the status quo. (p. 13)

Both teachers and administrators often find themselves at a crossroads of wanting to provide stability to the building while also feeling the pressure of creating an innovative culture. The challenge to leadership is to manage and support both perspectives without impairing the impact and effectiveness of either (Spady, 1978). Given the stark differences between them, this is certainly a challenging task.

Stability. There is only one way to begin the process of being known as someone in a school setting who can provide comfort and stability – to build a connection with others by getting to know them. Very simple day-to-day informal discussion and

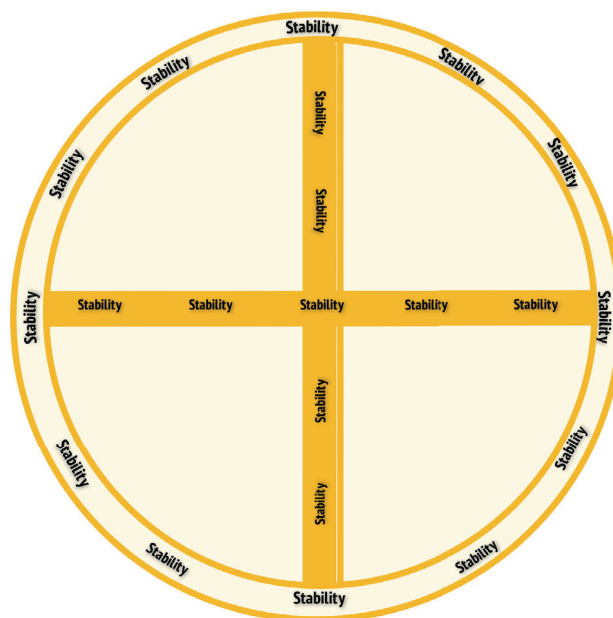


Figure 2.1.

nonthreatening collaboration opportunities create conditions where simple interactions make an exponential difference (Byrk & Schneider 2003; Fullan, 2003; Muhammad &

Cruz, 2019). Connection is defined as “the energy that exists between people when they feel seen, heard, and valued; when they can give and receive without judgment; and when they derive sustenance and strength from the relationships” (Brown, 2010, p. 19). This connection leads to trust in the professional relationship. If maintained, this trust has great benefits for the long-term, such as collaborative problem-solving and a reduced sense of vulnerability (Fullan, 2003; Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009).

Any deliberate action taken to reduce this sense of vulnerability makes people feel safe and secure and only further establishes a sense of stability. In change leadership, creating this type of culture is crucial to develop environments where people will willingly and excitedly take risks and dive into unknown waters of exploration. This kind of thinking bridges the waters of stability and innovation because it opens up a new opportunity to discover more than what we would have by ourselves (Covey, 1990). A visual to represent the lens of stability is shown in Figure 2.1.

Innovation. When a change leader can help people try new things under relatively nonthreatening conditions and listen and learn from their reactions, a culture is created where staff can feel safe to try new things and still feel supported (Fullan, 2011b; Muhammad, 2017). Open-mindedness takes over and there is a newfound sense of adventure in finding new solutions to old problems. For sustainable change to occur, there also must be a sense of ownership and motivation – a sense of people wanting the

change and wanting to be a part of it (Fullan, 2007; McIntosh, Filter, Bennett, Ryan & Sugai, 2010). For the staff members who prefer the deep sense of stability, an administrator advocating for change can be one of the scariest possibilities. In

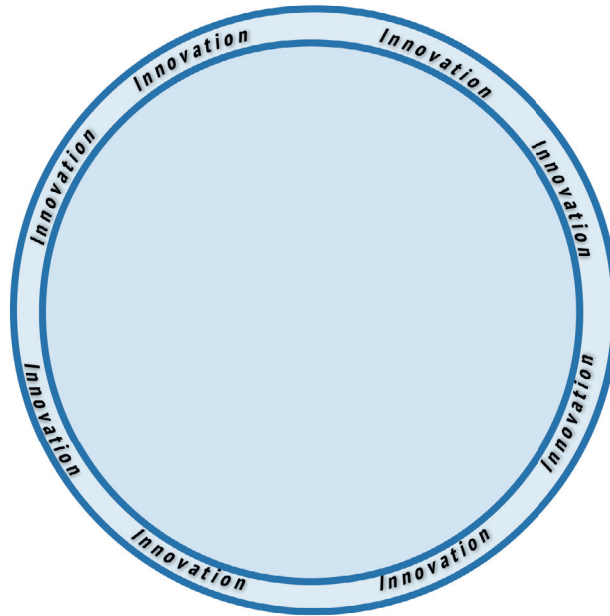


Figure 2.2.

education, teachers are constantly being asked to work faster and more competitively (Wheatley, 2002), and approached without unconditional support, these values cannot lead to anything healthy and sustainable, and they are alarmingly destructive. And this is where the thoughtful and intentional balance of change leadership comes into play. Leadership is not about the newspaper headlines and the district accolades; leadership is simply about energizing people to make the best decisions and to try other things. “It [leadership] is about helping release the positive energy that exists naturally within people” (Fullan, 2011b, p. 128). Effective leadership empowers by putting people first and listening to learn. Leaders skilled in change leadership are careful to balance innovation with a polished sense of calmness and composure, creating a culture of relational trust. A visual to represent the lens of innovation is shown in Figure 2.2.

In 2015, the National Policy Board for Educational Administration convened a work group to refresh the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL). The first standards were developed in 1996, but they had not been revised since 2008 (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015). The new standards, though grounded in the present, are innovative and inspirational, challenging leaders at all levels to be future-oriented and push the status quo. School leadership who can practice the content of these new standards are up to the challenge of change agency in schools while intentionally cultivating a safe, caring, and stable learning community for all learners, adults included. The PSEL intertwine the idea of honoring stability while supporting innovation in today's demand for change leadership in education.

Summary of Stability and Innovation

Wheatley writes how “the world always only changes when a few individuals step forward. It doesn't change from leaders or top-level programs or big ambitious plans. It changes when we, every day people gathering in small groups, notice what we care about and take those first steps to change the situation” (2009, para. 4). During times of change, leadership has the responsibility to honor the experiences and feelings of the staff members who find it more difficult to embrace change (Brown, 2010; Muhammad, 2017). Change can be terrifying, but if we lean into the discomfort in a way that enhances trust, collective capacity will be enhanced, paving the way for systematic change. Education is a service profession, and specifically leadership has a duty to serve all stakeholders, including teachers. This optimistic approach to leadership recognizes the central importance of human relationships and focuses on human potential (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015). Leadership

must ensure that teachers are getting the most out of their profession (Fullan, 2011b) and feel supported and cared for while doing so. Providing a culture of stability is the only way to support innovation in times of change.

What is Coherence?

Coherence is defined as “a shared depth of understanding about the purpose and nature of the work in the minds and actions individually and especially collectively” (Fullan & Quinn, 2016, p. 1). This is certainly easier said than done. Leaders who have tried to implement a district-wide strategy for improving systems know how difficult it is to accomplish this coherence (Childress, et. al., 2011). In 2011, Michael Fullan wrote a paper titled, “Choosing the wrong drivers for whole system reform.” In his work, he defines Big Drivers as variables in a systems change that paint the picture of the reform wanted. In some change initiatives, some of these Big Drivers could also be considered, Wrong Drivers, which are defined as variables that distract from reform initiatives and actually make matters worse (Fullan, 2011a, p. 3; Fullan & Quinn, 2016). Wrong Drivers as deliberate policy force have little chance of achieving a desired result. This big association policy feel is the opposite of how to develop organizational change; certainly, initiating and sustaining this process is a complex undertaking in and of itself (Noell & Gansle, 2009; McIntosh, et. al, 2010).

Opposite of the Wrong Drivers are of course the Right Drivers, which Fullan (2011a, p. 3) defines as policies that end up achieving better measurable results for students. Because complex systems naturally generate overload and fragmentation, effective leaders must be coherence-makers (Fullan, 1999, 2001). Coherence represents going into action with the right drivers as the foundation because they work directly on

changing the culture of the building. This approach to systematic change provides the remedy to the wrong drivers. In Fullan & Quinn's Coherence Framework (2016), the right drivers are redefined as an insight and solution to combatting the wrong drivers.

The Coherence Framework

A comprehensive method to achieving the strongest system coherence, capacity, and commitment resulting in sustained improvement (Fullan, 2015) is with the Coherence Framework approach. Within this framework, success for systematic change is developed through a simultaneous approach of the four components: focusing direction;

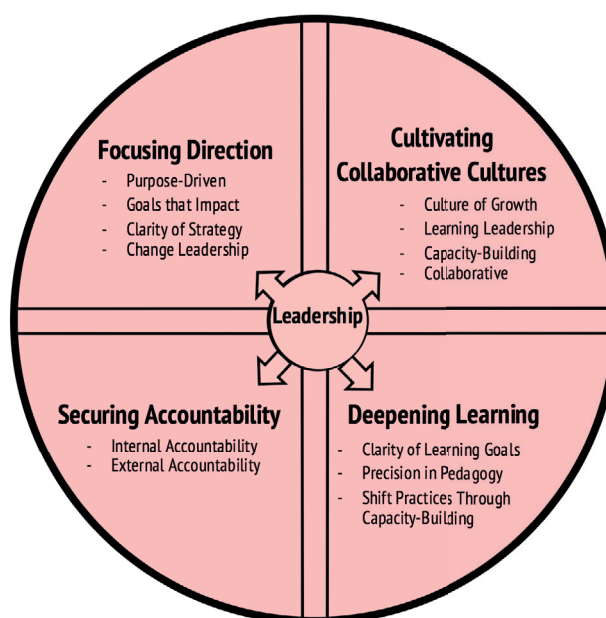


Figure 2.3 from Fullan & Quinn, (2016) p. 11.

cultivating collaborative cultures; deepening learning; and securing accountability (Fullan & Quinn, 2016). Leadership both activates and connects the four components.

Focusing Direction. Schools are a breeding ground for initiative-itis and ad-hoc policies, internal and external demands, and competing plans and agendas. Without a process involving continuous engagement for the group, excitement for an initiative will

be fleeting, at most. Effective change leaders must find what will hold everyone together and increase coherence in the school. One component of this endeavor is to develop and sustain a focused direction.

Purpose-driven. To truly focus direction in a whole system first demands that leadership look at the moral purpose for the needed change. Moral purpose is defined as “social responsibility to others and the environment” (Fullan, 2002, p. 17). Additionally, sustained improvement for the system is not possible unless the entire system is moving forward. To set this kind of compass, leaders must unapologetically advocate for what matters most in the needed change. To maintain this focus, leaders must strive for “piercing clarity” regarding their priorities in the system change (Collins, 2005, p. 17). If leaders can provide direction by analyzing their responsibility to the system all the while defining the change priorities with pristine clarity, a focused plan can be created and highlighted. When other stakeholders can connect this plan to their own moral purpose, people can begin to see the possibilities of what coherence can truly offer.

