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PBIS IMPLEMENTATION AND SUSTAINABILITY:
PRIMARY EDUCATORS' PERSPECTIVES OF SUCCESS

by
Melissa Ley

A Dissertation submitted to the Department of Leadership,
School Counseling & Sport Management
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH FLORIDA
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SERVICES

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This dissertation titled PBIS Implementation and Sustainability: Primary Educators' Perspectives of Success

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DEDICATION

To my mother, "Mimi" whose support is boundless

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ABSTRACT

Today the school-wide behavior management program, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, or PBIS, follows the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) framework when addressing students with behavior challenges in general education classrooms. PBIS provides a collaborative framework of problem solving and evidence-based strategies, thus proactively meeting students' overall needs. The purpose of this study is to fill a gap in the literature pertaining to teacher perspectives of using PBIS practices in their classroom across this framework. This dissertation further details implications for training and professional development concerning school-wide PBIS as well as the organizational structures necessary for success in the classroom. As a result, this study analyzes teacher perspectives of PBIS classroom implementation, challenges, and successes, taking place in one K-8 school. Administrative and problem solving teams support and professional development were examined across three primary educators. Meaningful data was then generated describing how teachers perceive the PBIS processes implemented in their classrooms.

Key Words: Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS), Response to Intervention (RTI), Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports (MTSS), Problem solving team, PBIS leadership committee, evidence-based practices, progress monitoring

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Over the years pressure has been placed on school districts to adopt and implement Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) since both Every Student Succeeds Act (2018) and Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA, 2004) have been adopted. These policies mandate that all students be taught in a general education classroom to the maximum extent possible, despite various backgrounds, abilities, and behavior challenges (Rodriguez, Loman & Borgmeier, 2016). These policies call for schools to focus on providing quality academic and behavioral supports for all children. For instance, MTSS provides schools a continuum of supports using a tiered system to prevent and remediate student challenges, both academically and behaviorally (Bruhn, Gorsh, Hannan & Hirsch, 2014, Rodriguez, Loman & Borgmeier, 2016). From both perspectives, MTSS provides strategies for increasing academic and behavioral gains as well as addressing student learning and discipline obstacles (Utley & Obiakor, 2015). Therefore, “MTSS requires schools to implement systematic, coordinated, evidence-based practices targeted to being responsive to the varying intensity of needs students have related to their academic and social emotional/behavioral development” (Utley and Obiakor, 2015, p. 1). Academically, MTSS identifies and targets “at-risk” students who struggle with certain skills and the tiered framework can be used to further drive instruction as well as teacher training needs (Utley and Obiakor).

Furthermore, Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS), a school-wide behavior management program, is a common method for implementing the MTSS model in general education classrooms (Richards, Aguilera, Murakami & Weiland, 2014). Using the MTSS tiered framework, PBIS provides a collaborative system of team problem solving where

teachers use evidence-based strategies to help meet all students' behavioral needs (Rodriguez, Loman & Borgmeier, 2016). As a result, the PBIS process provides evidence-based behavior supports and recommendations for students across a tiered system (Cressey, Whitcomb, McGilvray-Rivet, Morrison & Shander-Reynolds, 2014).

Problem Statement

Today in classroom settings where general education teachers embrace and teach diverse students, disconnects are found between behavior theories, classroom management strategies and school-wide expectations (Little & Akin- Little, 2008; Miramontes, Marchant, Heath & Fischer, 2001; Tillery, Varjas, Meyers & Collins, 2010; Todd, Horner, Newton, Algozzine, Algozzine & Frank, 2011). Classroom environments depend on the development of students understanding the curriculum while building relationships and embracing others with differing abilities (Mallory & New, 1994). However, some teachers do not view differences in student behavior as being acceptable in the general education classroom thus complicating classroom environments (Parker, Alvarez-McHatten & Crisp, 2014).

Hence, it is crucial that teachers provide classroom management strategies, or prevention practices, that inhibit negative student behaviors and support a safe and inclusive classroom for teachers, students and learning (Roberts & Simpson, 2016; Walker, Bauer & Shea, 1998). These classroom management practices can affect the positive encouragement of students, the value placed on differences in the classroom environment, and how teachers perceive implementation of classroom management strategies (Treder, Morse, and Ferron, 2000). However, teachers are struggling with the importance of committing to and sustaining school-wide positive behavior

supports such as PBIS (Parker & Alvarez-McHatten, 2014). Consequently, research that explores how teachers choose, use, and perceive PBIS practices needs additional exploration.

Purpose Statement

Although many studies have evaluated teacher perspectives regarding challenging behaviors of students diagnosed with disabilities (Tillery, Varjas, Meyers & Collins, 2010), few studies have focused on teacher perspectives of PBIS implementation concerning students of different needs in classrooms. Most of the literature analyzes correlations between PBIS and student outcomes, (Algozinne, Algozinne, Wang, Helf, White, Cooke, Duran & Marr, 2012; Freeman, Simonsen, McCoach, Sugai, Lombardi & Horner, 2016; Kim, McIntosh, Mercer & Nese, 2018). Some recent qualitative research using program evaluations have shown factors that increase the success of PBIS in diverse schools, but these studies do not include individual classroom teacher perspectives of PBIS implementation (Gelbar, Jaffery, Stein & Cymbala, 2015; Sugai & Horner, 2006; Forman & Crystal, 2015; Barrett, Bradshaw & Lewis-Palmer, 2008).

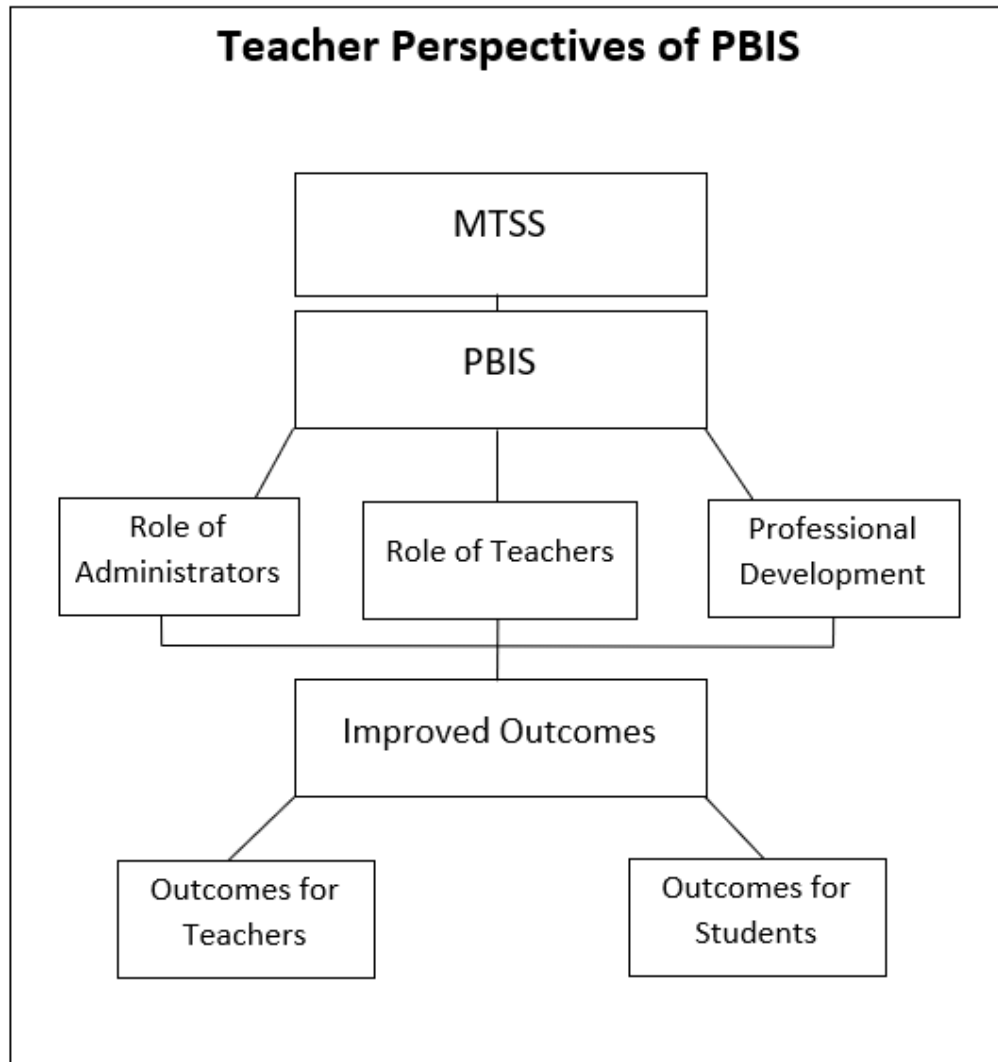
In sum, the purpose of this study is to fill a gap in the literature revolving around teacher perspectives of implementing PBIS practices in their classroom across the MTSS framework. According to Sugai and Horner (2006) implications for PBIS training and professional development embrace further research focusing on school leaders investing in “organizational structures that adequately support the adoption of the continuum of evidence-based practices (p. 257).” Therefore, this study focuses on the organizational structures and practices that teachers utilize with their PBIS routines in the classroom. Additionally, Rodriguez and colleagues (2016) state that more research is needed concerning the implementation of tiered interventions, such as

positive reinforcement systems. This study describes how tiered interventions of PBIS directly affect teachers' perspectives and how teachers describe their behavior intervention practices in their individual classrooms.

This research is a qualitative study of three primary grade educators. Using classroom observations and interviews the data captures rich descriptions, through analyzation and discussion, of how each teacher utilizes, implements, sustains, and perceives PBIS practices on a routine basis. Hopefully, the significance of this study provides different insights that form new approaches to PBIS utilization, implementation, and sustainability in general education classrooms.

This study's conceptual framework centers on teachers' perspectives around the roles, responsibilities, and professional development needed to successfully implement a tiered PBIS system of supports (Figure 1). This includes the responsibilities of administrators, leadership teams (or problem solving teams), classroom teachers, and how professional development plays an important part in improving teacher and student outcomes.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework

My research question consists of the following: *How do primary education teachers describe the PBIS practices used in their classroom and school?* This research also examines two sub questions:

- (a) Which PBIS practices do primary educators perceive as effective to use in primary classrooms? and

(b) Which PBIS practices do primary educators perceive as challenging to use in primary classrooms?

The focus of this research is to uncover teacher perspectives of PBIS implementation in primary classrooms to further understand how this process can be successful for both teachers and students. Therefore, the following two chapters deliver literature defining and describing MTSS, RTI and PBIS procedures as well as the evidence-based practices utilized within these methods, the organizational structures, and requirements. Furthermore, the qualitative framework is described in depth, explaining the case-study investigation that was used to gather data, address the identified gap in literature and use careful analysis to generate meaningful generalizations for PBIS implementation in primary classrooms.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Adapting consistent, evidence-based classroom procedures is crucial when teachers address different student behaviors and general education teachers implement effective classroom procedures through school-wide PBIS. These effective PBIS practices include routine monitoring, clear communication, and modeling behavior expectations (Algozzine, Wang, White, Cooke, Marr, Algozzine & Duran, 2012). However, while PBIS practices are often found to develop positive learning environments, many teachers do not perceive PBIS practices as feasible, useful and sustainable in their classroom (Kim, McIntosh, Mercer & Nese, 2018; Miramontes et al., 2011; McLeskey & Waldron, 2000). Therefore, focusing on the implementation and perspectives of general education teachers' PBIS practices in the classroom is necessary.

To enlighten my research, I synthesized the literature of PBIS' interrelated areas. I examined literature focusing on MTSS, PBIS, the PBIS professional development available and how PBIS affects teacher success and student success. Through recent studies I found descriptions of the MTSS and PBIS systems as well the responsibilities of principals, leadership teams, counselors, instructional coaches, and teachers. These aspects all play an important role in how teachers implement and sustain PBIS practices in their classroom. Furthermore, the framework of behavior management strategies, or PBIS practices, used in this review of literature is shown through MTSS and PBIS systems defined as three-tiered procedures that allow teachers and administrators to collaborate and generate "next steps" for managing challenging behaviors (Utley & Obiakor, 2015; Dulaney, Hallam & Wall, 2013). These procedures consist of the following Response to Intervention (RTI) assumptions:

“Tiers of intervention for struggling students, relies on research-based instruction and interventions, uses problem-solving to determine interventions for students, and monitors students regularly to determine if they are progressing as they should academically and/or behaviorally” (Tiered Intervention Systems, 2017, p. 1).

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)

Describing the MTSS process, while explaining the relationships between school leaders, teachers, and outcomes, is an important factor in describing teacher perspectives of PBIS implementation. Therefore, in this section I define MTSS components and summarize the literature pertaining to its implementation and sustainability. Certain terminology and key words used to illustrate the multi-tiered framework, MTSS, in my literature review include tiered intervention (including universal intervention, secondary intervention and tertiary intervention), evidence-based classroom management practices, Functional Behavior Assessments (FBAs), progress monitoring and data-tracking, and data-based goals. Rodriguez et al. explains (2016) universal prevention or Tier I, are school wide expectations, evidence-based classroom management practices and consequences set schoolwide by school administrators and leaders to promote student success and prevent challenging behaviors (Fairbanks, Sugai, Guardino & Lathrop, 2007). Certain evidence-based classroom management practices are strategies teachers employ that include differentiated instruction, recognizing positive behavior, allowing various opportunities for students to participate in lessons and providing immediate and individual feedback (Fairbanks et al., 2007). An example of these engagement strategies is discussed further in the next section.