Goals that impact. Fullan and Quinn (2016) stress the idea that the issue in systemness is not the absence of goals in schools, but instead it is the presence of too many goals that seem to only offer the feeling of chaos and inconsistency (p. 28). Whether it’s mandates from the district or state, the allure of exciting technology, or simply the just the next new program implementation, too many goals can leave teachers with feelings of chaos and desperate unmanageability. Even if all the goals are good ones, if they are not experienced as a perfect amalgamation of interconnectedness, this fragmentation leave teachers feeling under-supported and

overwhelmed (Cobb, et.al., 2018; Muhammad & Cruz, 2019). However, leaders can offer a more cohesive approach by reducing the overload of initiatives, reframing a plan to develop interconnectedness, and removing unnecessary distractors (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009; Fullan & Quinn, 2016). By completing these three activities in a collaborative manner, stakeholders feel cohesion in the refocused goals.

Clarity of strategy. The idea of coherence is not simply about clarifying goals; it is also about what generates clarity and cohesion on an emotional level. Strategy is tightly interwoven with the idea of collaboration and new culture development (Fullan & Quinn, 2016). “The role of the leader is to ensure that the organization develops relationships that produce desirable results” (Fullan, 2004, p. 68). So, to offer cohesion is to also shine a light on bettering the culture and therefore bettering the relationships of all people involved. As far as whole system change, purposeful and continuous positive interactions with high explicitness and climate change offer the optimal environment for depth of impact (Csikszentmihalyi, 2008; Forman, Stosich & Bocala, 2018). The interplay between positive climate change and clarity of strategy offers the best possible environment for sustainable coherence.

Change leadership. Focusing direction is about creating purpose-driven goals that provide clarity of strategy; however, leaders and stakeholders must shift the idea of a change process needing to have sequential, step-by-step stages. Instead, the much more sustainable process of change is more fluid and organic, offering optimal cultural conditions and a path for continuous learning. Fullan and Quinn (2016) explain that we need to make the journey of change vivid for people. Leaders must connect the change to what people know as “a catalyst to have honest conversations about their worries,

desires for change, and their needs for support” (p. 37). This is not a linear process. People need the freedom and safe space to be vulnerable and honest during systematic change. The best leaders can read these real-life situations and through strong relationship-building they have the insight of when to push and be assertive and when to draw people back in and/or follow (p. 42). Again, true change leaders do this work using clear intention and giving to others in a servant-leadership capacity. This framed intentionality offers an opportunity for leaders to build a larger sense of influence on the collective capacity of the group (Dickmann & Stanford-Blair, 2008) optimally offering a more true and sustainable focus.

Cultivating Collaborative Cultures. Change leaders understand that what pulls people in is meaningful work in collaboration with others. They “use the group to change the group” (Fullan & Quinn, 2016, p. 56), developing collective capacity. Collective capacity is defined as the ways people work together in schools to improve student learning and lives (Walker & Riordan, 2010, p. 51). Leaders who can prioritize the time to engage in effective face-to-face communication through productive teamwork and professional dialogue know how to engage the minds and hearts of everyone to focus their collective talent and intelligence. Cultivating a collaborative space is not simply about making people feel good; instead, it is about promoting and cultivating the expertise of the group for a singular purpose. As Fullan (2010) writes:

The power of collective capacity is that it enables ordinary people to accomplish extraordinary things for two reasons. One is that knowledge about effective practice becomes more widely available and accessible on a daily basis. The second reason is more powerful still – working together generates commitment.

Moral purpose when it stares you in the face through students and your peers working together to make lives and society better, is palpable, indeed virtually irresistible (p. 72).

This newfound commitment creates a culture of collaboration to implement high-yield strategies of change which ultimately brings people together as a united force.

Culture of growth. Every action a leader takes either cultivates coherence or fosters frustration. Dweck's work teaches that having a growth mindset allows people to love what they do and continue to love it and grow in the face of adversity (2007). Truly growth-minded people arrive at success more as a by-product of their enthusiasm for their work. Schools that support learning and innovation build this culture of growth. Additionally, Fullan and Quinn encourage leaders to not immediately look externally for the so-called key to this culture of growth. Teacher-leaders inside the school are the best sources for understanding the dynamics and context of all school stakeholders (2016). When an organization values the internal talent and expertise, it can create a leadership movement from the middle that creates the largest source of change energy (Hargreaves & Braun, 2010; Hargreaves & Ainscow, 2015). When teachers become aware of this concept, they quickly see the potential because it is a strategy that finally gives teachers an important role to play. It liberates the greatest mass of people in a school building to become engaged in the system change and committed to the changes that they make together.

Learning leadership. In many change initiatives, leaders mistakenly take on the role of being in charge of teaching everyone else and disseminating every piece of information, a truly top-down strategy if there ever was one. Instead, leaders must learn

to become lead learners (Muhammad& Hollie, 2011; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Fullan & Quinn, 2016) and build professional capital across their building. One way change leaders build professional capital is through modeling learning. In 2008, Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe conducted research on the impact of school principals on student achievement. Twice as powerful as any other factor was the degree to which the principal participated as a learn with the staff. Modeling learning is essential for demonstrating learning leadership. Additionally, shaping the culture is a huge variable because fostering deeper relationships leads to trust and engagement of the teachers. When change leaders create systems of support and process that build teacher collaboration, it maximizes the focus on learning.

Capacity-building. Collective capacity is at the heart of coherence because it gives the power of the system to the largest stakeholder group within the system. Capacity is defined as “the capability of the individual or organization to make the changes required and involves the development of knowledge, skills, and commitments” (Fullan & Quinn, 2016, p. 56). Collective capacity-building allows educators to make changes necessary to raise the bar. Hattie’s (2015) meta-analytic work showcases that the leader who can develop collective capacity at the building-level will make the greatest contribution to student learning. Effective system change is simply not possible without collective capacity.

The key to capacity-building lies in the idea that it is not a program; instead it is to be thought of as an approach. As previously stated, The Coherence Framework is much more organic in nature in its methodology. Leaders cannot simply implement a bulleted list of to-dos, but they must carefully and intentionally, with sustained, intense

efforts over several years, work openly with teachers to generate true collective capacity. Developing a common knowledge base, focusing on a few goals, and building learning opportunities for everyone is the basis of the capacity-building approach. As time goes on, learners begin to interact more consistently, optimally resulting in an integrated, coherent strategy for change.

Collaborative work. Individual learning can be weak when it is random and fragmented. To shift system practices, leaders must have a thoughtful learning design for creating an environment for deep collaborative work. This is where the idea of “using the group to change the group” (Fullan & Quinn, 2016, p. 6) comes into play because collaborative work exponentially increases the likelihood of persistence until sustained and systematic shifts become part of the norm. By adopting a teacher-centered, learning-by-doing approach, educators roll up their sleeves and create the necessary stamina to spread ideas more efficiently across the building (McIntosh, et. al, 2010; Bryk, et al., 2014; Buffam, Mattos, & Malone, 2018). This collaborative power truly is the machine behind a long-lasting culture of coherence.

Deepening Learning. Though a focused direction is essential in developing coherence and a collaborative culture is undoubtedly the means to do it, unless those components have a foundation of directed improvement, all this system change work will likely have a small impact on students. Fullan & Quinn (2016) comment that a learning revolution is under way because of a confluence of forces: “Urgency evolves from the allure of a dynamic, fast-paced, multimedia global world competing with traditional schooling that has not changed much in 50 years” (p. 77) Educators often get trapped in-between wrong drivers and right drivers, leaving them feeling disjointed and

disheartened. Deepening learning will cultivate clarity and get the basics in place so that system change can occur.

Clarity of learning goals. At the turn of the century, access to information on the internet changed how schools needed to think about learning. The Partnership for 21st Century Learning was formed in 2001 as an organization committed to 21st Century Skills (National Education Association, 2002). Their commitment to the 4 Cs, critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity, shifted the educational focus from numeracy and literacy to interpersonal skills and problem-solving. In 2014, The New Pedagogies for Deep Learning initiative presents a model of deep learning competencies that they call the 6Cs: character, citizenship communication, critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity. Fullan & Quinn (2016) explore these deep learning competences through the lens of coherency.



Figure 2.4 from Fullan (2016) p. 8.

Character. A sense of purpose is explored through self-regulation and responsibility; empathy for others and contributing to the benefit of others offers a sense of grit, perseverance, and resilience, all foundational to coherency of an institution.

Citizenship. Maintaining a global perspective and understanding diverse values and worldviews is essential for deepening learning. Genuine interest in human sustainability and making progress towards solving complex propels the well-being of the group and society.

Communication. Coherent communication should use a range of modes and be designed to reach different audiences. There should be substantive, multimodal communication and there should be a process of continuous reflection to assess the process of learning on how to improve the communication.

Critical thinking. This deep thinking involves evaluating information, making connections, and problem-solving to collaboratively construct meaningful conclusions. There is also a layer of taking action on ideas in the real world.

Collaboration. Working as a team to manage team dynamics and challenges while maintaining positive social and emotional relationships is the glue of the deep learning competencies. Working interdependently as a team to accomplish tasks is the engine of deep learning.

Creativity. Considering and implementing innovative thinking and solutions creates a sense of leadership for action. This deep learning competency is where the do-ers of economic and social entrepreneurialism shine.

Precision in pedagogy. Having a specific pedagogical framework is the key to consistency and sustainability for deepening learning. An instructional guidance system (Bryk, et al., 2010) is crucial because it represents the *how* of the implementation at hand. Pedagogical systems must include a common language and knowledge base and provide ways for learners to link their learning to ways of impact. Identifying these teaching practices in a coherent manner allows for consistency and accountability across the board. Teachers must weave together pedagogical partnerships, learning environments, and leveraging digital to support deeper learning (NPDL, 2014). Change leaders must consider an approach for building capacity to combine all pedagogical tenants to build a culture that fosters learning for all.

There is an additional level to this that begs the question, *What's Worth Learning?*, that speaks to the process of restructuring the system of learning and of the change process itself. If teachers are not given the opportunity to learn new skills and habits of mind then they will not be able to lead and implement change (Wilson, 2018; Muhammad & Cruz, 2019). Deep learning opportunities should be valued and put on a pedestal instead of feeling secondary to menial tasks and to-do lists. Change leaders must prioritize aligning pedagogy practices to support lasting coherence.