Furthermore, Tier I allows administrators, leaders, and teachers to identify students whose needs are not fully met by universal prevention, thus secondary or tertiary intervention is required. Therefore, the three tiers (I, II and III) pertain to different levels of intervention intensity students receive in the classroom (Rodriguez et al., 2016; Fairbanks et al., 2007). Interventions include different teaching methods such as small group instruction and behavior modification strategies that target a certain academic or social skill where groups of students are struggling (Fairbanks et al., 2007).

As students are identified as needing further support, despite Tier I universal prevention practices, Functional Behavior Assessments (FBAs) are used to understand the student's behavior including its specifics, purpose, and conditional factors. Fairbanks et al., describe FBAs as “collecting and analyzing various forms of indirect, descriptive, and experimental assessments to deduce a plausible hypothesis which can be tested and which identifies the likely conditions under which behaviors of concern occur (2007, p. 290)”. By using FBAs to fully understand why a student is demonstrating certain behaviors, teachers and guidance counselors create a function-based Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) to determine which research-based interventions can support the student in choosing alternative appropriate behaviors (or replacement behaviors) (Fairbanks et al., 2007; Scott & Cooper, 2017). Lastly, teachers then utilize progress monitoring or weekly assessments to monitor the progress or growth students have made while receiving the specified secondary, or Tier II, intervention. Progress monitoring allows teachers to track student responsiveness to an intervention while illustrating student growth, or lack of, and consequently generates data-based goals or next steps for the student to work towards over a specific period (e.g., six weeks) (McDaniel, Bruhn & Mitchell, 2015). Descriptions and examples of the three

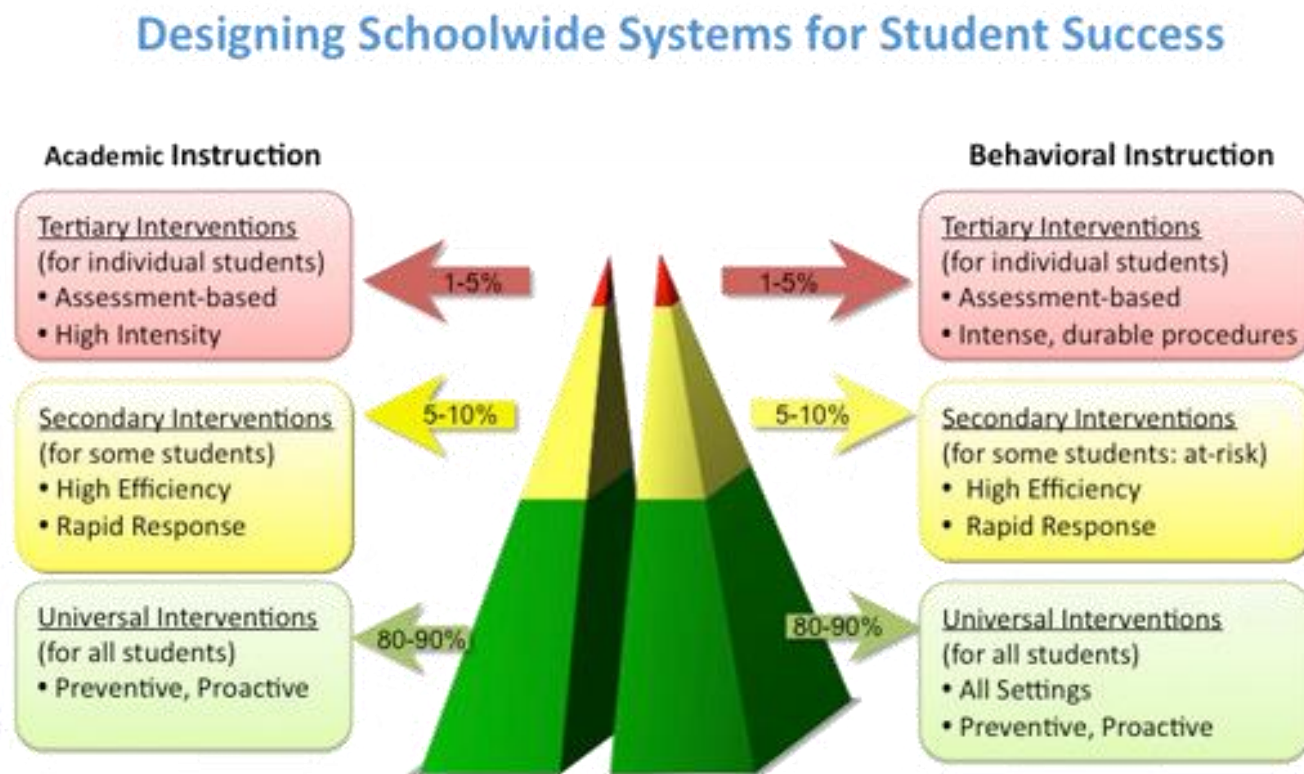
tiers, data collection processes, interventions and behavior modification strategies are discussed in the following sections.

Universal Intervention - Tier I

The previously mentioned interventions and data collections are the basis of MTSS, which provides tiers of “increasing intensity”, for teachers to implement in their classroom to increase student academic and behavior progress (Rodriguez, Loman & Borgmeier, 2016, p. 94). Nunn, Jantz and Butikofer (2009) specifically describe the process of MTSS as including three tiers, and overall, the MTSS tiers can be shown using the model shown in Figure 2 (Technical Assistance Center of PBIS, 2018). The academic instruction portion of the MTSS triangle helps students struggling in subject areas progress in their performance, whereas the behavioral instruction portion supports students with behavior challenges. This study refers to the right side of the MTSS model regarding behavioral instruction and how this relates to PBIS in the classroom.

Figure 2

MTSS Model. Technical Assistance Center of PBIS. (2018).



Tier I requires all educators to teach academic and social development lessons with general, school-wide research based instructional techniques. These general school-wide instructional techniques, known as universal prevention practices, consist of evidence-based instructional and classroom management strategies that successfully meet the needs of approximately 80% of the school population (McDaniel, Bruhn & Mitchell, 2015). In terms of prompting student behaviors, Sugai and Horner (2006) describe universal prevention Tier I practices as evidence-based classroom management strategies that teach social skills, present

clear expectations, provide frequent positive reinforcement, such as positive praise or rewards, and organize learning environments in a way that dejects inappropriate behavior for all students.

Consequently, Myers and colleagues have found these evidence-based classroom management strategies are imperative. For instance, all students need feedback to gain new skills or meet behavior expectations and “effective” teachers provide continuous feedback. When providing feedback, or positive reinforcement, positive praise or rewards must be given immediately after the behavior has occurred. As a result, positive reinforcement will increase expected and desired behaviors for most students (Myers, Freeman, Simonsen & Sugai, 2017, p. 227-228).

Myers and colleagues further explain the organization of learning environments is just as important. Additional effective practices that teachers employ include modeling expectations and routines for various locations and activities (e.g., walking to lunch, using the restrooms, participating in recess), providing error correction through prompting, re-teaching, and presenting choices, providing multiple opportunities for students to respond or participate in activities or lessons and actively supervising the space whether it be hallways, cafeterias or classrooms (Mid Atlantic PBIS Network, 2017).

An example of universal prevention practice includes a cooperative learning style developed by Kagan and Kagan (2009), Numbered Heads Together (NHT). When asked questions by the teacher, groups of students write their responses on a piece of paper. Once finished, students share their written responses and reach a consensus. A member of each group is then randomly selected by the teacher to share the group’s response. This varied, but whole-class approach to participation, student response and engagement has shown to be more effective

than students volunteering by raising their hands. Therefore, universal practices like this aim to engage all students and increase academic gains (Hunter, Maheady, Jasper, Williamson, Murley & Stratton, 2015). While using several universal practices, if data shows students' needs are not fully met, universal practices may be adjusted or research-based behavior prevention practices are applied in tiers II and III (Rodriguez, Loman & Borgmeier, 2016).

Secondary Intervention - Tier II

Secondary Intervention or Tier II requires that groups of students who continue to struggle with the universal prevention practices, either academically or behaviorally, are provided supplemental instruction and supports that include research-based programs and ongoing progress monitoring. These students are identified early, using data-based decisions regarding their responses to universal prevention practices, and receive Tier II interventions within 2-3 days (Rodriguez et al., 2016). Furthermore, Tier II interventions must fit the specific needs of the group of students which results in more varied instruction, resources and supports (Carter, Carter, Johnson & Pool, 2013; Hoyle, Marshall & Yell, 2011; Rodriguez et al., 2016).

As a result, to meet the requirements of Tier II, and the needs of students, data and teacher referral procedures are utilized to identify students and match those identified to effective interventions (Carter et al., 2013). As stated by Rodriguez and colleagues (2016, p. 95), Tier II interventions should include “teaching, prompts, opportunities for practice, frequent opportunities for feedback, fading procedures and regular parent communication (Anderson & Borgmeier, 2010)”. Therefore, this second tier provides more concentrated supports for a small group of students. Once identified and participating in Tier II support, the general education teacher or other instructional personnel continues the intervention until progress monitoring

shows a need for additional remediation, or adequate growth thus a return to Tier I instruction (Carter et al., 2013).

For example, these identified students participate in Tier II interventions in specified areas, such as reading. If a group of students struggle with reading comprehension, a Tier II intervention may include a weekly focus on decoding skills. In this case these identified students work on determining the meaning of parts of words including prefixes, suffixes and root words, which can aid in determining the meaning of words (Cunningham, 1998; cited in Ritchey, Silverman, Montanaro, Speece & Schatschneider, 2012). This decoding instruction can occur across 8-12 weeks until it is determined whether students made enough academic gains, or need more intensive support (Ritchey et al., 2012).

Tertiary Intervention - Tier III

Following Tier II, Tertiary Intervention or Tier III again utilizes data-based decision-making, if a lack of progress from Tier II is documented from progress monitoring to plan and provide daily, more intensive and individualized, remediation in a specified area for students with severe or persistent behavior and academic challenges (Kuchle & Riley-Tillman, 2015). This remediation requires teachers, special educators, guidance counselors and sometimes behavior specialists or analysts to collaborate on comprehensive interventions for the teacher to implement (Sugai & Horner, 2006). Like Tier II, Kuchle and Riley-Tillman (2015) explain Tier III, under the guidelines of the National Center on Intensive Intervention (2013) in the following 5 steps:

- (1) The [intervention] is delivered with increased intensity (e.g., more time, smaller group).

- (2) Frequent progress monitoring determines the student's response to the intensified program.
- (3) Diagnostic assessment ([e.g., current academic assessments or assessment of the function of behavior]) identifies the specific needs of nonresponsive students.
- (4) The intervention is adapted to meet observed needs (i.e., the underlying skill deficit or function of behavior).
- (5) Continued progress monitoring identifies if and when additional adaptations, informed by diagnostic assessment, are needed to ensure adequate progress (p.24).

As a result, when these steps are completed with fidelity, Tier III completes the MTSS progression by intensifying and adapting the interventions, supports and resources identified students are receiving. Therefore, MTSS is designed to meet the needs of all students academically and behaviorally using a “comprehensive” and “systematic” process (McDaniel, Bruhn & Mitchell, 2015, p. 10). These tiered interventions are described further, with examples concerning student behaviors, in the following section.

Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS)

Research-based behavior support is needed in the classroom as teachers embrace diverse learners and environments (Conroy, Sutherland, Snyder, & Marsh, 2008; Lewis, Hudson, Richter, & Johnson, 2004; MacSuga-Gage, Simonsen, & Briere, 2012; Simonsen et al., 2010). Using the MTSS model, PBIS follows the same proactive, tiered framework so that every child can receive the resources they need before disruptive behavior occurs (Rodriguez, Loman & Borgmeier, 2016). Accordingly, the process of school-wide PBIS provides a focus on implementing a “prevention-orientated” framework of behavior supports for all students

(Cressey, Whitcomb, McGilvray-Rivet, Morrison & Shander-Reynolds, 2014). Thus, in this section I summarize the literature in accordance to the PBIS model and key characteristics, the needs for proper implementation (Gelbar, Jaffery, Stein & Cymbala, 2015; Sprague & Horner, 2007; Sugai & Horner, 2009) including different roles of administrators and teachers as well as effective on-going professional development (Desimone & Pak, 2017).

This research focuses primarily on understanding the perspectives of general education teachers use of PBIS practices that occur in the classroom to help increase positive student behaviors. These practices include classroom management strategies that prevent negative student behaviors from occurring as well as reinforce and target desired behaviors. However, PBIS prevention-based programs are different from traditional classroom management.

First, traditional classroom management practices are typically reactive meaning they address challenging behaviors after they have occurred. Student teachers are more often instructed to teach a set of rules to help with their classroom management. As a result, they are encouraged to “gain and maintain control” of their students and classroom (Rabin & Smith, 2016, p. 600). Additionally, traditional classroom management practices solve problems with students individually and rely on punishment. Lastly, traditional classroom management practices utilize data only to document problem behaviors and aid in creating labels for students who are struggling (Maximize Positive Outcomes for Students, 2016). While these traditional practices have been utilized over the years, student teachers have felt unprepared and ineffective regarding these traditional classroom management practices (Rabin & Smith, 2016). On the other hand, PBIS practices are proactive, meaning they prevent challenging behaviors from occurring by addressing factors that encourage undesired behaviors. Teachers and faculty that implement

PBIS focus on teaching and rewarding expected behaviors, and data are collected to gain insight into why challenging behaviors occur. More importantly, PBIS provides interventions that support students in meeting behavior expectations (Maximize Positive Outcomes for Students, 2016).

While not all students respond successfully to traditional classroom management practices, school-wide PBIS was trialed and initiated to provide more support for students who struggle with behaviors (Myers, Freeman, Simonsen and Sugai, 2017). According to Sugai and Horner (2020), school-wide PBIS was first initiated beside the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in 1997. This included the provision, "...the education of students with disabilities can be made more effective by having high expectations for students and ensuring their success in the general education curriculum" (Gartner & Lipsky, 1998, p. 1). Researchers have worked with peers and experts in the field to "develop, implement and evaluate PBIS" to increase its sustainability and success in schools (Sugai and Horner, 2020, p. 120).

According to the PBIS Technical Assistance Center (2018), examples of universal PBIS prevention practices include the design of the physical space such as classroom desks, cafeteria tables and student lines, development and teaching of predictable classroom routines, definitions and teachings of classroom expectations, ample opportunities for student responses meaning varied methods of students participating, individual and immediate feedback, the use of prompts and active supervision, and finally the use of specific praise and acknowledgment of expected behaviors. Therefore, it is not surprising that scholars emphasize that "teachers should approach teaching behavior as they do academics" (Myers, Freeman, Simonsen and Sugai, 2017, p. 229).

By incorporating research based PBIS practices in the classroom struggling students are more likely to be successful.

As a result, the school wide PBIS approach is a framework, rather than a solitary practice (Maximize Positive Outcomes for Students, 2016). Thus PBIS focuses on five imperative tasks for applying general Tier I, evidence based, universal practices: (1) Set and promote school wide expectations, (2) plan to recognize expected behavior and actively supervise students, (3) define and effectively correct problem behaviors and their consequences for students and staff members, (4) report data for active decision making and (5) implementing for sustainability (Sprague & Horner, 2007). After a team of representatives is selected to lead the school wide PBIS program, a discipline plan can be set, and key goals identified. Sprague and Horner (2007) further describe these tasks as the following:

- (1) Setting school-wide expectations as teaching both teachers and students' skills for compliance, like respect and responsibility while posting visual reminders throughout campus.
- (2) The school community should establish a routine system of enforcement, monitoring and positive reinforcement such as points used towards rewards.
- (3) A supervision system is in place; positive reinforcement should be utilized as a main form of correction for undesired student behavior due to its higher success rate when compared to punishment. Rewards and consequences should be clearly defined and communicated to all students and teachers so that respect for rules becomes part of the school culture.

(4) Data-based feedback should be utilized when the team of representatives analyzes their PBIS practices and their effect on the behavior of students. This data can be collected quarterly through surveys or frequency of student referrals and regularly presented to the team.

(5) Most importantly, effective educational programs are implemented and therefore must be maintained. Training materials, implementation of PBIS policies and summarizing of student data and the training of coaches to support school teams and especially new teachers are strategies that must be included (Sprague & Horner, 2007).

Since these tasks are identified as noncurricular, teachers, other school personnel and family members can implement the Tier I PBIS universal practices throughout the day and school year using behavioral and social learning methods and procedures (Bradshaw & Pas, 2011). Some examples of school personnel, other than classroom teachers, implementing universal PBIS practices include administrators and teaching assistants using attention and monitoring to rewarding positive student behaviors in the hallways and cafeteria (Sugai & Horner, 2006), music, art and physical education teachers providing positive reinforcement for students when desired tasks are completed during resource class, and family members providing at-home rewards when certain classroom behavior goals are met.

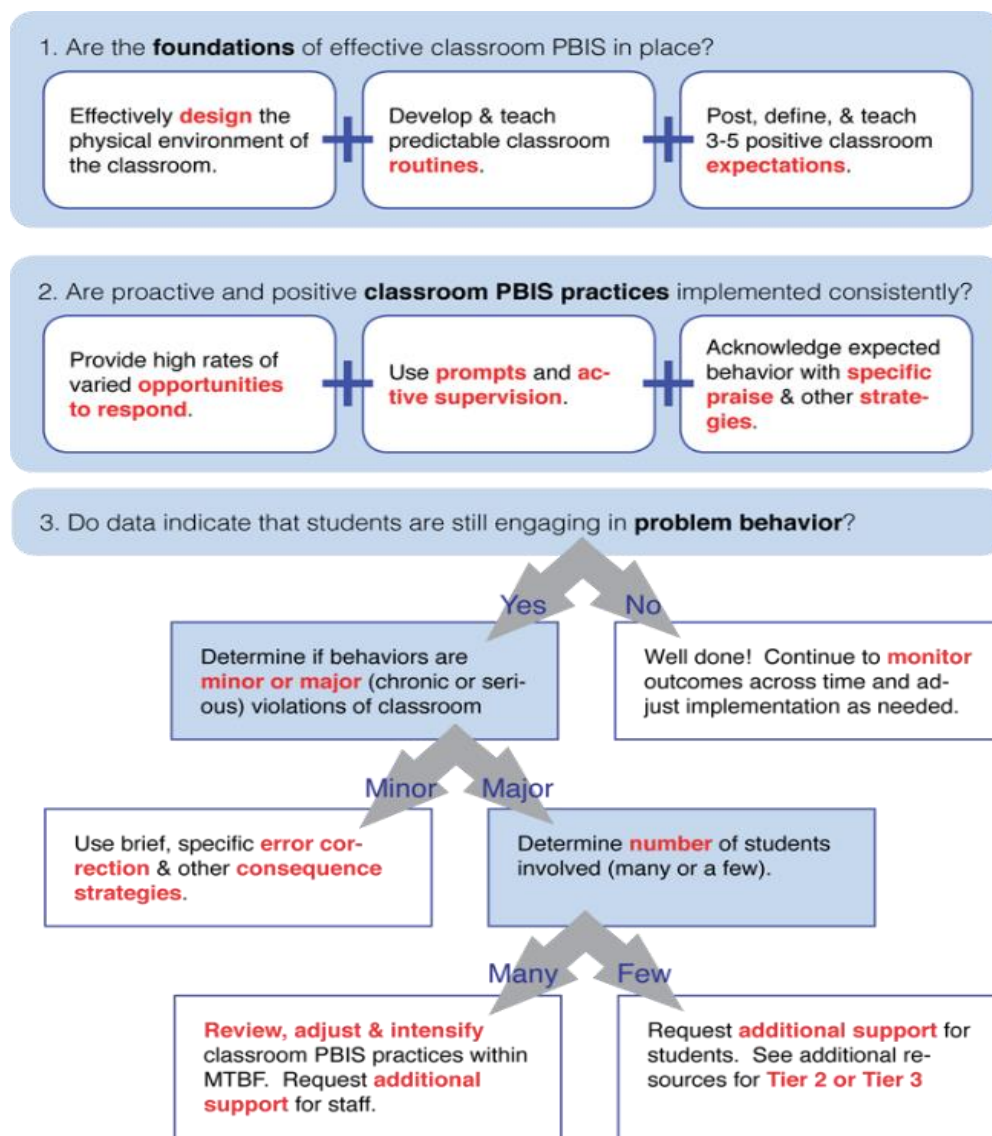
Furthermore, PBIS implementation encourages teachers and personnel to address minor negative student behaviors using general school-wide PBIS practices like brief error correction tactics including planned ignoring (not providing attention for behaviors that are attention-seeking), providing positive reinforcement or rewards (i.e., tokens that can be used as “money”

towards a school store) and providing concise statements (Technical Assistance Center of PBIS, 2018).

As shown in Figure 3, (Technical Assistance Center of PBIS, 2018) teachers utilize data they collected to determine if Tier II or Tier III interventions and administrative support are needed. For challenging student behaviors that are considered major, teachers are trained through professional development and coaching to count and/or time the behavior occurring during Tier II and Tier III data collection.

Figure 3

PBIS classroom practices in the classroom. Technical Assistance Center of PBIS. (2018).



Furthermore, progress monitoring is a large component of PBIS and occurs regularly, as shown in figure 3. Like universal prevention, PBIS includes additional approaches to determine how well an intervention is working. Through progress monitoring, teachers can efficiently collaborate with members of the leadership team while making educational decisions regarding struggling students. Self-monitoring data, or data students collect on their own behavior, can act

as progress monitoring data used to evaluate how well students are responding to the implemented intervention. This data can then help the leadership team problem solve if intensity needs to be increased, what other resources need to be provided, or if the intervention is no longer needed (Pierce & Mueller, 2018).

Teachers have reported that many of these PBIS behavior practices and interventions have been successful. Research shows PBIS has a key goal of influencing positive social development schoolwide and decreasing undesired behaviors that take place in classrooms and in other school environments (Bradshaw & Pas, 2011; Cressey, Whitcomb, McGilvray-Rivet, Morrison & Shander-Reynolds, 2014; Gelbar, Jaffery, Stein & Cymbala, 2015; Harn, Basaraba, Chard & Fritz, 2015; Sugai, 2007; Sugai & Horner, 2006). Additionally, systems like progress monitoring, research-based behavior management practices, data-based goals as well as commitment from school administrators are all required components of PBIS (Harn, Basaraba, Chard & Fritz, 2015). Not only is this systematic implementation of MTSS and PBIS perceived as manageable by administrators and stakeholders, but the process is valuable for schools, teachers and students because the PBIS process entails “stabilizing the entire school and reducing overall levels of behavior problems (Barrett, Bradshaw & Lewis-Palmer, 2008, p. 106)”. However, research suggests that many teachers implementing the PBIS practices feel the data collection measures are not realistic or practical for the everyday classroom, even though they can foster a positive school culture (Miramontes, Marchant, Heath & Fischer, 2011). Additionally, research reveals that classroom management is still a primary concern for teachers (Little & Akin-Little, 2008).

Although MTSS and PBIS can be implemented differently based on different needs of schools and educators, it is important for teachers to implement proven prevention practices such as providing clear expectations, individual recognition and feedback, and cooperative learning in their classrooms (Parsonson, 2012). Research has shown these prevention practices decrease negative behaviors and therefore increase task engagement which improves student achievement (Sutherland, Lewis-Palmer, Stichter & Morgan, 2008). Like Sprague and Horner's five tasks of PBIS (2007), Gelbar, Jaffery, Stein and Cymbala (2015, p. 290) assert the success of PBIS requires these seven systems of practice:

- “(1) Obtaining leadership of school-wide practices from an administrator who creates and serves as a member of an implementation team.
- (2) Obtaining district level support for training, policies, and expectations aligned with school wide PBIS.
- (3) Defining three to five school-wide expectations for appropriate behavior.
- (4) Actively teaching the school-wide behavioral expectations to all students.
- (5) Monitoring and acknowledging students for engaging in behavioral expectations.
- (6) Correcting problem behaviors using a consistently administered continuum of behavioral consequences.
- (7) Gathering and using information about student behavior to evaluate and guide decision-making (Horner et al., 2004 cited in Gelbar et al., 2015, p. 290).”

In comparison to Sprague and Horner (2007), Gelbar and colleagues (2015) identify the support of school districts and administrators as imperative. School-wide PBIS requires long-term commitments and staff development to establish and implement meaningful and evidence-based

classroom routines, therefore leadership support is at the core of the framework (Sugai & Horner, 2006). Teachers need resources to successfully implement the three-tiered process and these instructional practices. These resources include research-based practices for behavior and academic needs, systems of leadership through team collaboration, and evaluation methods used to document fidelity of the program and individual student progress (Bruhn, Gorsh, Hannan & Hirsch, 2014).

Consequently, PBIS requires the general education teachers to participate in team collaboration to learn how to use these resources such as ongoing progress monitoring, data tracking and evidence-based practices (Nunn, Jantz & Butikofer, 2009). Therefore, although PBIS is seen as a vital benefit for students, it can also be viewed as a requirement that leads to frustration placed upon educators and classroom settings. Furthermore, since administrators and teachers perceive prevention practices and the needs of students differently at times, many schools, administrators, and teachers disagree on how each tier of the multi-tiered process should be implemented. This is exasperated by the lack training, perceived feasibility and teacher self-efficacy since teachers are in the “front lines of [PBIS] implementation” (Nunn, Jantz & Butikofer, 2009, p. 215), teacher beliefs and their perspective of value plays an important role of providing prevention practices. Thus the interception of teacher perspectives and school-wide PBIS implementation provides the foundation of this literature review.

Nunn and colleagues (2009), surveyed 429 K-12 educators trained in implementing tiered interventions. While developing, implementing, and evaluating academic and behavioral student interventions the educators completed two surveys rating their teaching self-efficacy and how they perceived the effectiveness of their intervention. The results showed a strong correlation

between teacher beliefs and the effectiveness of the implemented intervention. The researchers found that increases in teacher efficacy were connected to the successful utilization of student interventions and increased teacher efficacy presented increased perspectives of “improved outcomes of intervention, satisfaction and results, collaborative team process and data-based decisions” (2009, p. 217). Therefore, one of the biggest challenges of successfully implementing PBIS are teachers’ perspectives if they can sufficiently implement prevention practices, which were primarily utilized by special education teachers before PBIS emerged (Richards, Aguilera, Murakami & Weiland, 2014).