Shift practices through capacity-building. Schools must tackle the difficulty of shifting shallow learning to deep learning. To do that, administrators must empower the collective capacity. This accelerates the shift by building clarity of the new learning outcomes, developing precision in new pedagogies, and cultivating deep collaborative work (Muhammad & Hollie, 2011; Fullan & Quinn, 2016). All educators must stand side-by-side to learn together – there should be no top-down feel because the approach

in a collaborative culture is that everyone together is learning how to do this work. This is not the feeling of a quick fix to a problem. Systems change happens through deep inquiry that examines practices and infiltrates relationships and decisions to propel the change. The combination of a focused direction and a collaborative culture provides a roadmap to deep learning, which is essential to coherence.

Securing Accountability. Responsibility of implementing change is often seen as the unspoken thorn in the side of system shift. Change leaders simply cannot go door-to-door checking boxes of whether teachers are doing a good or bad job. It isn't that simple and that certainly isn't an effective approach to accountability. Fullan, Rincon-Gallardo, & Hargreaves instead draw on an internal-external accountability dynamic which is the best approach for securing accountability during times of change (2015). Maximizing internal accountability and reinforcing with external accountability matches the collaborative nature of the rest of the Coherence Framework.

Internal accountability. Accountability provides consistency for all teachers and students during times of sustainment and change. Internal accountability happens when teachers willingly take on a collective responsibility for improvement and success simply because it's the right thing to do and because they want to do it (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009). Marzano (2003), Fullan (2010), and Hargreaves (2012) suggest that for lasting improvement, internal accountability must precede external accountability. If individuals within the group can hold themselves and their colleagues responsible for their own performance, a collaborative culture is built that provides a collective expectation of everyone in it. This is another feature of leading from the middle (Fullan, 2015) that is preferred by building staff. It gives control to the masses and the

group of people in the building who have the greatest effect on students: teachers. If internal accountability can be cultivated and prioritized by lead learners within the system, sustainable change is inevitable.

External accountability. A lone, top-down approach to accountability all but guarantees discord, mismanagement, and failure. However, people in authority often do not like to give up control. In previous years, accountability has been thought of as something that must be imposed (Koestenbaum & Block, 2001, p. 3; Pink, 2009). Reward and punishment schemes are devised and people find themselves in a cycle of uncertainty of what is to come next. This feeling is so dominant in our culture that it has often felt like there is no other option for accountability. Alternatively, when leaders invest in internal accountability, external accountability can take on a secondary role, reinforcing the ideas and policies without being the hammer that it was once thought to be. In this way, the collaborative nature of collective capacity is preserved and honored, allowing for people to work with each other instead of against each other.

Leadership. Achieving coherence in a system takes a long time and requires intentionality and perseverance. Because people come and go and situational dynamics are always changing, coherence-making is a job that is never officially complete. Change leaders can always come back to the Coherence Framework and its four components for direction to meet the varying needs of changing schools. This compass will enable the entity to become much more efficient and effective in preserving sustainability. Then as the system becomes stronger and stronger, teachers will show

greater enthusiasm; this spurs better and better results that motivate people to accomplish even more.

Master the framework. During coherence work, it is essential to build a commonly owned approach that every stakeholder can adopt and think of as their practice. Forming a building-owned plan based on the four components of the framework is the best starting point for teams wanting to assess and build coherence in schools. McKinsey & Company conducted a study of leaders which revealed that most leaders are not good at leading systematic change (Callanan, et. al., 2014). Therefore, the idea of participating as a learner while using the Coherence Framework approach is essential to move the organization forward. When administrators can simultaneously implement the framework components with high levels of intention, change leaders can work alongside teachers to move the organization forward (Fullan & Quinn, 2016).

Develop leaders at all levels. Effective leaders undoubtedly have an impact on student life, but one of the marks of a truly successful leader is that they develop other great leaders throughout their time in leadership. In the short-term, this is important because it empowers the majority of people within a building to work toward a common focus and goal. In the long-term, within this same majority of people emerges new leaders who can take the programming to the next phase. Successful change leaders establish a culture in which people are not only expected to develop their leadership skills but people want to step up and lead to better the entire organization.

Summary of Coherence

The study and approach of coherence involves essential practices of the four Coherence Framework components including focusing direction; cultivating

collaborative cultures; deepening learning; and securing accountability (Fullan & Quinn, 2016). This Coherence Framework liberates a greater mass of people to become engaged in purposeful system change, and ultimately to own the changes that they create together. As stated, it is important to understand that each of these components must be addressed simultaneously from the beginning of the initiative, balancing each other and being woven together by leadership.

Top-down leadership doesn't last even if you get a lot of the pieces right because it is too difficult to get, and especially sustain, widespread buy-in from the people with the greatest impact on students: building teachers. (Hattie, 2012; Fullan, 2015; Muhammad & Cruz, 2019). Leadership works with teachers to determine how to combine the four components of the framework to meet the needs of the building. This is the power behind the collective capacity machine that is The Coherence Framework.

Chapter 3

Review of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Behavior Literature

The purpose of this mixed-data case study was to evaluate the coherence across current perceptions of staff regarding initial implementation of a Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Behavior (MTSS-B) program in a Midwestern middle school. Chapter 2 described coherence and Chapter 3 describes the essential components of an MTSS-B program. Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has identified features or components for MTSS-B based on the PBIS National Center Implementer's Blueprint that together form a highly effective approach to schoolwide discipline (Technical Assistance Center on PBIS, 2010). They have identified five essential components of school-wide programming; each component is vital and they operate simultaneously to ensure the positive and proactive approach to discipline that is most likely to lead to student behavior success.

What is Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Behavior?

When it comes to school discipline practices, greater attention has been directed toward approaches based on validated practices that apply the science of human behavior to improve school climate and discipline. Another given in this equation is that schools have the responsibility to provide an educational atmosphere that feels safe and predictable. Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Behavior (MTSS-B) is defined as a district or school's process for teaching social and behavioral skills so its focus can be on teaching and learning (Nebraska Department of Education, 2019; Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2015). MTSS-B is an organizational framework for discipline, and it and creates a sense of safety for all

students. MTSS-B should not be thought of as a specific model or a specific program. Instead, it is an approach to behavior programming reform using a compilation of effective and research-validated interventions, practices, and systems change strategies.

Common Philosophy and Purpose. Approaches to school discipline are widely still based on exclusionary and punitive policies developed when public education began in the early 1900s. Unfortunately, such a punitive view of discipline results in approaches that have questionable and harmful effects (Skiba & Peterson, 2000; U.S. Department of Education, 2014). Punishment may satisfy the punisher, but has little lasting effect on the punished (Losen, 2011). These exclusionary approaches are in direct conflict with school missions to help all students reach their fullest potential. Unfortunately, punitive policies fail the very students they target (U.S. Department of Education, 2014).

Effective schools realize that it is far easier and better to build adaptive behaviors through proactive instructional approaches than to try to decrease behaviors through punishment (Greenwood, Delquadri, & Bulgren, 1993). Before embarking on school improvement related to discipline, the beliefs about student behavior and discipline must be examined and a new, shared, positive and proactive philosophy and purpose created. Discovering shared beliefs increases commitment, provides a framework for making decisions, and is often the first step in unifying staff (Muhammad, 2017). Effective schools commit this positive and proactive philosophy of discipline. This philosophy creates the sense of direction that gives coherence to keep the learning on course. Time spent creating a shared philosophy is imperative for lasting change.

Three levels of implementation. MTSS-B focuses on a systems change approach with three broad levels of implementation. This continuum of schoolwide, instructional, and positive behavior supports is a defining feature of MTSS-B (Walker, et.al., 1996; Sugai & Horner, 1999; Sugai & Horner, 2006). Each level of implementation is described in Tiers. Tier 1 incorporates universal schoolwide management strategies designed to meet the needs of all students and develop a common language and focus for all school stakeholders. These strategies should be implemented efficiently and consistently across all school settings, classroom, and non-classroom settings. Tier 2 are secondary supports that are developed to provide targeted, group-based strategies for students who present risk factors such as low academic achievement, poor peer skills, or limited family and community supports. Tier 3 are tertiary systems of support that are developed to provide highly specialized strategies for the relatively small number of students who engage in chronic challenging behavior that is unresponsive to primary and secondary supports. These supports include specialized personnel like school psychologists and counselors to provide wraparound and person-centered supports and interventions (Nebraska Department of Education, 2019; Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2015).

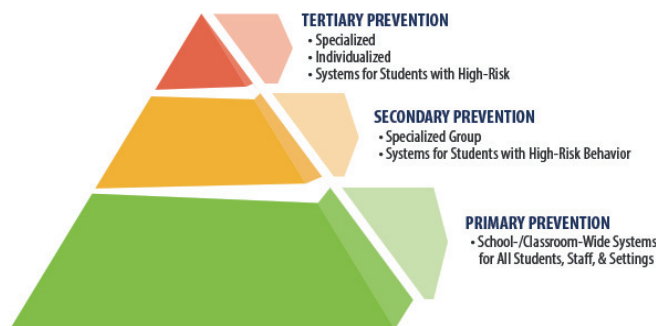


Figure 3.1 from PBIS = positive behavior interventions and supports (n.d.).

Understanding applied behavior analysis. MTSS-B is grounded in the science of applied behavior analysis. Applied behavior analysis is defined as “application of evidence-based intervention strategies used to change socially significant behaviors to a meaningful degree such that the interventions applied can be shown through experimental manipulation to be responsible for the change of behavior that occurred” (Alberto & Troutman, 2012, p. 351). This is based on the understanding that individuals’ behavior is determined by past and current environmental events. In short, the science of behavior focuses on changes to the environment to result in changed behavior. Applied behavior analysis shows us that a person can’t necessarily be changed but their behavior can be influenced by shaping the environment within which they function. In MTSS-B, there is also a focus on changing the behavior of the adults to ultimately change the environment that will greatly encourage change in student behavior.

MTSS-B Leadership. To promote deep and lasting change, schools must blend commitment and proven practices with strong leadership and effective school improvement processes (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). Successful school improvement efforts all share one commonality: strong leadership. Maintaining a well-disciplined school is one of the primary roles of the building administrator. One of the primary roles of the principal in the development and implementation of MTSS-B is to develop, support, and guide the MTSS-B Leadership Team. The process recommended for effective school improvement is based on strong leadership, shared decision-making, and consensus building among all school staff (Nebraska Department of Education, 2019). It begins with the formation of a discipline leadership team or an MTSS-B

leadership committee. The leadership team assists staff in the continual process of developing and maintaining a positive school environment where students behave responsibly. Broad representation on this team leads to a greater assurance that all views will be shared, the committee's work will be widely accepted, and the procedures widely implemented by all teachers, specialists, and administrators.