Role of Administrators and Leaders

As with data tracking, evidence-based interventions and team collaboration, the role of administrators within the PBIS framework is critical (George, Cox, Minch & Sandomierski, 2018). Some influences that school leaders consider include making data-driven decision to determine which students need support beyond Tier I, thus Tier II and Tier III interventions (Lane, Oakes, Ennis & Hirsch, 2014). Additionally, leaders must secure funding for research-based intervention materials and PBIS professional development for teachers (Bruhn, Gorsh, Hannan & Hirsch, 2014), which correlates with teacher motivation for PBIS implementation and sustainability (McIntosh, Kelm & Delabra, 2016).

Taken as whole, implementing school wide PBIS requires that administrators take overall school data into account when analyzing a student’s academic achievement and behavior when identifying students for Tier II and Tier III interventions (Lane, Oakes, Ennis & Hirsch, 2014). This requires team collaboration and data-driven decision-making between school leaders and teams of teachers. Collaboration specifically includes meeting as an MTSS interdisciplinary team

and researching different PBIS practices regarding an individual student's needs (Bruhn, Gorsh, Hannan & Hirsch, 2014; Sugai & Horner, 2009; Sugai & Simonsen, 2012).

The leaders that act within this team include principals, assistant principals, guidance counselors, instructional coaches, special education teachers and general education teachers. Research reveals that this work has resulted in significant decreases in student office referrals and suspensions (George, Cox, Minch & Sandomierski, 2018; Goodman-Scott, Hays & Cholewa, 2018). Aside from collaborating on evidence based PBIS practices, the team's responsibility is to develop and provide a culturally responsive framework based on its school needs. For example, Goodman-Scott et. al (2018) asserts implementing PBIS with the diverse schools' populations in mind is essential. Therefore, culturally representative school stakeholders, like parents, guardians, students, and community members, should be included as well in PBIS planning, implementation, and ongoing monitoring.

Additionally, school leaders need to provide professional development pertaining to implementing research-based interventions. This professional development should target how to use the various components of PBIS (i.e., progress monitoring, data-tracking, fidelity etc.) (Bruhn, Gorsh, Hannan & Hirsch, 2014; Sugai & Horner, 2006). Critical to this professional development is coaching for teachers to understand the implementation of such components (Dulaney, Hallam & Wall, 2013; Sugai & Horner, 2006) which is discussed further in this review.

Lastly, the principals and assistant principals provide the motivation for program sustainability (McIntosh, Kelm & Delabra, 2016). Principals that are more informed and demonstrate the importance of PBIS and its visibility and justification in their school increase the

strength of implementation (McIntosh, Kelm & Delabra, 2016; Sugai & Horner, 2006). For example, Rohrbach and colleagues (1993) shared the positive influence that principals had on PBIS implementation and improved PBIS sustainability across the school. Further, these scholars explain that to aid classroom teachers in adopting a new program, some program characteristics and expectations need to be addressed when introducing new classroom methods. These characteristics include clear instructions, training, or preparation requirements, and how students respond to the changes. Therefore, a lack of principal buy-in and backing could lead to a decrease in PBIS prevention practices being implemented throughout the school and in teachers' classrooms (Lohrmann, Forman, Martin & Palmieri, 2008).

Role of Teachers

Usually teachers of all grades and subject matter are responsible for academic and behavioral growth of their students. Since 1 in 5 children are at risk for behavior or emotional problems, (World Health Organization, 2004) teachers should have systems in place to meet the behavioral needs of their students. This includes having some expertise in effective classroom and behavior management strategies that encourage desired student behaviors and certain tactics for when undesired student behavior occurs (Stormont, Reinke & Herman, 2011). School-wide behavior expectations, some set by administrators or teams of representatives, fall under the first tier (Tier I) of PBIS (Sugai & Horner, 2006). In Tier I, teachers implement these universal PBIS prevention practices, like positive reinforcement of expected behaviors, monitoring and modeling (McDaniel, Bruhn & Mitchell, 2015). These classroom practices are decided school-wide and implemented across the school for consistency.

Certain classroom games, reward, or point systems can all be considered for universal prevention. For example, PAX Good Behavior Game (PAX GBG) is a universal prevention curriculum for targeting student behaviors (Embry, Staatemeier, Richardson, Lauger & Mitich, 2003). The PAX GBG provides classroom teachers with a social-emotional curriculum and training that demonstrate how to implement daily evidence-based classroom management practices. These practices include student and teacher collaboration regarding classroom routines and rules as well as self-management instruction (PAX Good Behavior Game, 2018). PAX GBG can be as simple as a short game where students work intensively to showcase their good behaviors during instructional time. When good behaviors are recognized during the game, students are awarded prizes they pre-determined with their teacher. According to the company's website and research, PAX GBG has shown positive outcomes while it “teaches self-regulation to benefit self and others, rather than just to avoid “punishment” from the current authority figure—and students continue to use these skills when the adults are out of sight (How PAX Differs, 2018, paragraph 3)”. Imperative to this study, PAX GBG has shown a “major reduction in teacher stress” (The Science Behind PAX, 2018, paragraph 5) as students learned which behaviors are desired and which behaviors are undesired by their teachers.

However, these universal prevention strategies do not always reach all students, therefore once a teacher refers a student, or group of students, and they are identified as needing additional support or Tier II intervention, implementation should start immediately (Rodriguez, Loman & Borgmeier, 2016). These interventions may include thirty-minute social skills lessons and/or self-monitoring techniques taught two to three times a week as well as more detailed behavior plans such as Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) (Oakes, Lane & Germer, 2014; Rodriguez,

Loman & Borgmeier, 2016). According to Hawken, O’Neill, and MacLeod (2011), BIPs entail building on school wide PBIS expectations by providing groups of students with specific and immediate feedback regarding their social behaviors in the classroom. If students are exhibiting expected behaviors, they earn a reward. A popular example of a Tier II BIP includes Check-In Check-Out where a student “checks-in” with a BIP coordinator (can be a teacher or teaching assistant).

During their check-in they review a checklist, or progress report, of their expectations for the day. The checklist can be used by their classroom teacher to rate how well the student followed the expectations throughout the day. In the afternoon, the student “checks-out” with the coordinator, where they discuss their checklist and earn points for meeting behavioral goals. Finally, the checklist is sent home to ensure family members participate in providing positive reinforcement like encouragement and praise (Hawken, O’Neill & MacLeod, 2011). Moreover, in a study conducted by Hawken (2006) 70% of students participating in BIPs, like this example, had a reduction in office discipline referrals.

BIPs and other Tier II interventions are in addition to Tier I strategies used in general education classrooms. Furthermore, teachers are responsible for monitoring the progress of their students participating in Tier II, or Tier III, interventions (McDaniel, Bruhn & Mitchell, 2015). This data-based progress monitoring in the classroom includes weekly or bi-weekly “direct behavior ratings, direct observation and intervention-based measures” (McDaniel, Bruhn & Mitchell, 2015, p. 13) that measure the student’s growth. For example, teachers may use a direct behavior ratings scale to measure a student on a single behavior over a certain period. In addition to direct behavior ratings, teachers may observe students, gather, synthesize, and interpret data

on an identified behavior using a functional behavior assessment (FBA). FBAs are an assessment used to determine environmental antecedent and consequences that influence student behaviors to form a hypothesis (Johnson et al., 2018). The FBA process requires repeated observations in the environment where the behavior takes place (Scott and Cooper, 2017). Since schools and classroom environments are complex, FBAs can provide teachers the missing piece to understanding why a behavior is happening. During observations, FBAs gather frequencies or duration data to assess student behavior and growth. These data are used to determine effective interventions which result in a needed change of the teacher's instruction. As a result, FBAs identify "appropriate behaviors that can be taught to most effectively replace problem behavior by matching the function, and what may be altered in the environment to make that replacement behavior more likely to occur and maintain (p.102-103)." Therefore, the Tier II or Tier III intervention that follows is the teaching of the replacement behavior.

Self-monitoring is a behavior management practice that can increase students' responsibility, accountability, and engagement during identified times of challenging behaviors. Self-monitoring can be utilized during Tier II intervention and requires students themselves to record whether they have been on task for a predetermined time interval (e.g., 10 minutes or during independent reading) in order to reach their predetermined goal for the day, such as being on task for 10 out of 20 intervals. (McDaniel, Bruhn & Mitchell, 2015). Student scores are recorded and compared over a timeline (Chafouleas, 2011). Gathered student scores and assessments resulting from student self-monitoring and other Tier II interventions are used for progress monitoring support, data-based decision-making regarding effectiveness, formative and

summative evaluations, allocation of resources and communication among teachers, parents and the interdisciplinary team (McDaniel, Bruhn & Mitchell, 2015).

Professional Development

As teachers collaborate with the interdisciplinary team, and these interventions are implemented within the classroom, teachers can work more confidently on their practice by participating in professional development (Oakes, Lane & Germer, 2014). Most importantly, teacher professional development should focus on evidence-based practices to increase academic and behavior outcomes for students as well as simultaneously improving the school climate (Freeman, Sugai, Simonsen & Evertt, 2017; Oakes et. al, 2014). According to Desimone and Pak (2017) there are five features professional development must encompass to be considered effective:

- (1) *Content focus*; where activities focus on the subject matter including how students learn the content.
- (2) *Active learning*; incorporating opportunities for teachers to participate by observing, presenting and analyzing student work
- (3) *Coherence*; meaning that all professional development goals and activities are relevant to the curriculum, student needs, teacher perspectives and district and state policies.
- (4) *Sustained duration*; includes ongoing development throughout the school year and a minimum of 20 hours of contact between teachers and professional development coordinator.

(5) *Collective participation*; an interactive learning community is encouraged by including teachers of the same grade, subject area, and school.

Further, Desimone and Pak suggest that instructional coaching as a form of professional development has shown to be successful as it intertwines these five effective characteristics for teacher learning.

Coaching

Since traditional professional development is found to be short and neglects opportunities for application (Freeman, Sugai, Simonsen & Evertt, 2017), methods of coaching might be more appropriate for gathering new knowledge and implementation techniques of PBIS, and overall MTSS. According to a report by Pacchiano and colleagues, traditional professional development focuses on topics that educators are expected to comply with and provides training using a workshop model. As a result, professional development does not provide ongoing discussion or support which is essential for teachers to implement what they learned. Furthermore, due to the constrained schedules and budgets of educators and administrators it is difficult to find time and resources for traditional professional development (Pacchiano, Klein, Hawley & Ounce of Prevention Fund, 2016). On the other hand, instructional coaching provides the support traditional professional development is lacking. While using collaboration, active participation and application coaching allows teachers to learn and implement new strategies through ongoing discussion, monitoring and feedback (Freeman et al., 2017; George, Cox, Minch & Sandomierski, 2018; Desimone & Pak, 2017).

Therefore, schools and administrators utilize coaching as a driving force supporting professional development in an applicable context. Coaching allows professional development to

take place in context and bridges the gap between professional development and applications in the classroom (Freeman et al., 2017). While using collaborative team-based decision-making and problem solving, coaching supports teachers and interdisciplinary teams with implementation of PBIS (George, Cox, Minch & Sandomierski, 2018). For example, Desimone and Pak (2017) explain coaching can be implemented as team-based or side by side, where teachers receive immediate feedback of their implementation practices. This form of coaching can occur using in person observation or video recordings of lessons when teachers and coaches debrief immediately after. This results in trial and error forms of learning, or active learning.

Instructional coaches that are selected and monitored by leadership teams support the fidelity of “new skills being sufficiently taught, modeled, prompted and reinforced” (Freeman et al., 2017, p. 32-33) in classrooms and schools. After PBIS has been implemented, coaches are utilized further to determine which practices should be “re-trained, abandoned, adapted, and/or combined with something else” (Freeman et al., 2017, p. 32-33). Prior research has shed light on the importance of coaching as it improves “school culture, teacher collaboration, teacher attitudes, skill transfer, feelings of efficacy and student achievement (Cornett & Knight, 2009; Guinney, 2001; Neufeld & Roper, 2003 cited in Desimone & Pak 2017, p. 4)”. Additionally, training in functional behavior assessments, consultation, teaching methods and facilitation of PBIS are included in coaching models like *PBISplus*, a PBIS program initiated and implemented alongside coaching (Hershfeldt, Pell, Sechrest, Pas & Bradshaw, 2012). Hershfeldt and colleagues (2012) describe the structure of *PBISplus*, utilized in teachers’ classrooms as follows:

Three *PBISplus* “liaisons” served as coaches to provide technical assistance to teachers and student support teams regarding the use of evidence-based practices in the prevention

of and interventions for problem behaviors. This was accomplished through consulting with teachers, providing support in the use of evidence-based practices, providing support in problem-solving student issues through a behavioral approach (with a focus on the function of behavior), and attending meetings that addressed student needs (e.g., student support team meetings). (p. 283).

As a result, this coaching model provides a systematic, collective, and reflective approach that allows schools to meet the needs of students who did not respond to the universal prevention practices of PBIS. The researchers further assert the coaching model PBIS*plus* has shown to improve teacher efficacy (2012). Thus, as teacher attitudes affect how they approach and handle behavior challenges in classrooms, coaching plays a large role in increasing effective teaching practices that provide a greater scope of tolerance concerning student behaviors (Bradshaw, Pas, Goldweber, Rosenberg, & Leaf, 2012; Hershfeldt, Pell, Sechrest, Pas & Bradshaw, 2012; McLeskey & Waldron, 2000; Treder, Morse & Ferron, 2000).

Improved Outcomes

Consistent with adequate PBIS training, fidelity, progress monitoring and consecutive years of implementation, PBIS execution shows increases in positive school climates, attendance rates and thus greater academic achievement in reading and math (Bradshaw, Mitchell & Leaf, 2010; Freeman, Simonsen, McCoach, Sugai, Lombardi & Horner, 2016). In this next section I summarize how the literature describes the positive outcomes of PBIS implementation for students concerning both behavior and academics (Algozzine et. al, 2012; Kim, McIntosh, Mercer & Nese, 2018; Rodriguez, Loman & Borgmeier, 2016). Additionally, I address the

outcomes of PBIS implementation for teachers, and how further study is warranted to describe successful implementation and sustainability in primary classrooms.

Outcomes for Students

As mentioned earlier, PAX GBG has shown positive outcomes across schools and classrooms. Also, while influencing self-management skills and collaboration amongst teachers and students PAX GBG has shown a 50-90% decrease in challenging student behaviors throughout school campuses, a 20-50% increase in student engagement, a 10-30% decrease in special education services and a 30-60% referral, suspension and expulsion reduction (The Science Behind PAX, 2018, paragraph 5).

In addition to the positive data behind PAX GBG, in a study conducted by Freeman and colleagues (2016), relationships between these PBIS universal prevention practices and student outcomes were analyzed. Attendance results showed a significant positive correlation with PBIS implementation of two or more years ($0.51, p < .001$). It was noted that schools that had not yet reached fidelity of implementation showed a significant increase in student attendance as well ($0.30, p = .009$). Likewise, research indicates decreases in bullying, violence, and student referrals (Kim, McIntosh, Mercer & Nese, 2018; Rodriguez, Loman & Borgmeier, 2016). For instance, Bradshaw, Mitchell, and Leaf (2010) used a longitudinal study to show the effectiveness of PBIS on referral and suspension reduction across twenty-one elementary schools. After consistent years of training in PBIS implementation and fidelity the sample of schools achieved a significant decrease in student referrals or office discipline referrals (ODR). According to the study, “the number of major and minor ODR events per student also decreased significantly over the course of the trial, (Wilks’s $\Lambda = .52, F(1, 14) = 12.90, p = .003, \eta^2 = .48, d$

= .12” (p. 141) as well as a significant drop of suspensions (“ $Z = -2.17$, $p = .03$, $d = .27$ ”) for the school year (p. 141). However, this research also found that the number of years a school has sustained PBIS was crucial to long term success. For instance, Simonsen et. al (2012) explain that elementary schools with high fidelity of PBIS have a more significant decrease in referrals and suspensions over time when compared to schools without fidelity or multiple years of PBIS implementation. More specifically the authors state:

“implementing SWPBS with fidelity was related to better rates of all social behavior outcomes therefore, it was not surprising to find that schools that implemented SWPBS with fidelity also experienced lower rates of ODRs, out of school suspensions (OSS), and total number of suspensions (TS)” (p. 12).

These positive outcomes and decreasing trends occur across schools that implement PBIS with fidelity for four to five years.

Furthermore, Tobin, Horner, Vincent and Swain-Bradway (2012) used a focus on students with Individualized Education Plans (IEP) and their referral data and found a reduction in discipline referral rates across eighty-five elementary schools. The research concluded during year one of PBIS implementation 3,940 students with IEPs received referrals, but by year three the total dropped to 3,492 referrals for the same group of students, a decrease of 448 referrals or 11.4%. Besides reductions in discipline referrals, Gelbar et al., (2017) found that PBIS implementation has shown to be essential when providing a change in staff behavior in school environments with students diagnosed with special needs and who exhibit more physical, complex and challenging emotional and behavioral problems. In this study, the change in staff behavior include PBIS key characteristics described when referencing Tier I: setting school-wide

expectations, explicit instruction, providing positive reinforcement and using consistent evidence-based practices when responding to student behavior. Implementing Tier I universal practices alongside these changes in staff behaviors reduce the use of seclusion, or isolation from peers, for students with special needs (Gelbar, Jaffery, Stein & Cymbala, 2015). Therefore, schools and teachers implementing PBIS, professional development, fidelity and sustainability are important elements of successful student outcomes concerning diverse students (Barrett, Bradshaw & Lewis-Palmer, 2008).

In terms of improved academic outcomes, an article presented by Algozzine et. al (2012), described multi-tiered framework of interventions proved to have a positive effect on “difficult-to-teach” (p. 45) students and their outcomes such as reading abilities and behavior. Through intensive reading interventions and “supporting behavior instruction” (p. 49) that act as PBIS prevention practices, the authors discussed academic growth in early reading skills among primary grade students. This included improvement in student behavior that resulted in less office discipline referrals and improvement in school climate and achievement assessments across schools. In addition, these researchers discovered the connection between academic growth and PBIS when they collaborated with seven elementary schools and implemented tiered interventions for children identified as having reading difficulties. While implementing a reading intervention, alongside PBIS to address adherence to social rules, academic performance increased while school climate improved pertaining to PBIS characteristics like “defined expectations”, “reward system” and “monitoring and decision making” (p. 56). Lastly, while using office discipline referrals to analyze improvement in behavior, Algozzine and colleagues (2012) found a lower trend in referrals across the schools. These new outcomes also showed a

positive correlation with achievement assessments for third graders when compared to schools not implementing tiered interventions with PBIS.

In a study conducted over nine years, Madigan, and colleagues (2016) analyzed the association between school wide PBIS fidelity and student academic achievement. After collecting five years of baseline data, where schools did not implement PBIS, the researchers collected four years of intervention data using twenty-one schools implementing PBIS programs with fidelity. The results of the longitudinal study found a strong association between PBIS implementation and increased student academic achievement. While comparing control schools and treatment schools, this study found that schools implementing PBIS showed a faster rate of academic improvements in core content areas by year five and outpaced the control schools for three years.

Madigan and colleagues (2016) explain the importance of the number of years used in these academic studies as well as the consideration of grade level and diversity of classrooms:

“Increased instructional time, however, appears to improve achievement more for disadvantaged students (Jez & Wassmer, 2015), and the accumulation of added instructional time across several years may be required before effects on achievement become evident for all students (p. 407).”

Since behavior improvements may take several years to effect academic progress, it is difficult to examine academic improvements in just one year. Therefore, it is suggested research should analyze schools with moderate to strong PBIS fidelity over the course four years or more to provide accurate findings (Madigan, Cross, Smolkowski & Strycker, 2016).

Outcomes for Teachers

In studies addressing teachers' knowledge of evidence-based prevention practices, most teachers recognize PBIS practices as behavior management strategies they have used or studied before (Stormont, Reinke & Herman, 2011). Teachers similarly perceive PBIS practices such as modeling, positive reinforcement and high expectations as imperative elements in managing student behaviors (Tillery, Varjas, Meyers & Collins, 2010), although they struggle with managing diverse student behaviors (Parker & Alvarez-McHatten, 2014). As a result, the sustainability of implementing Tier I practices has shown to be complex for teachers as they need initial and ongoing training and coaching so that practices can be implemented properly and with clear definitions of expected student behavior (Floress & Jacoby, 2017). Moreover, since it is difficult to determine if teachers already possess the skills needed to adequately implement PBIS in their class, as teachers report they learn most from trial and error, professional development of these PBIS practices and implementation is key (Tillery, Varjas, Meyers & Collins, 2010).

A gap in the literature concerning PBIS implementation and teacher perspectives is apparent in a study regarding the impact of PBIS on teaching conditions and student achievement (Houchens, Zhang, Davis, Niu, Hee Chon & Miller, 2017). Houchens et al., state teachers reporting "higher levels of student and faculty understanding" or behavior expectations and an improvement in "professional trust and respect" (p.168). However, the study does not elaborate on the PBIS program structure the teachers embrace, nor the PBIS practices teachers implement in their daily routines.

Thus, this literature review suggests further research that analyzes how teachers perceive PBIS prevention practices concerning its implementation and effects on students in Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III within an individual classroom. Qualitative research relating to examining and understanding teachers' perspectives of implementing and sustaining these individualized, effective, and positive PBIS practices in their classrooms can further develop accommodating systems that fit all student needs. Since much of these data focus on quantitative outcomes regarding academic interventions and implementing mostly Tier I PBIS practices for behavior challenges, taking a deeper look into teacher perspectives of multi-tiered PBIS practices and how its classroom implementation is selected and executed may help promote PBIS implementation and program sustainability as well as focus on the demands of current classroom management needs of practicing teachers, teacher leaders and administration.

Chapter Summary

This tiered PBIS model, the responsibilities of school leaders and teachers, as well as the successful student outcomes demonstrate how the three tiers of PBIS can be implemented effectively. As with most systematic processes, PBIS requires key characteristics encompassing universal prevention practices, evidence-based interventions, and progress monitoring. Furthermore, the support of administrators, other school leaders and teams are necessary to motivate and assist in the planning process to encourage sustainability and provide the necessary resources and coaching for teachers. When implemented with fidelity, PBIS is proven to be effective for students academically and behaviorally.

While the general and broad practices of PBIS Tier I generates a more positive school environment, 20% of students require more intensive support (Rodriguez, Loman & Borgmeier,

2016; Sugai, Horner, Algozzine, Barrett, Lewis, Anderson, ...Simonsen, 2010). These students need different approaches and behavior management strategies that teachers struggle with implementing and sustaining. As mentioned, teachers have reported some elements of PBIS are not practical and they face occasions of disagreement with their administrators and team leaders on the proper implementation of interventions (Miramontes, Marchant, Heath & Fischer, 2011; Nunn, Jantz & Butikofer, 2009). Therefore, the primary goal of this research is to uncover the perspectives of teachers as they implement PBIS practices across tiers in their classrooms. In sum, the conclusion of this study aims to provide insight into teacher perspectives regarding implementing and sustaining successful PBIS practices for challenging student behaviors in primary classrooms.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This investigation seeks to understand how teachers perceive school wide PBIS programs and their classroom implementation of PBIS practices. By using a qualitative case study method, I describe in detail how teachers believe PBIS improves or challenges their practice as well as the integrated system of school leaders and professional development teachers need and PBIS demands. Merriam and Tisdell assert qualitative research designs are known to support improving people's practice in education (2016). More importantly, it can be argued that qualitative research makes a significant difference in people's lives when focused on understanding the perspectives of participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

As the researcher I explored the phenomenon behind the implementation, feasibility, and sustainability of PBIS school wide and in the classroom (Merriam, 1988) through a descriptive case study. The bounded case being one school's PBIS program. It is my intent to uncover how teachers feel about their school's PBIS program, how it fits into their everyday routine, how they perceive their students responding to the PBIS practices, and what they believe are the benefits and challenges of PBIS. While using a "bounded case" of one selected school, I provide an "in-depth description and analysis" of one school's implementation of school-wide PBIS (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016, p. 37-38). Stake (2010), explains a case study "aims at understanding one thing well" (p. 27). Like Stake explains, this study's purpose is to fully understand specific strengths and challenges of one school's school-wide PBIS implementation. This study's participants are bounded by the specifics of their school-wide PBIS program. These specifics include (1) the school-wide PBIS program has been implemented for at least four years, (2) the

school has developed a leadership team, (3) the teacher teachers in a primary grade, and (4) the teacher utilizes and implements PBIS practices within their classroom on a routine basis.

Since the processes of PBIS is intricate, I explore this phenomenon in a “holistic manner” (Merriam, 1988, p. 153) or study it in its complete form and implementation. As cited in Merriam (1988), Lijphart (1971, p. 691) explains descriptive case studies as “entirely descriptive” and “neither guided by established or hypothesized generalizations nor motivated by a desire to formulate general hypothesis”. Most importantly, Lijphart (1971,) and Merriam (1988) conclude innovative educational practices are the focus of descriptive case studies and descriptive case studies are meaningful when studying educational areas where there is a gap in the literature. Through this case study I intend to gather information pertaining to the bounded case, or one school’s PBIS program. Therefore, this study aims to understand the perspective of primary education teachers that implement PBIS practices in their classroom routines and how they describe these practices as useful and sustainable.

In this chapter I describe the rationale for selecting my methodology. I provide context on the selected setting, its PBIS leadership committee and explain the participant selection process. All data sources, including interview protocols and observational tools are described thoroughly. Lastly, I explain how I analyzed the data as well as the trustworthiness of my results.