Clarifying Expected Behavior. Across school staff, many variations of acceptable behavior exist. Without a curriculum to guide what a school wants their students to accomplish socially, little consistent teaching and monitoring can occur. With a proactive and instructional approach to discipline, social behavioral curriculum is developed. When there are schoolwide expectations, the procedures of teachers are not perceived as arbitrary but a direct outcome of schoolwide valued behaviors and expectations held by all (U.S. Department of Education 2014). Perhaps most importantly, they show students how they can be successful. Components of a social behavioral curriculum include three to five overarching schoolwide social behavioral expectations are defined and agreed to by all staff (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2015). Once these 3-5 broad schoolwide expectations have been identified, then staff work together to define the expected social behaviors or rules which are what students do specifically to produce those expectations. These articulate how students should act. Finally, procedures are defined in non-classroom areas and in each classroom. Procedures are the methods or process for how things are done. Schoolwide expectations reflect the language and culture of each school. They become the language all staff use when they teach, remind, recognize, and correct students.

Teaching Expected Behavior. An important component of MTSS-B is teaching behavioral skills because there is a close connection between social competence and academics (Horner & Sugai, 2005). Teaching expected behavior is a cornerstone because it integrates the notion of what students should know and be able to do with how staff will be sure they can do it. Effective instruction requires more than providing the rule – it requires instruction, practice, feedback, re-teaching, and encouragement (Sprague & Golly, 2005; Sugai, Hagan-Burke & Lewis-Palmer, 2004). With teaching these expected behaviors, the entire school must embrace the need for full implementation in schoolwide and classroom settings from the beginning to leverage implementation efforts for fidelity and sustainability (McIntosh, et. al, 2010; Mathews, McIntosh, Frank, & May, 2014). At first, it may seem overwhelming for teachers to teach students social behavior. It is helpful to reiterate that teaching these expectations proactively can increase the likelihood students will follow the expectations, thereby also increasing future academic instructional time.

Encouraging Expected Behavior. Because teaching alone is not sufficient for success in learning social behavior, MTSS-B includes a component for developing a continuum of procedures for encouraging expected behavior (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2015). Adult attention is powerful when encouraging expected social behavior. Contingent attention from adults has been shown to increase on-task behavior (Sutherland, Wehby, & Copeland, 2000), and non-contingent attention has been shown to provide a positive quality in the student-teacher relationship, decrease the number of behavior referrals students receive, and increase the amount of time students spend on-task (Decker, Dona & Christenson 2007). These adult behaviors

set the stage for effectively interacting with students in a way that changes behavior.

How MTSS-B Program Implementation Mirrors the Coherence Framework

Each of the seven MTSS-B programming components discussed in this chapter fit within one of the four Coherence Framework components: focusing direction; cultivating collaborative cultures; deepening learning; and securing accountability (see Figure 3.2). It cannot be overstated that success for systematic change are developed through a simultaneous approach of the four components of the framework. Each variable within this whole systems change approach must be so in sync that it is difficult to identify which component is which.

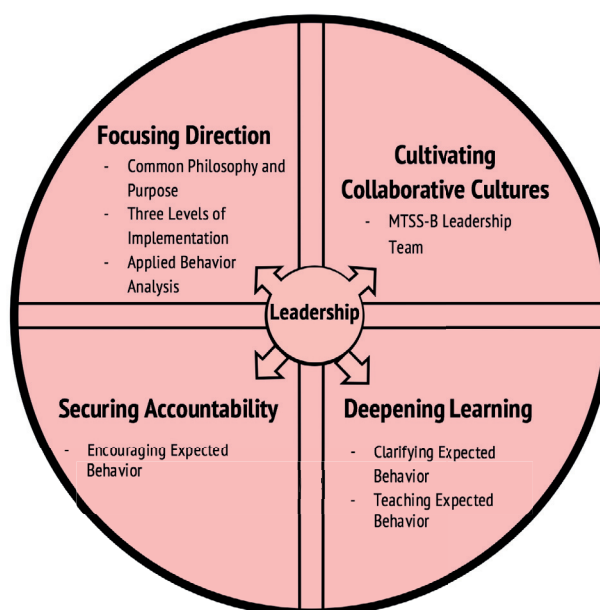


Figure 3.2

The Self-Assessment Survey Measurement

There are many formal and informal ways to measure and feel successful MTSS-B implementation. Staff buy-in is the number one factor when assessing implementation success and sustainability of behavior programming (Pinkelman, McIntosh, Rasplca,

Berg & Strickland-Cohen, 2015; McIntosh, et al., 2013; Heath & Heath, 2007). Getting support from staff members is critical for getting a program off the ground as well as for program sustainability. Staff should showcase a willingness not only to learn but also to internally invest in the program and bettering the lives of students. One way to measure this dedication to implementation is through the Self-Assessment Survey (SAS).

The Self-Assessment Survey, or SAS, is an annual, multiple-response survey to help schools identify the staff perception of implementation status for school-wide, classroom, non-classroom, and individual student systems. The SAS is a research-validated measure of variables influencing sustainability of schoolwide behavior interventions, and is the best measurement of staff perceptions and buy-in (McIntosh, et al., 2013). The SAS can be taken by certified staff members before and during initial implementation. When analyzing results of each system of support, including schoolwide, non-classroom, classroom, and individual supports, 80% of survey responses must indicate that supports are in place for that feature to be considered implemented with fidelity (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2015; Mathews, McIntosh, Frank, & May, 2014). The SAS will be explained in more detail in Chapter 4.

MTSS-B, The Coherence Framework, Stability and Innovation

The idea of multiple systems with multiple layers working simultaneously together is daunting. However, it is also doable. When the components of the Coherence Framework act as the foundation of implementation and when they are paired with carefully applied layers of stability and innovation, MTSS-B programming can be implemented with fidelity and success.

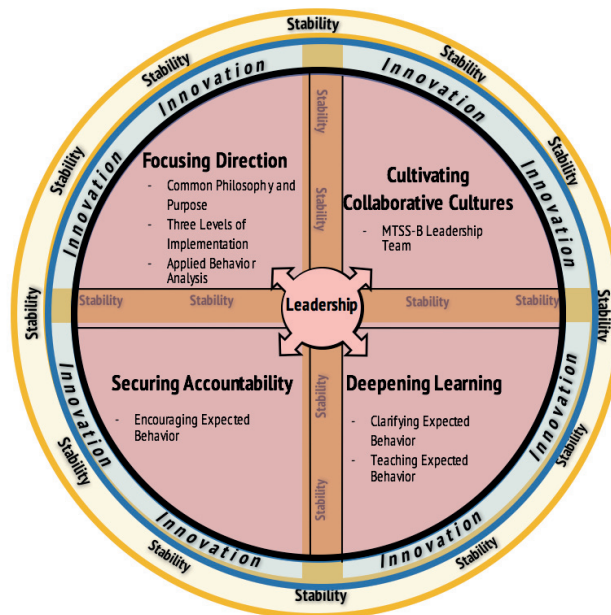


Figure 3.3

Summary of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Behavior

This chapter explored the five essential components of school-wide MTSS-B programming. Like the Coherence Framework, each component is meant to operate simultaneously to ensure the positive and proactive approach to discipline that is most likely to lead to behavioral success. Reaching today's students requires teaching students how to be successful and behave responsibly in school. This is based on the belief that social behavior is learned, therefore it can be taught. A foundation of MTSS-B programming is the philosophy that discipline should be based on the very same instructional concepts used to facilitate academic learning. Direct instruction in social behaviors can be provided to students, and practice, encouragement, and correction given as needed (Nebraska Department of Education, 2019; Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2015). And just as with academics, when

behavior problems are complex or chronic, specialized interventions or intensive teaching arrangements may be necessary.

Chapter 4

Profile of Data Collection and Analysis

The purpose of this study was to explore how one middle school pursued coherence when implementing Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Behavior. Current research indicates the need for coherence throughout the process of school change initiatives. While current coherence research and frameworks describe what coherence is and how to attempt to gain it, few studies have explored the degree of coherence within certified staff perceptions during the first year of implementation of a new behavior program. This mixed-data study was developed to utilize survey results from certified staff regarding initial Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Behavior implementation practices, as well as field notes and document analysis to tell the story from the lens of coherence resources. The use of quantitative data alone would have been limiting in the analysis of successful implementation (Creswell, 2014; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998); therefore, a mixed-data design offered the best approach to fully analyze how all four components of the Coherence Framework were used to implement Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Behavior at the building level.

Procedures

The data source for this study included certified staff employed by a public, Midwestern middle school.

Participant selection. This study utilized a voluntary sample of certified staff in one middle school. Because the sample is from one school, the sample is limited and therefore a limitation of the study. Study participants were asked to complete the survey as part of the school district's individual school building self-assessment survey. The

purpose of this survey was to determine the fidelity of implementation of year one of a Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Behavior program. Two surveys were administered: the first before program implementation in March 2018 and the second at the beginning of the second semester of program implementation in January of 2019. The school MTSS-B leadership team requested via email, in a small group professional development session, that all certified staff members in the building take the self-assessment survey. A total of 92 requests were made to certified staff to complete the Self-Assessment Survey. Of those 92 requests, 84 self-assessment surveys were completed.

Data access. The researcher requested approval from the Institutional Review Board through the University of Nebraska at Omaha as part of the research process. In addition, the researcher gained permission through the participating school district's approval process to access the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Behavior building-level implementation data.

Data Collection – Quantitative

The quantitative data source used as part of this study was archived data generated from the school district's individual school Self-Assessment Survey (SAS) to determine fidelity of implementation of all buildings' Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Behavior programs. The school district's Office of Student and Community Services chose the Self-Assessment Survey (SAS) created by PBISApps, a non-profit group developed and operated by faculty and staff at Educational and Community Supports, a research unit within the College of Education at the University of Oregon (PBISApps, 2019). The SAS, as described in Chapter 3, is an annual, multiple-response survey to

help schools identify the staff perception of implementation status for school-wide, classroom, non-classroom, and individual student systems. As the study focused on current staff perceptions of implementation, a survey was the best tool to gain baseline insight regarding staff beliefs (Sugai & Horner, 1999; Sugai, Horner, and Todd, 2003; Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

For certified staff to have access to the survey, the district's Office of Student and Community Services had to open the window of access for the school. The window of access was from January 7, 2019 through March 6, 2019. During a small group professional development session, the MTSS-B school leadership team shared the survey to certified staff via email. Staff members were asked to complete the survey during allotted work time within the professional development session. The link shared took staff directly to the survey. For staff members who were not present, individual emails were sent from the MTSS-B school leadership team requesting the survey be completed.

As part of the work of the school district's Office of Student and Community Services, MTSS-B district supervisors communicated with schools via email to confirm the completion of the surveys in order to close the survey window end date. Every school building in the district completed the self-assessment survey, and the MTSS-B supervisors compiled the data by building. The data was presented to the office of student and community services and to the executive leadership team of the district to assess implementation strengths and weaknesses. In a March 2019, one-day professional development session, school MTSS-B leadership teams were given individual school survey results. MTSS-B leadership teams then communicated these results with their

respective buildings with a recommendation for future phasing for MTSS-B school programming. Individual schools were not given access to other school MTSS-B SAS survey data.

Instrumentation. The quantitative instrument used for this study was a PBIS Self-Assessment Survey report that was used to provide feedback to the district's Office of Student and Community Services Department. It was developed by PBISApps, and its intended use was to identify the staff perception of initial implementation status of the building MTSS-B programming. As mentioned in Chapter 3, 80% of survey responses must indicate that supports are in place for that feature to be considered implemented with fidelity (University of South Florida & Florida's Positive Behavior Support Project, 2019; Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2015; Mathews, McIntosh, Frank, & May, 2014). The data from this measure was accessed as part of this study.

After participants identified their grade level at which they serve, their school, and their position within the school, the survey directed them to 46 statements across four sub-sections. Each statement identified a particular feature within the sub-section, which were categorized by specific systems of programming within the school. The system titles of each survey sub-section were School-Wide Systems, Non-Classroom Setting Systems, Classroom Systems, and Individual Student Systems. In all 46 statements, certified staff were asked to rate the 46 Feature Statements based on their individual experiences in the school. Each feature was presented in a single row of a table and instructions requested participants to make their selection on the left side of the page for Current Status of System Feature and on the right side of the page for the

Priority for Improvement for the Feature. On the left side of the page, in regard to Current Status of Feature, the three choices for staff to select were, In Place, Partial in Place, or Not in Place. On the right side of the page, the three choices for staff to select were, High, Medium, or Low, in regard to Priority for Improvement (see example in Figure 4.1). This three-point Likert scale was repeated for all 46 statements.

Current Status			Feature	Priority for Improvement		
In Place	Partial in Place	Not in Place		High	Medium	Low
			Example system #1: School-wide. School-wide is defined as involving all students, all staff, & all settings.			
X			Example feature #1: A small number (e.g. 3-5) of positively & clearly stated student expectations or rules are defined.			X

Figure 4.1 – Self-Assessment Survey excerpt from PBISApps (2019).

Within the School-Wide Systems sub-section were 18 survey questions that represented staff perceptions about system features that involve all students, all staff, and all settings. In the Non-Classroom Setting Systems sub-section were nine survey questions that represented staff perceptions about system features that involve particular times or places where supervision is emphasized, (e.g., hallways, cafeteria, playground, bus). The Classroom Systems sub-section included 11 survey questions in regard to features in instructional settings in which teachers) supervise and teach groups of students. Finally, in the Individual Student Systems sub-section were eight survey questions about specific supports for students who engage in chronic problem behaviors. The survey statements for each feature are listed below in Appendix B. Scores were totaled for each sub-section, as well as for the entire survey.

Data Collection – Qualitative – A Case Study Approach

The qualitative data came from a case study methods approach. A case study is defined as “a method for learning about a complex instance, based on a comprehensive understanding of that instance obtained by extensive description and analysis of that instance taken as a whole and in its context” (Morra & Friedlander, 1999, p. 3). A case study focuses on one particular unit and often uses a combination of quantitative and qualitative data (Balbach, 1999; Better Evaluation, n.d.). Case studies often involve “thick descriptions” (Morra & Friedlander, 1999, p. 5), because the power in the details comes from the rich information from multiple data points. Oftentimes, multiple methods can be used, from document review to first-hand observation. From a mixed-data perspective, the combination of quantitative and qualitative data was particularly helpful in understanding how the different program elements fit together (Balbach, 1999; Rogers, 2014). Another important element in a case study approach is investment of time – the researcher must have enough time on site to obtain breadth of information and to get longitudinal data (US General Accounting Office, 1990, p. 51).

The analysis of the case study data is usually extensive. The key technique in this analysis is triangulation, which is defined as a technique that involves developing the reliability of the findings through multiple data sources within each type (US General Accounting Office, 1990; Balbach, 1999; Morra & Friedlander, 1999, p. 6). When agreement is derived among the different types of data sources, the findings gain validity. There are analysis strategies that can help with finding this agreement, such as pattern matching, explanation building, and thematic review. The benefit from

triangulation is that it offers assurance that the themes that derive from the data reflect influences from many different sources.

Instrumentation. The concept of a human being as a research instrument was first introduced by Lincoln and Guba (1985). Humans as the primary means of data interpretation is founded on the idea that people bring meaning through their analysis of the world around them (Glense & Peshkin, 1992; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2002). The qualitative instrument used for this study will be the researcher and her interpretation of field observation notes and analyzed documentation.

Strength of Claims Made

Main research question. The overarching research question of this study is, how do middle schools pursue coherence when implementing Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Behavior? Though one school was studied, the results are not generalized but the results of the school's journey could be helpful for other schools in similar pursuits.

Data Analysis. A sequential mixed data case study was chosen for this research because of the concept of data informing data, and therefore data informing action. Quantitatively, a survey using a three-point Likert scale was used, and the researcher used graphical analysis to analyze the data, ultimately comparing the results of each Self-Assessment Survey, the one given in March 2018 and the one given in January 2019.

The qualitative data sources for this case study included field observation notes, digital communication, and original program documents. Each of these items were

collected and organized chronologically and coded using the deductive coding method. Using Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña's ideas about coding (2014), codes were developed using the four components of Fullan and Quinn's Coherence Framework (2016), the main research question in this study, as well as elements of innovation and stability. The sequential organization was written in a quarterly timeline format, spanning the course of 17 months. Data analysis showcased the most influential component of coherence during each semester. Examples of the aforementioned qualitative data sources are provided in Appendix C.

Organization of the Study and Future Steps

This mixed-data case study focused on the perceptions of staff members regarding the fidelity of initial implementation of a Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Behavior program and what factors were or were not in place to reach coherence. Through the study, the researcher hoped to answer the following research question: How can coherence be created when implementing Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Behavior at the middle level? The organization of this study included receiving consent from both the Institutional Review Board and the participating school district, accessing the MTSS-B building survey data previously gathered by the school district, and using methods of quantitatively and qualitatively analyze the data for areas of program coherence within the individual school.

Chapter 5

Findings and Analysis

The overarching research question of this study was, how do middle schools pursue coherence when implementing Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Behavior (MTSS-B)? A sequential mixed data case study was chosen for this research because of the concept of data informing data, and therefore data informing action. The quantitative data sources for this study were two, three-point Likert scale Self-Assessment Survey (SAS); a sign test was used to analyze the survey results. The qualitative data source for this case study included field observation notes, digital communication, and original program documents. Each of these items were organized chronologically and coded using the deductive coding method. For analysis, a network display was created to show implementation processes over a circular timeline; colors represent the four Coherence Framework components, and lines represent connections and flow between data sources.

Quantitative Results

A sign test was used to compare the SAS results from the March 2018 survey and the January 2019 survey. The sign test was first introduced in 1710 and it is a non-parametric test that can be used to test whether two outcomes have equal probabilities (David & Edwards, 2001; Sakind, 2010; Gravetter & Wallnau, 2012). Teacher perceptions of fidelity of implementation showed a significant difference between the 2018 and 2019 SAS surveys in all four systems. Tables 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, and 5.4 show the analysis for the four individual systems in the survey.

Set 1	Set 2	Set 2 - Set 1	Sign
63%	100%	37%	+
47%	93%	46%	+
29%	76%	47%	+
34%	54%	20%	+
23%	41%	18%	+
27%	41%	14%	+
41%	74%	33%	+
67%	91%	24%	+
60%	92%	32%	+
65%	82%	17%	+
37%	73%	36%	+
22%	53%	31%	+
39%	69%	30%	+
10%	62%	52%	+
13%	83%	70%	+
28%	75%	47%	+
32%	75%	43%	+
80%	96%	16%	+

Table 5.1
School-wide System Results

For the School-Wide System shown in Table 5.1, because the data is nonparametric, a two-sample sign test was performed to test whether or not there was a difference in the medians of the two sets. There were 18 samples, all 18 were positive and none were negative. With probability of 50%, $P(X=x) \leq .001$, which is less than $\alpha = .01$. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the difference between Set 1 and Set 2 medians is not zero; there is a significant difference between Set 1 and Set 2.

Set 1	Set 2	Set 2 - Set 1	Sign
33%	90%	57%	+
18%	65%	47%	+
52%	77%	25%	+
8%	83%	75%	+
35%	65%	30%	+
50%	54%	4%	+
23%	57%	34%	+
29%	62%	33%	+
41%	75%	34%	+

Table 5.2
Non-classroom System Results

For the Non-Classroom Settings System shown in Table 5.2, because the data is nonparametric, a two-sample sign test was performed to test whether or not there was a difference in the medians of the two sets. There were 9 samples, all 9 were positive and none were negative. With probability of 50%, $P(X=x) = .002$, which is less than $\alpha = .01$. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the difference between Set 1 and Set 2 medians is not zero; there is a significant difference between Set 1 and Set 2.

Set 1	Set 2	Set 2 - Set 1	Sign
70%	95%	25%	+
34%	59%	25%	+
69%	94%	25%	+
27%	67%	40%	+
18%	31%	13%	+
21%	53%	32%	+
33%	64%	31%	+
51%	65%	14%	+
60%	59%	-1%	-
60%	78%	18%	+
44%	64%	20%	+

Table 5.3
Classroom System Results

For the Classroom Settings System shown in Table 5.3, because the data is nonparametric, a two-sample sign test was performed to test whether or not there was a difference in the medians of the two sets. There were 11 samples, 10 were positive and 1 was negative. With probability of 50%, $P(X=x) = .005$, which is less than $\alpha = .01$. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the difference between Set 1 and Set 2 medians is not zero; there is a significant difference between Set 1 and Set 2.

Set 1	Set 2	Set 2 - Set 1	Sign
22%	33%	11%	+
25%	44%	19%	+
22%	46%	24%	+
30%	71%	41%	+
20%	44%	24%	+
37%	55%	18%	+
12%	19%	7%	+
15%	57%	42%	+

Table 5.4
Individual Student System Results

For the Individual Student System shown in Table 5.4, because the data is nonparametric, a two-sample sign test was performed to test whether or not there was a difference in the medians of the two sets. There were 8 samples, all 8 were positive and none were negative. With probability of 50%, $P(X=x) = .004$, which is less than $\alpha = .01$. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the difference between Set 1 and Set 2 medians is not zero; there is a significant difference between Set 1 and Set 2.

Quantitative Analysis

In looking at the difference in the results between the first set of data and the second set of data, the first being the SAS survey given in March 2018 and the second being the SAS survey given in January 2019, in this resulting survey data, neither set of the data mimicked a normal curve. Therefore, instead of a t-test that is used for parametric data, a sign test was used because the researcher wanted to find the difference of nonparametric data. The null hypothesis was that the difference between the medians would be zero; in other words, there would be no change from data set number one and data set number two. In each of the four systems, School-Wide, Classroom, Non-Classroom, and Individual Student, the null hypothesis was rejected: there was a change between the first set of data and the second set of data. To interpret this, they all improved by looking at the actual results.