Rationale for Qualitative Study

A qualitative approach was used for this study because the interpretation of teacher experiences and how they construct their perspectives, classroom routines and PBIS developments are of interest and lacking in the research literature. Furthermore, qualitative

research provides a deep understanding of how people construe their everyday routines and the meaning they allocate to their experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Since this study is interested in uncovering how teachers perceive the implementation, feasibility, and sustainability of its school's PBIS practices, a qualitative research approach was selected. The experiences, perspectives and words of the participants were utilized as data, rather than numbers (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). Therefore, it is my intent to provide a constructed meaning regarding the phenomenon surrounding this case's PBIS implementation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

According to Wolcott (2001), a case study "is a form of reporting (p. 91)" where a "program, an event, a person, a process, an institution, or a social group" and its phenomenon is being examined (Merriam, 1988, p. 9). It is evident for the purpose of this research, a case study design with interest in the phenomenon surrounding a specific PBIS program in one selected school is necessary. Merriam & Tisdell (2016) describe phenomena as "people's conscious experience of their life-world (p. 26)". In terms of phenomenological research, this study focused on how teachers perceive their routine PBIS implementation experiences in their classrooms. Moreover, a case study design allows for the intricate and detailed reporting (Wolcott, 2001) of a single program (Merriam, 1988; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Wolcott, 2001) being implemented amongst multiple school leaders and teachers.

Additionally, teacher perspectives of administrative and leadership team support as well as the professional development the school provides is examined "across cases" or participants (Merriam, 1988, p. 153). This study generated meaningful data within the case study by using a "cross-case analysis" with three primary teachers or "subunits" of the PBIS program (Merriam,

1988, p. 153). The framework of PBIS and its presence in multiple primary classrooms, while influencing teacher perspectives provides part of the foundation for my research and data collection. In addition, I utilized the foundation of Social Learning Theory to form my interpretations and new ideas surrounding how I observed participants implementing practices and routines. Social Learning Theory applies “direct experience” and observations of others’ behaviors in helping people learn new information. Additionally, watching others as “models” can increase new patterns of behavior (Bandura, 1977, p. 3).

According to Federal regulations, any research involving human subjects requires the approval of an Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, or IRB. Once the application process was completed and approval received, I began reaching out to the school administrators and dean for their approval in communicating with participants. For this research, the expectation of the study was stated clearly to administrators and participants while considering ethical and political influences including the confidentiality of participants and data, and problems arising from the “audience being unable to distinguish between the data and [my] interpretation” (Merriam, 1988, p. 179; Rossman, 2017).

In this case study I included an outline of the individual school’s PBIS program. I used a purposeful sample of three primary education teachers that teach different primary grades, kindergarten, first and second grade (Merriam, 1988). The decision to select primary grade teachers pertains to the challenges most educators face concerning student behaviors, it’s connection to early intervention (Miramontes, Marchant, Heath & Fischer, 2011; McLeskey & Waldron, 2000; Parker & Alvarez-McHatten, 2014) and the minimal studies conducted on PBIS programs with this age group.

To gain more insight into the context as well as understand certain experiences in relation to PBIS, semi-structured interviews and observations were utilized (Roberts, 2010). These interviews included an initial interview that sets the foundation for the participants' beliefs and interpretations of the PBIS program and administrative support. Further, three follow-up interviews occurred after classroom observations, to provide teacher insight and unpack the details regarding the procedures and experiences I observed in each classroom environment. Lastly, data analysis across the three participants within the selected PBIS program sought to uncover patterns, relationships, and themes between variables (Merriam, 1988). Lastly, an "inductive investigative strategy" provides a more descriptive analysis of teacher perspectives (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 37).

Data Collection

The following portion of this chapter outlines the design of the case study. I explain the research questions, setting, selection of participants, data collection, analysis, trustworthiness and finally a description of my bias as a researcher and how this may affect the proposed study.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to describe and understand teacher perspectives of schoolwide PBIS practices used to promote positive student behaviors in primary education classrooms. This intent leads to the following research question: *How do primary education teachers implement the PBIS practices used in their classroom and school?* This research question presents two sub questions:

- (a) Which PBIS practices do primary educators perceive as effective in primary classrooms and

(b) Which PBIS practices do primary educators perceive as challenging in primary classrooms?

In this study, I define PBIS practices as preventative behavior management strategies that impact the social atmosphere and behaviors of learning schoolwide (Little & Akin-Little, 2008) by preventing challenging student behaviors. Thus, these practices are frequently recognized as part of the school and classroom culture (Algozzine & Algozzine, 2007). This study investigates teachers' perspectives of their school wide PBIS structure and how PBIS practices are implemented and sustained in their classrooms.

Setting

The selection of this study's school was greatly dependent on the PBIS program that was already in place. This element requires teacher and faculty contribution as well as full PBIS implementation with fidelity, or implementation for at least four school years, encompasses a PBIS leadership committee and the PBIS leadership committee meets once a month where new ideas and concerns are discussed by the grade level representatives.

The school selected, North Beach Academy¹ is a kindergarten to eighth grade school (K-8), with 1,600 students enrolled, located in the suburbs in north east Florida. It resides in a master planned community with nineteen neighborhoods, various parks, local restaurants, and retail (according to the community's website). This large public-school's administration includes one principal, three assistant principals, one dean of students and three guidance counselors. According to the school districts website, staff includes ninety-eight teachers, fourteen assistant teachers and paraprofessionals as well as ten support staff. Demographics of the school includes

¹ North Beach Academy: This is a pseudonym for the setting in this study

78% White, 9% Hispanic, 6% Asian and 4% Black with 13% of students considered “low-income” schoolwide. According to the most recent school improvement plan (SIP), North Beach Academy is an “A” ranked school with a student to teacher ratio of 17:1. The school ranks in the top 5% for both math and reading proficiency in the state.

The 2018-2019 SIP also compares Early Warning Indicators between prior years. These indicators include documenting attendance rate, suspensions, course failure in reading or math and scoring a level 1 on statewide assessments. According to this information during the 2018-2019 school year 593 students were enrolled in primary grades, 7 of these students had one or more suspensions, and 10 students had attendance below 90 percent. Data from the prior year (2017-2018) shows 5 primary grade students had one or more suspensions and 12 students had attendance below 90 percent. Finally, during the 2016-2017 school year, 8 primary grade students had one or more suspensions and 12 students had attendance below 90 percent. Lastly, the SIP documents students with disabilities with a Federal Index of 56 and this subgroup scored a grade average achievement score of 47% in reading and 69% in math.

North Beach Academy’s PBIS Program

North Beach Academy has implemented its school-wide PBIS program for four to five years. This school-wide PBIS program was initiated and developed by the dean of students who has developed a PBIS leadership committee comprised of teachers from multiple grade levels. Administrators including assistant principals occasionally sit in on the committee meetings. The PBIS leadership committee meets monthly to discuss student referral data, trends, and next steps for the program. Moreover, reports and documents are brought back to each grade

level's teachers where concerns and updates are expected to be discussed throughout grade level meetings and planning periods.

North Beach Academy's PBIS program is highlighted in the current SIP as a top priority. When describing the school's area of focus, PBIS is listed as number one. The SIP describes the following rationale:

A strong focus on the importance of character development is central to all aspects of student success. A review of data on student behavior referrals and reports of bullying indicated gains could be made in this area through a concerted school-wide effort.

The SIP further explains the measurable outcomes the plan hopes to achieve:

NBA will reduce behavior referrals and bullying reports by 10% through the use of school-wide PBIS program supported by Character Counts! lessons. These lessons are implemented by our guidance department as well as PTO parent volunteers. Additionally, NBA will make use of the NBA 360 program to increase student self-reflection with the goal of reducing the recidivism rate for students being sent to the Dean's Office for behavior.

This outcome is followed by two action steps that identify Character Counts lessons fulfilled by teachers, guidance counselors and parent volunteers as well as the school behavior system that encourages rewarding good behavior throughout the school.

Additionally, the school's PBIS program has a school-wide PBIS handbook that outlines the general purpose of school-wide PBIS, North Beach Academy's school-wide reward system, expectations of students and student referral process. This handbook was presented to teachers at the beginning of the school year for their review and is referenced routinely to address student

behaviors, teacher questions and classroom intervention rather than holding formal meetings. Furthermore, North Beach Academy recognizes “Hawk Bucks” as it’s positive reinforcement system along with classroom instruction of character traits to support students’ understanding of the school’s behavior expectations and core values. The handbook and hawk bucks reward system will be explained in further detail in Chapter 4 as it was mentioned numerous times during participant interviews.

Participant Selection

The selection of the three primary grade teachers, kindergarten, first and second grade included a purposeful process of identifying a “critical case” in each grade level (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Roberts, 2010; Patton, 2001, p. 266). Critical case means selecting a small number of “important cases” that provide researchers with the “most information” in the area (Patton, 2001, p. 236). When selecting participants, I looked for teachers that were willing to take a unique look at the PBIS framework of the school and were open to their PBIS practices being observed in their classroom. Furthermore, “snowball sampling” occurred where I located one qualifying participant, who then referred me to other participants that met my criteria (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 48). A critical case was utilized to “reflect the average person” that can inform the case study, by discussing the phenomenon and specific PBIS implementation, in context (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 97).

The established criteria (Merriam, 1988) of the participants included teaching in a primary grade with at least two years’ experience in the field, so that more insight regarding PBIS implementation can be provided for that age group. Due to the extent of research on the importance of early intervention in primary grades, I felt it was important to research behavioral

intervention in the same manner, thus during early intervention in primary grades (Carter et al., 2013; Myers, Freeman, Simonsen & Sugai, 2017; Rodriguez et al., 2016). Regarding this setting, a K-8 school, I also felt it was imperative to explain how primary educators introduce PBIS to younger aged students so that the teachings, expectations and practices become more routine and customary as the students become older.

Additionally, the participants have experience working in a school with a school wide PBIS program that has been implemented for at least four years and routinely participate in utilizing and implementing the school wide PBIS practices throughout campus and within their individual classroom. By using the critical case design, and by selecting teachers in different primary grades and with different types of teaching experience this research strives to reflect the average teacher in ordinary situations in hopes of applying “logical generalization” of the findings to similar cases of schools, teachers and classrooms (Patton, 2001, p. 266).

Semi-Structured Interviews

To capture the intricate details of the participants’ perspectives and integrated PBIS practices, five audio-recorded, semi-structured interviews (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), approximately an hour in length, were conducted with each of the three teachers. First an initial interview occurred to address participant backgrounds, knowledge, and definition of PBIS as well as their beliefs of the program and its implementation, and perspectives of administrator support and involvement. Further, three interviews followed each observation that reflected upon what I observed in the classroom and provided more insight into the teacher’s actions, beliefs, perspectives, and reflections. Finally, a concluding interview took place to discuss my interpretations of the current data. Each interview was transcribed either by hand, between each

interview. Since the “format of the interview transcript should be set up to enable analysis” each transcript was organized with identifying information and double spacing (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 133). After each transcription, the recording was deleted (Roberts, 2010).

Confidentiality was a priority during this study. I used pseudonyms as identifiers for each participant to ensure the concealment of each person pertaining to the observations, interviews, discussions, and descriptions. Additionally, the context of the data collected and described were taken into strong consideration, so that the privacy of each participant was not compromised (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Initial interview. The initial, semi-structured interview used prompts regarding student behaviors and school data, teachers’ chosen style of teaching and classroom routines and PBIS implementation within the school and classroom. The purpose of this initial interview was to gauge how each teacher defines PBIS, how they implement PBIS practices in their classrooms as well as their descriptions of administrator, school leadership support and professional development. My goal was to collect a clear understanding of how the participants perceive the school’s PBIS program, its support through administration, leadership teams and professional development and how they think the practices can be sustained over time with their students.

Observations

The observations in this study acted as a tool that serves the research purpose by taking place in the “natural field setting” with “firsthand experience of observing” (Merriam, 1988, p. 87). The observations were purposefully thought out and planned. I took organized field notes detailing the date, time, place, physical aspect of the setting and purpose during observations and used a code sheet to determine actions, dialogue and non-verbal cues to look for during

observations (Merriam, 1988). As the researcher, I acted as a “researcher participant” (Merriam, 1988, p. 93) observing each teacher as they teach classroom lessons, using a phenomenological lens pertaining to the PBIS program used in the classroom.

Several factors that were taken into consideration during classroom observations included PBIS practices facilitated by teacher and students, MTSS progress monitoring, student engagement, student collaboration and peer discussions. Frequency and duration (Merriam, 1988) of certain teacher and student interactions and behaviors were also considered to fully understand the PBIS program implementation. For example, the number of times a student was prompted of a correct behavior, or the amount of time a student participated in a challenging behavior was recorded in field notes and addressed later with the participant. Additionally, it was recorded in field notes how students worked together on assignments and the dialogue they engaged in during peer discussions. Furthermore, when observing the teacher engaged in MTSS progress monitoring, the duration and behaviors of the students participating in remediation as well as the students not participating were considered.

Merriam (1988) points out that important aspects of observations need to be recorded after the observation takes place. Following suggestions described by Taylor and Bogdan (1984) I recalled important occurrences by using a “narrow lens” by “focusing on an interaction or specific person”, looking for “key words in people’s remarks”, “mentally play back remarks and scenes during breaks in observing” and “remembering the substance of a conversation” rather than direct quotations (p. 97). Once I left each observation, I recorded these recalled field notes as soon as possible. These field notes were discussed later with each participant to see how they perceive and describe these behaviors and actions in the classroom. Lastly, after each

observation, field notes were used to reflect upon the experiences and unpack my emerging thoughts, questions, and next steps of the research process (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Patton, 2001)

After each observation cycle, I read, re-read, and reflected on my field notes and generated follow up questions for the follow up interview. During my reflection, I used a fieldwork journal to separate my observer comments, which provided my emotions, confusions and reactions to each observation and added to my data analysis and findings later in this study (Merriam, 1988). This study required three observations of each participant which took place after the initial interview. Additionally, follow-up interviews following a sequenced framework studied by Siedman (2006), occurred after each observation to understand the participants' perspective of what occurred during the observations.