For the School-Wide System shown in Table 5.1, because the data is nonparametric, a two-sample sign test was performed to test whether or not there was a difference in the medians of the two sets. There were 18 samples, all 18 were positive and none were negative. With probability of 50%, $P(X=x) \leq .001$, which is less than $\alpha = .01$. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the difference between Set 1 and Set 2 medians is not zero; there is a significant difference between Set 1 and Set 2.

For the Classroom Settings System shown in Table 5.2, because the data is nonparametric, a two-sample sign test was performed to test whether or not there was a difference in the medians of the two sets. There were 9 samples, all 9 were positive and none were negative. With probability of 50%, $P(X=x) = .002$, which is less than $\alpha = .01$.

Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the difference between Set 1 and Set 2 medians is not zero; there is a significant difference between Set 1 and Set 2.

For the Non-Classroom Settings System shown in Table 5.3, because the data is nonparametric, a two-sample sign test was performed to test whether or not there was a difference in the medians of the two sets. There were 11 samples, 10 were positive and 1 was negative. With probability of 50%, $P(X=x) = .005$, which is less than $\alpha = .01$. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the difference between Set 1 and Set 2 medians is not zero; there is a significant difference between Set 1 and Set 2.

For the Individual Student System shown in Table 5.4, because the data is nonparametric, a two-sample sign test was performed to test whether or not there was a difference in the medians of the two sets. There were 8 samples, all 8 were positive and none were negative. With probability of 50%, $P(X=x) = .004$, which is less than $\alpha = .01$. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the difference between Set 1 and Set 2 medians is not zero; there is a significant difference between Set 1 and Set 2.

Qualitative Results

The goal of the qualitative exploration segment of this study's analysis was to create a network display to showcase how things act or transform over time, as well as how each item within the timeline can inform direction of future implementation. In the first step of the analysis process, all documents that were to be used for the study were organized chronologically and categorized into five time frames, almost all relating to a semester within the school year: Fall 2017, Spring 2018, Summer 2018, Fall 2018, and Spring 2019. These time frames were used to create five quintants within the circular timeline used in the network display, with time frames starting point beginning in the

middle of the circle. In all, there were 165 documents included in this study. The second step was to give each document 1-4 codes, congruent with Fullan's Coherence Framework. These codes and the colors used in the network display for each one were Focusing Direction (orange), Deepening Learning (green), Cultivating Collaborative Cultures (yellow), and Security Accountability (pink). The third step was to allocate an approximate time, measured in hours, to assess the energy level of commitment to that item within the timeline. Within the network display, values of time were visually shown by the circle size for each item. Tables 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8, and 5.9 include calculations used to create the network display. Figure 5.1 showcases the Network Display.

	Focusing Direction	Deepening Learning	Cultivating Collaborative Cultures	Securing Accountability
Count of Documents Within Component	16	6	19	17
Energy per Component	27.5	7.5	36.5	46.5
Percent of Focus During Semester Implementation	23.31%	6.36%	30.93%	39.41%

Table 5.5
Fall 2017 Results

	Focusing Direction	Deepening Learning	Cultivating Collaborative Cultures	Securing Accountability
Count of Documents Within Component	29	14	29	13
Energy per Component	56.5	58.5	22	35
Percent of Focus During Semester Implementation	32.85%	34.01%	12.79%	20.35%

*Table 5.6
Spring 2018 Results*

	Focusing Direction	Deepening Learning	Cultivating Collaborative Cultures	Securing Accountability
Count of Documents Within Component	12	8	20	8
Energy per Component	27.5	31	33.5	21
Percent of Focus During Semester Implementation	24.34%	27.43%	29.65%	18.58%

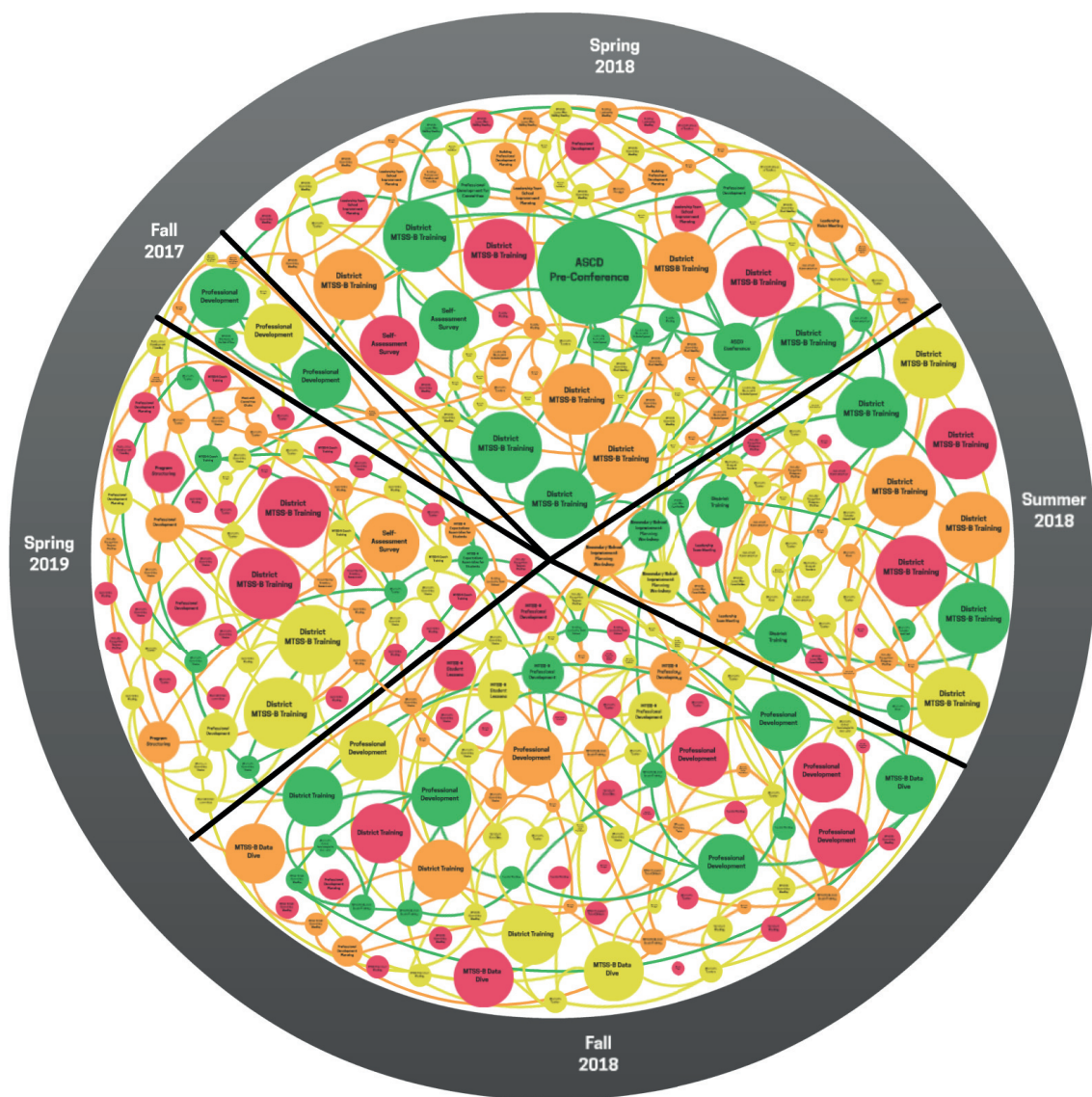
*Table 5.7
Summer 2018 Results*

	Focusing Direction	Deepening Learning	Cultivating Collaborative Cultures	Securing Accountability
Count of Documents Within Component	21	3	15	30
Energy per Component	43.5	43.5	40.5	59.5
Percent of Focus During Semester Implementation	23.26%	23.26%	21.66%	31.82%

*Table 5.8
Fall 2018 Results*

	Focusing Direction	Deepening Learning	Cultivating Collaborative Cultures	Securing Accountability
Count of Documents Within Component	16	6	19	17
Energy per Component	27.5	7.5	36.5	46.5
Percent of Focus During Semester Implementation	23.31%	6.36%	30.93%	39.41%

*Table 5.9
Spring 2019 Results*



*Figure 5.1
A Network Display to Showcase the Inter-Workings of a Five-Semester MTSS-B
Program Implementation*

Qualitative Analysis

Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014) teach that creating codes and partaking in the act of coding data takes deep reflection and thus deep analysis and interpretation of the data's meaning. In the case of using deductive coding to analyze the 165 documents and items within this circular timeline, the act of coding triggered deep responses and emotions that were very clearly tied to one, if not all four, of the components of Fullan and Quinn's Coherence Framework. Charmaz (2001) describes coding as the critical link between data collection and their explanation of meaning, and the latter can certainly be visualized within the network display that was created. This categorization created a method of discovery (Saldaña, 2015; Miles & Huberman, 1994), offering up a very personal and interpretive familiarity to the past happenings involved in this middle school's MTSS-B implementation.

If these results were to be used to assist other middle schools in program implementation, the hope would be that school leadership could use the network display and the previous tables of information to outline an implementation timeline based on the Coherence Framework. For example, one notable importance would be to focus each semester of implementation around the most important components of the Framework for that specific time period. Based on the analysis of the document coding, Table 5.10 shows the ranking of each component within the Coherence Framework as to which would be most important during each semester. Though one school was studied, the results are not generalized but the results of the school's journey could be helpful for other schools in similar pursuits.

	Ranked Components			
	First	Second	Third	Fourth
Fall 2017	Deepening Learning	Cultivating Collaborative Cultures	Focusing Direction	Securing Accountability
Spring 2018	Deepening Learning	Focusing Direction	Securing Accountability	Cultivating Collaborative Cultures
Summer 2018	Cultivating Collaborative Cultures	Deepening Learning	Focusing Direction	Securing Accountability
Fall 2018	Securing Accountability	Tie -- Deepening Learning & Focusing Direction	Tie -- Deepening Learning & Focusing Direction	Cultivating Collaborative Cultures
Spring 2019	Securing Accountability	Cultivating Collaborative Cultures	Focusing Direction	Deepening Learning

Table 5.10
Ranked Components During Each Quintant

Summary

The main research question in this study served to explain how middle schools can approach coherence when implementing Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Behavior (MTSS-B). While statistically significant findings were found quantitatively, the data collected and analyzed from the qualitative aspect of this study gives a fuller and more robust explanation of the process as to how to get such statistically significant results. Though one school was studied, the results are not generalized but the results of the school's journey could be helpful for other schools in similar pursuits.