Follow up interviews. After each observation, a semi-structured interview occurred to try to fully understand each participant's perspective of what I observed during each observation. These follow up interviews were not influenced by scripts or questions but prompted through observed PBIS processes in the selected classroom, previous recorded classroom observation data, student behaviors that were observed, and actions of the teacher. These interviews were guided by conversation between myself and the participant and involved my current interpretations of the data (Rossman, 2017). Thus, the interview prompts were flexible, and specific issues, such as PBIS practices, MTSS processes and administrative support, professional development, classroom routines and student behaviors were discussed with specific examples (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) describe this interview method as allowing the researcher to “respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the

respondent, and to the new ideas on the topic (p. 111).” This method of semi-structure interviews was vital to the study because I hoped to provide insight into how each participant interprets the PBIS program and how they implement and sustain the practices into their classroom.

The purpose of the three follow-up interviews of observations was to discuss which PBIS practices each teacher felt were successful, and/or challenging, during the lesson I observed. Additionally, the purpose of these interviews was to explain why they think the implementation of certain PBIS practices are more sustainable or less sustainable over time. Furthermore, these interviews were intended to provide more insight into the phenomenon surrounding the program and thus discussed their perspectives, disconnects between beliefs and practices and where they wish to go from here. Siedman asserts “People’s behavior becomes meaningful and understandable when placed in the context of their lives and the lives around them (2006, p. 16-17)”. Therefore, by conducting an initial interview that builds on each participants’ beliefs, followed by observations and three follow up phenomenological interviews, I was able to see and understand each teachers’ environment and context before “exploring the meaning of their experiences (Siedman, 2006, p. 16).”

Data Analysis

After each interview was completed and transcribed, a constant comparative method (Merriam, 1988) of reading, rereading, and making note of my reactions, patterns, and relationships across participants (Merriam, 1988; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) occurred. These data analyses kept the teachers lived experience perspectives in mind. Therefore, my data analysis occurred as follows: inductive investigation, open coding, axial coding, and selective coding.

Inductive Investigation

Merriam and Tisdell state, “Data analysis requires the ability to think inductively, moving from specific raw data to abstract categories and concepts (2016, p. 19).” My data analysis of the words and behaviors I collected through interviews and observations involved uncovering categories based on similarities across teachers implementing the selected PBIS program. As first proposed by Glaser and Strauss (1967), the constant comparative method of data analysis is inductive and comparative and thus utilized to generate findings from qualitative research (Charmaz, 2014). As the researcher, I “consolidated, reduced and interpreted” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 202) what my participants’ expressed to me in interviews and what I observed from behaviors in the classroom. This was a reciprocal effort between myself and the teachers I selected. The meanings that were derived from the data collection were articulated in descriptive accounts first from each participant’s perspective. Subsequently, a cross-case analysis took place across participants to identify patterns, themes, and categories (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Open, Axial and Selective Coding

Corbin and Strauss (2015) describe three phases of coding that are useful for interpretation phenomena or the intricate perspectives of participants: *open coding*, *axial coding*, and *selective coding*. As mentioned, *open coding* occurred in the beginning of the inductive process where certain data was “tagged” as useful pertaining to each data collection (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 229). During the open coding process, I assigned codes or terms to each data point. Data points consisted of words, topics, or phrases that I interpreted as vital or appeared frequently in our discussions. These initial codes supported the teachers’ perspectives and beliefs regarding PBIS in their schools. These codes included, “immediate positive reinforcement”,

“school-wide PBIS character lessons”, “teacher buy-in”, “MTSS”, “Exceptional Student Education accommodations”, “colleague support” and “Professional Learning Communities”.

After my initial lists of codes were generated for each teacher, the lists were merged into one using *axial coding* (Merriam, 1988; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). During axial coding I identified similarities that reoccurred in the data and started to identify emerging data patterns across the three participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I reflected on my interpretations of meanings and created the list of categories by using repeating language, phrases and ideas that appear relevant to my research questions and purpose of this study as well as relating participant experiences and refining them (Richards, 2015). While taking the categories I created through open coding, I generated connections between categories, “common experiences” (Hoddy, 2019, p. 118) and the concepts of my research. Axial coding helped to paint a picture of the links, or cause and effect, between interactions and practices that were discussed and observed during my data collection (Hoddy, 2019). These grouped codes that formed similarities and connections included, “positive practices that are preventative”, “school-wide PBIS rewards”, “challenges with buy-in”, “MTSS challenges”, “Exceptional Student Education challenges”, and “teacher collaboration”.

Lastly, *selective coding* occurred when I used my merged list of categories to create core themes in the study. These finalized categories and propositions were consistent and reoccurring throughout the data (Merriam, 1988) as well as explained the phenomena occurring within the school’s PBIS program. Therefore, my selective coding sought to understand and determine “conclusions and generalizations” (Merriam, 1988, p. 130) that inform the study’s purpose and research questions. Overall, the study’s data analysis included reviewing the school PBIS

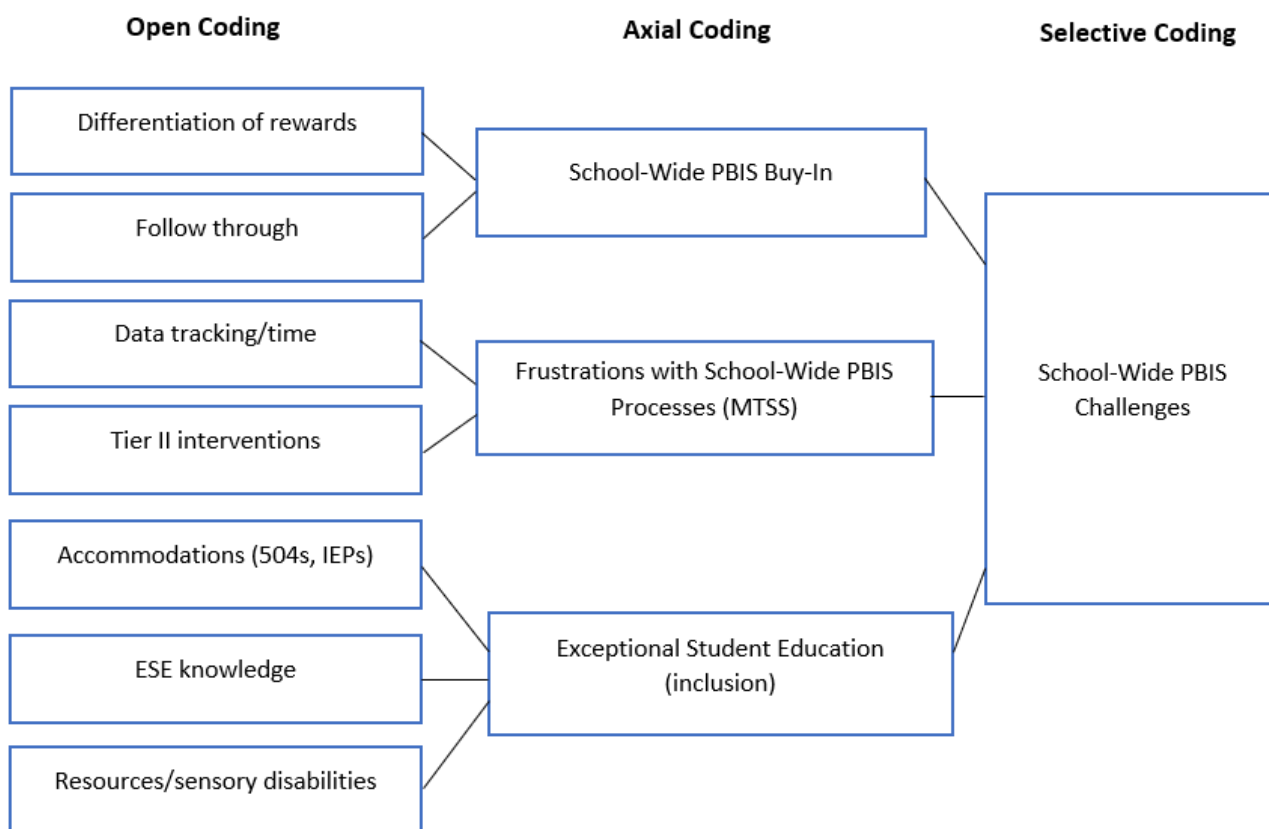
handbook, several re-readings of transcripts, observational field notes, synthesizing and classifying data into relevant themes and patterns from the participants viewpoint (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Merriam, 1988; Roberts, 2010). As a result, selective coding involved merging the different codes into major groupings or themes that could describe their presence overall in the classroom.

Cross-Case Analysis

Finally, after open and axial coding I used a cross case analysis approach to compare each participants “case” to form new knowledge in PBIS. By reading, re-reading, and studying each cases conclusion, I described and focused on similarities and differences across the three cases and described how this information adds value to previous ideas of PBIS implementation in primary classrooms. Through this analysis it was my intention to “build a general explanation that fits all the individual cases” by weaving the data together and creating a “unified description across cases [leading] to categories [and themes] that conceptualize the data from all the cases” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 234).

To demonstrate how open, axial and selective coding was completed, figure 4 shows the process for one theme, School-Wide PBIS Challenges. “Challenges with buy-in” and “MTSS challenges” were merged under a theme that described the different hurdles each participant detailed. “School-wide PBIS rewards” and “positive practices that are preventative” fell under a subtheme that depicted feasible PBIS practices. The final themes that emerged from my codes consisted of “universal PBIS practices”, “school-wide PBIS implementation” and “school-wide PBIS challenges”.

Figure 4

*School-Wide PBIS Challenges: Open, Axial and Selective Coding*School-Wide PBIS Challenges**Member Checking**

Once the categories were identified for each case, the researcher and participants assessed how the analysis could be interpreted differently through member checks (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Further summary of the analysis did not occur until full agreement was met between the researcher and individual participants. Therefore, member checking occurred “continuously throughout the study” (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, p. 414) as well as at the end of my analysis. During member checking I shared my current interpretation of our previous observations and

discussions and how I categorized each participants' perspective of PBIS practices in their classrooms thus far. During this time, I solicited feedback from the participants regarding my preliminary findings and use of data to uncover the study's themes and patterns (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I discussed my preliminary findings and concluding interpretations with each teacher that I interviewed and questioned if the findings seemed true. I used findings that were significant for each participant so that I completely interpreted their experiences and feelings through my descriptive analysis.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness of the coding and findings relied on the consistent and carefully planned observations and semi-structured interviews along with the detailed field notes and utilization of a code sheet. Trustworthiness entailed my re-readings and reflections of this study's research questions, purpose and interview transcripts (Roberts, 2010), member checking (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Roberts, 2010) and peer examination where I asked colleagues and my dissertation chair to "comment on the findings as they emerge" (Merriam, 1988, p. 169). A concluding interview took place after data analysis with a purpose of member checking the meanings and researcher interpretations that emerged through the research process (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Roberts, 2010). Additionally, I asked participants for clarification about emerging themes from my analysis to ensure their lived experience was being accurately portrayed. Thus, it was my goal during the concluding interview to share my completed interpretations of the data with each participant to ensure plausibility and validity of the study (Merriam, 1988).

Triangulation of observations was conducted through semi-structured interviews where the participants could clarify their experiences and perspectives of PBIS practices through the

school's PBIS framework. In all, observations, a code sheet of actions, dialogue, and non-verbal cues, and my field notes acted towards trustworthiness and creditability through member checks and triangulation (Kidder, 1981). Before concluding the study, assumptions and bias of the researcher have been explained and a rich description of all aspects of the research and analyzations were available so that reliability was enhanced (Merriam, 1988).

Researcher Subjectivity

“The interviewer-respondent interaction is a complex phenomenon. Both parties bring biases, predispositions, attitudes, and physical characteristics that affect the interaction and the data elicited” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 130). To account for these factors asserted by Merriam and Tisdell, I intend to collect and analyze data that is “non-judgmental, sensitive, and respectful of the respondent” (p. 131). To accomplish this, I thoroughly describe my own bias and to demonstrate how it may affect my data analysis for this study.

As a primary educator for eight years I have experienced multiple situations that have impacted my own beliefs regarding teacher development in education. Some of these reflective experiences take place during my pre-service internship and novice years of teaching, some when my confidence level of teaching began to grow, others during my years as a master's student in exceptional student education and finally as a doctoral student in educational leadership. Each of these experiences and times of my personal and professional growth have shaped my feelings regarding educational leadership and the professional development of teachers.