Chapter Six presents an overview of the study, discussion and considerations to be made, as well as implications for further research. An interpretation of the mixed-data case study results as well as recommendations for future research will be included for continued work aimed at pursuing coherence while implementing behavior programming such as MTSS-B at the middle level.

Chapter 6

Overview of the Study, Discussion, and Implications

This chapter discusses an overview of the study, discussion and considerations to be made, as well as implications for further research. The overview of the study reflects on the purpose of the study, provides a review of the literature, the research design, as well as the findings. The discussion section opens an informal dialogue about how the researcher organically carried out this study. Implications for further research are discussed and final thoughts about the study are shared.

Overview of the Study

The purpose of this mixed-data case study was to evaluate how middle schools approach coherence when implementing Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Behavior (MTSS-B).

Review of Literature. Using Fullan and Quinn's Coherence Framework (2016), as a theoretical construct, MTSS-B program implementation was studied to find specific implementation elements with specific care to the elements of supporting innovation and honoring stability. The Coherence Framework includes four components, that when used simultaneously, lay the groundwork for sustainable systematic change. These four components are 1) Focusing Direction; 2) Cultivating Collaborative Cultures; 3) Deepening Learning; and 4) Securing Accountability. In the middle of these four, a fifth Leadership component connects and activates the others.

MTSS-B is an organizational framework for discipline; it should not be thought of as a specific model or a specific program, but instead it should be modeled as an approach to behavior programming reform using a compilation of effective and

research-validated interventions, practices, and systems change strategies ((Nebraska Department of Education, 2019; Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2015). A foundation of MTSS-B programming is the philosophy that discipline should be based on the very same instructional concepts used to facilitate academic learning. Direct instruction in social behaviors can be provided to students, and practice, encouragement, and correction given as needed. Like the Coherence Framework, each component of the MTSS-B system is meant to operate simultaneously to ensure the positive and proactive approach to discipline that is most likely to lead to behavioral success.

The large ideas of supporting innovation and honoring stability may have seemed tertiary components to this study. However, even when intentionally planting the seeds of coherence throughout the five-semester-long MTSS-B implementation process, the researcher would have been senseless, and perhaps even unsuccessful, if not placing large value on the strength and weight of these large notions. The juxtaposition of stability and innovation can often create a volatile environment in school buildings, leaving staff feeling like they lost their love for what they do. There is so much pressure to offer the best of the best and compete with other schools and districts, oftentimes at the hands of Wrong Drivers (Fullan, 2011a, p. 3; Fullan & Quinn, 2016). This is exactly why program implementation must value these concepts, providing a delicate balance of the two and spending organic yet significant amounts of time juggling both simultaneously.

Research Design. This mixed-data case study was developed to utilize survey results from certified staff regarding initial Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for

Behavior implementation practices, as well as field notes and document analysis to tell the story from the lens of coherence resources. The use of quantitative data alone would have been limiting in the analysis of successful implementation (Creswell, 2014; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998); therefore, a mixed-data design offered the best approach to fully analyze how all four components of the Coherence Framework were used to implement MTSS-B at the building level. For the quantitative data, the Self-Assessment Survey (SAS) was used. The SAS is a multiple-response survey to help schools identify the staff perception of implementation status for school-wide, classroom, non-classroom, and individual student systems. As the study focused on current staff perceptions of implementation, a survey was the best tool to gain baseline insight regarding staff beliefs (Sugai & Horner, 1999; Sugai, Horner, and Todd, 2003; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Two SAS surveys were administered: the first before program implementation in March 2018 and the second at the beginning of the second semester of program implementation in January of 2019.

The qualitative data came from a case study methods approach. Data sources for this case study included field observation notes, digital communication, and original program documents. Each of these items were collected and organized chronologically and coded using the deductive coding method.

Findings. In the quantitative analysis of the Self-Assessment Survey, 46 out of the 45 features on the survey showed an increase, or a positive result. These results indicate that implementation was not random, but instead was meticulously designed. Within the School-wide System, the p-value was 3.8147E-6; within the Non-Classroom System, the p-value was 0.00195313; within the Classroom System, the p-value was

0.00976563; and within the Individual Student System, the p-value was 0.00390625. In all four systems, we could reject the null hypothesis and say there was a significant difference. This analysis indicates that staff perceptions were changed because of the way the MTSS-B program was implemented. The SAS results showed success of implementation, but through qualitative data and analysis and the creation of the network display, the mixed-data design structure of this study provided a justification of how those results occurred.

Discussion. Four main ideas emerged from the findings of this study. They include teacher perceptions of implementation, the intertwining of stability and innovation, how Tier 1 implementation affected Tier 2 and Tier 3 structures, and the true intertwining of the components of the Coherence Framework.

Teacher perceptions of implementation. One of the main takeaways from this specific case study was the undeniable fact that this approach of MTSS-B implementation worked for this school. For each of the systems within the Self-Assessment Survey (SAS) in the quantitative findings, the null hypothesis was rejected showing that there was a significant difference between the March 2018 SAS and the January 2019 SAS. The results also showed that the difference was so significant that out of the 46 features within the SAS, 45 of them showed a positive outcome after 10 months of implementation. This is significant because this approach could be replicated in other secondary schools, especially in middle level buildings, who are beginning the process of behavior program implementation.

Intertwining of stability and innovation. Additionally, an important factor of this study were the two lenses of stability and innovation. It was stated in the second chapter that to be intentional about building connections with others and getting to know them is a wonderful avenue for becoming known as someone who can provide comfort and stability. This can be difficult for new administrators because they do not yet have the clout and experience that veteran administrators can bring to the table. However, many researchers have found that the informality of the day-to-day interactions and informal morning cafeteria conversations is a wonderful approach where simply interactions can make an exponential difference (Byrk & Schneider 2003; Fullan, 2003; Muhammad & Cruz, 2019). This is the approach that was taken by the researcher in this study, and because the focus was not on pushing a program and instead it was about getting to know people, the researcher gained the trust of the staff. Because it was maintained, this trust had great benefits for the long-term, such as collaborative problem-solving and a reduced sense of vulnerability (Fullan, 2003; Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009). With this non-threatening approach to maintaining stability, the culture shifted to one where people were willing and excited to take risks and to dive into the unknown.

Because of the newfound energy of the culture shift, innovation began to take shape. Veteran staff members were energized and excited that they would have a chance to have a stronger voice in a new program in the school as members of the committee. Newer teachers who showed promise, character, and enthusiasm were brought along onto the committee. Open-mindedness seemed to take over and people were motivated to collaborate and tighten up behavior programming in the building. And because this was a

committee where teachers were front-and-center, staff felt like their own friends were designing the program, and because of that there was buy-in. Teacher perceptions are very real, and without buy-in, programming will not work. The quantitative data from this study showed that with this coherence-focused approach, teachers bought-in and felt that the program was implemented with fidelity.

How Tier 1 implementation affected Tier 2 and Tier 3 structures. In the book, *Good to Great* (2005), Jim Collins introduced the Flywheel Effect, an anecdotal metaphor about a 5,000-pound, heavy, metal flywheel that you push to rotate on its axle as fast and as long as you can. Using your greatest effort, pushing as hard as you can, you may only get the flywheel to complete one rotation after hours of struggle. But as you keep exerting yourself, at some point the flywheel begins to slightly pick up momentum, and move more easily and more quickly. Collins writes, “Then at some point – breakthrough! The momentum of the thing kicks in your favor, hurling the flywheel forward, turn after turn... whoosh!... its own heavy weight working for you... Each turn of the flywheel builds upon work done earlier, compounding your investment of effort” (p. 164). This metaphor is a great visual for what happened with the MTSS-B implementation approach used in this case study. The first two semesters of focus included painstakingly slow progress, unknown to almost all stakeholders. With the exception of having small conversations with future committee members, learning a lot, mostly in isolation, and collaborating with the principal, MTSS-B was completely out-of-sight.

This is where the Coherence Framework component, Cultivating Collaborative Cultures really came into play in this case study. Finally, when the committee convened

for the first several times, staff were primed to roll up their sleeves and work on something special and unique to the building. Using a prescribed protocol (MTSS-B), staff designed how they wanted it to be implemented. Because people had to struggle with it, just enough to own it, this created momentum for the first success, the next success, and so on and so forth. The flywheel was in motion, and though it wasn't moving quickly yet, it was being pushed by a group of very influential and wide-ranging stakeholders.

Fast-forwarding through all five semesters, this flywheel effect describes perfectly how this approach of MTSS-B Tier 1 implementation affected Tier 2 and Tier 3 structures, as well. The fourth system in the SAS survey, Individual Students, show results of this effect. In March 2018, all eight features within the Individual Students system of the SAS survey showed that 50% or less of staff felt that feature was in place. In the January 2019 SAS results, three of those eight features had a positive increase, even though the focus was only on the Tier 1 structures which only included the first three systems in the survey, which were School-wide setting, Classroom setting, and Non-classroom setting. Tier 2 and 3 successes were happening in the school that were ripples of strong Tier 1 implementation. This ended up being a great stepping stone for the beginning stages of a Tier 2 focus.

Intertwining of the components of the Coherence Framework. This case study would not have had the exponential effect that it did if the components of the Coherence Framework weren't executed at the same time. Even though figure 5.10 in Chapter Five showed that each of the five semesters had one component that was a true front-runner, every component played a role in each semester. This simultaneous approach of the four

components is the equation for systematic change, and the approach is what activates and connects all four components. Used in this way, the Coherence Framework liberates a greater mass of people to become engaged in purposeful system change, and ultimately to own the changes that they create together. When the components balance each other and are woven together by intentional leadership, this is the power behind the collective capacity machine that is The Coherence Framework. All of these moving parts can certainly be daunting; however, when the components of the Coherence Framework act as the foundation of implementation and when they are paired with carefully applied layers of stability and innovation, MTSS-B programming can be implemented with fidelity and success.

Implications for Further Research. The researcher of this study recommends that replicate studies could be done to include more schools within the same school district so as to better compare the implementation of MTSS-B programming. Further research could also be conducted on approaching coherence while carrying out program implementation, specifically at the middle level. Middle level work is unique because it requires a knowledge and skill of both elementary and secondary practices, and adult learning specific to each. Districts could certainly bring in middle level experts to assist with the Focusing Direction (Fullan & Quinn, 2016) component of the district-level initiative.

The researcher also identifies that there are still many questions to be asked regarding the middle school in this study as they continue to year two of their MTSS-B program implementation journey. With MTSS-B remaining a school and district priority

area, the researcher intends to continue to monitor and carry-out MTSS-B programming and use the Self-Assessment Survey to design staff development based on survey results. Additionally, a comparison study could also be done to examine the Self-Assessment Survey results between all middle schools in the district. As there are more than ten middle schools, a mixed-data approach to analyzing program implementation of MTSS-B could uncover areas of success as well as areas of need, both of which would be substantially beneficial for district leadership to use in the assessing and revising of the district initiative as a whole. In all, a larger study could be conducted to measure MTSS-B program implementation throughout the entire district to measure each school's approach to coherence while implementing the behavior program. A quantitative approach only using the SAS results could be very useful, but a mixed-data approach could offer up how each successful school approach coherence during implementation. Continued research in these areas may provide viable program implementation solutions to aid schools and districts in implementing behavior programming in the future.

Final Thoughts. This mixed-data case study detailed the journey and outcomes of one middle school's MTSS-B program implementation during five semesters. Grounded in Fullan and Quinn's Coherence Framework (2016), this study served to provide insight to MTSS-B program implementation while also supporting innovation and honoring stability within the middle school building. This study is significant because it provides a lens to look at the idea of innovation and stability in a way that offers understanding and cohesion. Systems change initiatives can be frightening; however, with the Coherence Framework, schools can strategically scaffold program implementation to provide both innovation and stability, offering the best solution to needed change.

The book *Leadership on the Line* by Heifetz and Linsky describes this kind of approach:

For transformative change to be sustainable, it not only has to take root in its own culture, but [it] also has to successfully engage its changing environment... Therefore, leadership needs to start with listening and learning, findings out where people are, valuing what is best in what they already know, value, and do, and build from there... You need both a healthy respect for the values, competence, and history of people, as well as the changing environment, to build the capacity to respond to new challenges and take advantage of new openings. (2017, p. xiv)

Any type of program implementation cannot be done in a silo of selective knowledge. Regardless of building size, composition, age, or any other identifiable trait imaginable, program implementation cannot be done without people. It simply can't. Sustainability isn't all about best practices and the most up-to-date programming; it's about the people who are carrying out the programming. Leadership can only start with listening and learning – there is no other way to begin if we want it to work. A common phrase found in the work of Michael Fullan is that we have to “go slow to go fast,” which really should be in the introduction chapter of every program implementation manual or guidebook (Fullan & Pinchot, 2018).

This mixed-data case study detailed the design and outcome of one middle school's journey to Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Behavior program implementation. Grounded in Fullan and Quinn's Coherence Framework and intertwined with ideas of supporting innovation while honoring stability, findings indicate that the

carryout of the MTSS-B program significantly affected the fidelity of implementation, as perceived by school staff members. This study served to provide insight to building and district leaders hoping to support school leadership during any program implementation, but specific to behavior programming implementation. Additionally, recommendations were made for additional research related to MTSS-B program implementation, specifically related to coherence. A follow-up study will be conducted to examine implementation from year two to year three in the same middle school building. Continued research in this area may provide viable insight to aid middle schools in implementing behavior programming in the future.

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Appendices

APPENDIX A

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA IRB APPROVAL LETTER



NEBRASKA'S HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER

Office of Regulatory Affairs (ORA)
Institutional Review Board (IRB)

IRB Protocol: 854-19-EX
SUPPORTING INNOVATION, HONORING STABILITY, AND ACHIEVING COHERENCE WHILE
IMPLEMENTING MULTI-TIERED SYSTEMS OF SUPPORT FOR BEHAVIOR AT THE MIDDLE LEVEL

PI: Chelsea Krebs

Please be advised that the above titled IRB Protocol has been re-classified as withdrawn. Per the information provided in the exempt application in which you are re-analyzing existing survey data with no identifiers, this would not be considered human subject research per the regulations defined at 45CFR46.102. Therefore, it is not subject to the federal regulations. No further action is required.

Please be advised that should anything change which would result in the project meeting the definition of human subject research, the IRB must be notified before any further research activity continues.

Should you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact the Office of Regulatory Affairs at 559-6463.

Sincerely,

Gail Kotulak, BS, CIP
IRB Administrator III
UNMC IRB
Office of Regulatory Affairs
402-559-6540

Signed on: 2019-11-21 11:24:00.000

APPENDIX B

SURVEY FEATURE STATEMENTS BY SYSTEM SUBSECTIONS

System	Features
School-Wide	1. A small number (e.g. 3-5) of positively & clearly stated student expectations or rules are defined.
	2. Expected student behaviors are taught directly.
	3. Expected student behaviors are rewarded regularly.
	4. Problem behaviors (failure to meet expected student behaviors) are defined clearly.
	5. Consequences for problem behaviors are defined clearly.
	6. Distinctions between office v. classroom managed problem behaviors are clear.
	7. Options exist to allow classroom instruction to continue when problem behavior occurs.
	8. Procedures are in place to address emergency/dangerous situations.
	9. A team exists for behavior support planning & problem solving.
	10. School administrator is an active participant on the behavior support team.
	11. Data on problem behavior patterns are collected and summarized within an on-going system.
	12. Patterns of student problem behavior are reported to teams and faculty for active decision-making on a regular basis (e.g. monthly).
	13. School has formal strategies for informing families about expected student behaviors at school.
	14. Booster training activities for students are developed, modified, & conducted based on school data.
	15. School-wide behavior support team has a budget for (a) teaching students, (b) on-going rewards, and (c) annual staff planning.
	16. All staff are involved directly and/or indirectly in school-wide interventions.
	17. The school team has access to on-going training and support from district personnel.
	18. The school is required by the district to report on the social climate, discipline level or student behavior at least annually.
Non-classroom Setting	1. School-wide expected student behaviors apply to non-classroom settings.
	2. School-wide expected student behaviors are taught in non-classroom settings.

	3. Supervisors actively supervise (move, scan, & interact) students in non-classroom settings.
	4. Rewards exist for meeting expected student behaviors in non-classroom settings.
	5. Physical/architectural features are modified to limit (a) unsupervised settings, (b) unclear traffic patterns, and (c) inappropriate access to & exit from school grounds.
	6. Scheduling of student movement ensures appropriate numbers of students in non-classroom spaces.
	7. Staff receives regular opportunities for developing and improving active supervision skills.
	8. Status of student behavior and management practices are evaluated quarterly from data.
	9. All staff are involved directly or indirectly in management of non-classroom settings.
Classroom	1. Expected student behavior & routines in classrooms are stated positively & defined clearly.
	2. Problem behaviors are defined clearly.
	3. Expected student behavior & routines in classrooms are taught directly.
	4. Expected student behaviors are acknowledged regularly (positively reinforced) (>4 positives to 1 negative).
	5. Problem behaviors receive consistent consequences.
	6. Procedures for expected & problem behaviors are consistent with school-wide procedures.
	7. Classroom-based options exist to allow classroom instruction to continue when problem behavior occurs.
	8. Instruction & curriculum materials are matched to student ability (math, reading, language).
	9. Students experience high rates of academic success ($\geq 75\%$ correct).
	10. Teachers have regular opportunities for access to assistance & recommendations (observation, instruction, & coaching).
	11. Transitions between instructional & non-instructional activities are efficient & orderly.
Individual Student	1. Assessments are conducted regularly to identify students with chronic problem behaviors.
	2. A simple process exists for teachers to request assistance.
	3. A behavior support team responds promptly (within 2 working days) to students who present chronic problem behaviors.

	4. Behavioral support team includes an individual skilled at conducting functional behavioral assessment.
	5. Local resources are used to conduct functional assessment-based behavior support planning (~10 hrs/week/student).
	6. Significant family &/or community members are involved when appropriate & possible.
	7. School includes formal opportunities for families to receive training on behavioral support/positive parenting strategies.
	8. Behavior is monitored & feedback provided regularly to the behavior support team & relevant staff.

APPENDIX C

EXAMPLES OF QUALITATIVE DATA SOURCES

Examples of Qualitative Data Sources

- Administrative Responsibilities Memorandum (Memo)
- MTSS-B Leadership Team Agendas
- MTSS-B Professional Development Presentation Resources
- District MTSS-B Resources
- Emails
- School-specific MTSS-B Programming Documents (i.e. Frequently Asked Questions Memo)
- Attendance Rosters
- ASCD MTSS-B session notes
- District School Improvement Planning Resources
- School Staff Session Creating Expectations Template
- School Behavior Expectations Matrix
- School Behavior Expectation Posters
- Year One Self-Assessment Survey Results
- Curriculum Writing Request Form
- Hand-written Notes about Professional Development Ideas and Dates
- AdvancEd Summative Evaluation Feedback
- Staff Professional Development Literature Handouts
- District Behavior Dashboard Snapshot
- Hand-written Notes from District Professional Development Sessions
- Professional Development Workshop Agenda and Presentation Abstracts
- School Professional Development Schedule
- School Scope and Sequence of MTSS-B Lessons
- School MTSS-B Lesson Plan
- Email Communication Between MTSS-B Leadership Team Co-Chairs
- School Behavior Recognition Program Resources
- District MTSS-B Building Coach Documents and Notes
- School Intervention Documents
- Student Reflection Documents
- School Team Leader Communication Documents and Agendas
- Staff Professional Development Graphic Organizers
- Staff Professional Development Follow-up Documents
- MTSS-B Assessment Instruments
- Staff Professional Development Activities
- District MTSS-B Readiness Checklist
- Field Notes from Coaching Professional Development

APPENDIX D

SEQUENTIAL ROADMAP OF DATA INFORMING ACTION

Year and School Quarter	Self-Assessment Survey (SAS)	Actions & Documents
2017 Quarter 1	--	7-28-17 BLT Leadership Retreat
2017 Quarter 2	--	Read MTSS-B Tier 1 Workbook
	--	11-17-17 Nebraska MTSS-B Showcase
2018 Quarter 3	--	MTSS-B Conversations with Individual Staff Members
	--	3-22-18 – 3-26-18 ASCD Conference
2018 Quarter 4	3-27-18 SAS – Gather Baseline Data	3-28-18 and 3-29-18 District MTSS-B Training
	--	MTSS-B Conversations with Individual Staff Members
	--	4-2-18 BLT School Improvement Planning
	--	4-30-18 PD Planning on the Wall
2018 Quarter 1	--	7-31-18 – 8-1-18 District MTSS-B Training
	--	8-13-18 District MTSS-B PD for Teachers
2018 Quarter 2	--	10-2-19 MTSS-B Building Coach Training
	--	11-19-18 MTSS-B Committee Meeting
	--	11-30-18 MTSS-B PD Planning
2019 Quarter 3	1-31-19 SAS -- Assess Implementation	2-26-19 MTSS-B Tiered Fidelity Inventory
	--	MTSS-B Conversations with Individual Staff Members
2019 Quarter 4	--	4-26-19 PD Planning on the Wall
	--	5-14-19 MTSS-B Committee Meeting
2019 Quarter 1	--	8-8-19 MTSS-B Professional Development for Teachers
	--	10-9-19 AQuESTT Scores and Ratings Published
	--	10-14-19 Submission of AQuESTT Evidence-based Analysis Document