When I first began my teaching career I was hired as a second-grade teacher in the school where I interned. My internship at this school was an incredibly positive experience. My

mentoring teacher and I had a great relationship and I learned information concerning classroom management, data tracking and the different approaches to grading in abundance. As a result, I found a love for students who exhibited behavior challenges and enjoyed critically thinking and problem-solving concerning classroom management implementation and collecting data both academically and behaviorally. Once I was hired as a teacher following my internship, I felt confident in my abilities with the students since I was familiar with the administration and grade level teachers. Furthermore, I consistently volunteered to have an inclusion classroom meaning students identified with disabilities, academic and emotional, would be placed with me where I collaborated daily with their special education teachers. During my first two years of teaching I recall several occasions with students who became aggressive or demonstrated other challenging behaviors such as stealing. I remember feeling overwhelmed with these behaviors and sensing similar feelings from my administration and colleagues, especially due to the lack of professional development in behavior management regarding students with special needs. However, I remained optimistic and continued learning more about myself as a teacher and gained more resources that could help me resolve these issues.

As I continued my career and worked with diverse students from year to year, I made the decision to further my education with a master's degree in exceptional student education. During those two years of my studies I learned numerous ways to collect student behavior data as well as different approaches for increasing desired student behaviors. I began to see myself using my new knowledge in my classrooms, with parents and with colleagues. I enjoyed sharing new ideas and articles with my administration, colleagues, and parents in hopes of successfully using trial and error approaches for solving challenges. These experiences helped me learn about my

students, their backgrounds, their families, their interests, their triggers and overall helped me encourage positive classroom behaviors that improved academics and relationships.

After five years of teaching, I moved to a different school district and new school as a second-grade teacher. Still, I volunteered for the inclusion classrooms and continued to collaborate with different special education teachers. During this time MTSS and PBIS was becoming more prevalent across the district and required more opportunities for professional development. For two years I continued to collaborate with my administrators, grade level team and parents as we problem solved challenging student behaviors in hopes of increasing student participation, relationships, and academic growth. I noticed similar patterns between my new school and my previous one. Colleagues of mine voiced their struggles with student behaviors due to the demands of MTSS processes, time management, issues with professional development and the lack of resources.

As a result, I decided to work towards my doctoral degree in educational leadership because I saw a need for more routine professional development in this area and felt I could help bring these resources to light. More recently, I have been working as an Exceptional Student Education teacher and I have seen PBIS initiated in numerous schools and across school districts to help provide support for teachers, students, and families. However, the needs for teacher development remain (Freeman, Sugai, Simonsen & Evertt, 2017; George, Cox, Minch & Sandomierski, 2018). Each of these experiences have brought my studies to where they are today, and I reflect on them routinely with each situation I encounter in hopes of understanding the perspectives of other teachers implementing behavior management practices.

Chapter Summary

In sum, interpretations of the data collected took place respectfully through a lens of Social Learning Theory and teacher perspectives of PBIS. By comparing the three participants perspectives of PBIS practices using observations and interviews, core themes and useful propositions were constructed (Merriam, 1988). Triangulation of data including member checking and analysis of artifacts, as well as my acknowledgement of researcher bias has helped increase the validity of my findings before moving forward. Hopefully, these findings provide some understanding into PBIS practices and how they are perceived by primary classroom teachers. The primary objective of this study's research methods and its findings aim to provide clarification of supports needed for teacher buy-in and feelings of self-efficacy that can be fulfilled by administration, teacher leaders and professional development (Hershfeldt, Pell, Sechrest, Pas & Bradshaw, 2012).

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

The overall structure of qualitative research is explained by Merriam and Tisdell (2016) as identifying and discussing a problem that arises from practice, “collecting and analyzing data” and “interpreting the results” (p. 267). “Determining your audience” and “selecting a focus” are two important considerations when writing your findings (p. 270) The focus of this study follows this outline which consist of determining the audience, focusing on the purpose of the study as well as the interpretations made during the description of the findings. The purpose of this study was to describe teachers’ perspectives of PBIS implementation in primary classrooms. The findings of this research aim to explain how school-wide PBIS processes can be successful for both teachers and students. These findings can benefit fellow practitioners, school administrators, leaders, and teachers within the field. This chapter discusses the background of the study’s participants, three overarching themes and subthemes that answer the research question and sub questions and provide a deeper understanding of teacher perspectives.

Background

Before introducing the themes and detailing how each participant shared their perspectives of their school’s PBIS program, I begin sharing these findings by describing each participant’s background and how they came to be where they are today. My first participant, Suzanne², has been working in education for fourteen years as a primary grade teacher (kindergarten, first and second grade). She explained to me she enjoys working with the younger age group. Additionally, she has been teaching at North Beach Academy for six years and was one of the original teachers that opened the school when it was first built. With education in her

² Suzanne, Nicole and Ardene are pseudonyms for the participants in this study

family's background, Suzanne shared that working with children and understanding classroom management comes as "second nature". She mentioned she believes in the ideas behind PBIS, specifically the school-wide rewards, and she is very much "part of the process" working on the school's PBIS leadership committee. Lastly, when specifically asked about classroom management and her core beliefs she credited "learning tricks along the way" as her most vital classroom management training experience.

My second participant, Nicole, has been working in education for eighteen years and has been a second-grade teacher at North Beach Academy for six. Before coming to the school Nicole taught special education, self-contained classrooms including pre-kindergarten, blended Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten through second grade as well as in a private special education school. Nicole shared with me that she believes PBIS relies on standards and rules that reward students for going "above and beyond" and serves on the school's PBIS leadership committee. Like Suzanne, Nicole mentions that learning by "trial and error" has contributed most to her classroom management preparation and practice. She bases her classroom management approach around "planning rituals and routines" and spends weeks early in the school year teaching and modeling expected behaviors. She feels each activity in the school day should be "structured" and "follow rules" which has helped support her style of teaching.

Ardene, my third participant, was different from Suzanne and Nicole as she does not serve on the school's PBIS leadership committee. She has been working in education for thirteen years and has taught in primary grades including kindergarten through second grade. Like Suzanne, Ardene was one of the educators that helped open North Beach Academy six years ago. Ardene first defined PBIS as "bringing attention to positive behaviors" an occurrence that must

be a “daily, all the time, thing”. She shared with me that she has learned most of her classroom management strategies from her internship as well as “on the job” from coworkers. One of her key “go tos” for classroom management includes teaching her students “responsibility” and providing them with classroom “jobs”. She relies heavily on “character traits” that are identified through a school district program initiative, celebrating individual students for being respectful and showing perseverance, and lastly “team building” where students work together as a class to earn rewards.

Each of my three participants showed similarities as well as differences. Their experiences ranging from thirteen to eighteen years of teaching and teaching general education classrooms to special education self-contained classrooms provide support for their different approaches in classroom management. Additionally, since two of my participants are members of the PBIS leadership committee with different capacities, all three hold different viewpoints of their school’s PBIS process due to their roles. Suzanne described herself as being “very much of the process” and “always on the PBIS team” and Nicole explained she piloted the PBIS reward system two years prior to this study. Although Ardene is not a member of the PBIS leadership committee, she expressed suggestions such as encouraging buy-in and “everybody being on board”.

Through my observations and our follow up interviews I spent time with each teacher to see how this program “worked” in their individual classroom as well as how they felt it impacted their classrooms and school overall. Through 25 categories, three overarching themes were created to explain their similar perspectives with an appreciation for each of their different backgrounds, current placements, and beliefs.

Themes

During this research analysis my research question was always kept in view. Explaining how the teachers described and actualized their effective PBIS classroom practices was always this study's primary goal. While reviewing classroom observations and interview transcripts across the participants, parallel phrases and key words appeared immediately. Thus, during this cross-case analysis, and through this study's merged lens of the PBIS conceptual framework and Social Learning Theory, three themes emerged about how the participants describe PBIS practices: *Universal PBIS Practices*, *School-Wide PBIS Implementation* and *School-Wide PBIS Challenges*. Table 1 provides the three themes that emerged from my cross-case analysis which provides the evidence from all participants and their initial interviews and follow up interviews.

Table 1

Evidence of Cross-Case Analysis

Theme	Participant Codes	Evidence from Data
Theme 1: Universal PBIS Practices	SI, SF1, NI, NF1, NF2, NF3, AI, AF1, AF2, AF3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hawk bucks • "NBA Way" • Character traits • Parent involvement
Theme 2: School- Wide PBIS Implementation	S1, SF1, NI, NF1, NF3, AI, AF1, AF2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student classroom jobs • Praise • Consistent Language • Team building • Rituals, routines and clear expectations • Immediate reinforcement • Teaching experience, teacher role models, mentor teachers • Beneficial colleague support • Discipline Plan/Contract with Dean

Theme 3: School-Wide PBIS Challenges

SF1, SF2, SF3, NI, NF1, NF2, NF3, AI, AF1, AF2

- Lack of school-wide PBIS buy-in
- Lack of clear expectations from administration
- “Sensory issues”, ADHD, Autism Spectrum Disorders
- Lack of resources from MTSS
- Implementing Tier II strategies without qualifying for MTSS
- Lack of knowledge and experience in ESE
- Need for professional development in ESE behaviors
- Data tracking difficulties
- Cannot fulfill IEP accommodations and services

SI: Suzanne Initial Interview	SF1: Suzanne Follow Up 1 NF1: Nicole Follow Up 1	SF2: Suzanne Follow Up 2 NF2: Nicole Follow Up 2	SF3: Suzanne Follow Up 3 NF3: Nicole Follow Up 3
NI: Nicole Initial Interview	AF1: Ardene Follow Up 1	AF2: Ardene Follow Up 2	AF3: Ardene Follow Up 3
AI: Ardene Initial Interview			

These overarching themes are tightly coupled as they shed light on PBIS practices that are perceived as both effective and challenging. Therefore, each theme relates directly to my two sub research questions, *which PBIS practices are effective, and which are challenging?* The first theme, *Universal PBIS Practices*, explains the content teachers use to provide an effective foundation of PBIS through school-wide PBIS expectations as well as character development.

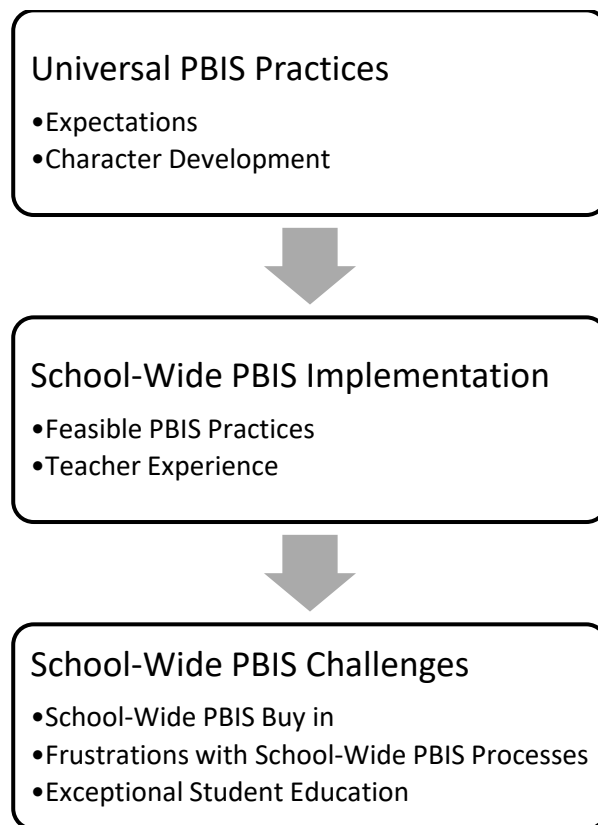
The second theme, *School-Wide PBIS Implementation* describes teacher experiences, application of feasible strategies, and methods the participants use to progress their behavior management practices. The final theme, *School-Wide PBIS Challenges*, identifies the key challenges teachers face while managing student behaviors in their classrooms. These challenges include school buy in, intricate PBIS processes, teaching students with special needs and a desire for professional development. Together the three themes and subthemes link similarities and

experiences each participant shared with me when answering this study's research question, *how do primary education teachers describe the PBIS practices used in their classroom and school?*

Each theme includes the following subthemes as shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5

Themes and Subthemes



Universal PBIS Practices

This first theme, Universal PBIS Practices, describes each participants' perspective and definition and appreciation for universal PBIS practices in the classroom as well as their school-wide PBIS application. Through their perspectives I was able to identify two sub themes from consistencies throughout the observations and conversations: school-wide PBIS expectations and character development.

Expectations

During our initial interviews, the participants shared their understanding of PBIS as well as their administrator's expectations. Even though a whole school faculty meeting addressing PBIS had yet to take place this school year, the teachers were aware of the school's school-wide PBIS plan through the school-wide PBIS handbook. Therefore, the handbook was referenced throughout this study, rather than formal meetings. Suzanne explained that while they do not meet as a faculty to discuss current data, they do meet at their monthly PBIS leadership committee meetings to discuss any current standings and changes to the plan. Additionally, Nicole pointed out that the dean of students, along with the PBIS leadership committee had created and positioned visuals throughout school campus that highlighted expected student voice levels for common areas. Examples of voice levels include "*Level 0 (Silent), Level 1 (Low Volume), Level 2 (Conversational) and Level 3 (Celebration)*" (p. 6). These common areas included hallways and the cafeteria.

During our interviews, all three participants provided and referred to their individual copies of the PBIS handbook. The participants shared that the handbook provides an explanation of what school-wide PBIS is, a behavioral expectation matrix, guidelines for teaching positive

behaviors, reward system guidelines, a monthly event schedule, discipline policies, behavior correct processes and a list of positive character traits with definitions (See Appendix C for details). According to Ardene and Nicole, the handbook has never been reviewed with the different grade levels, it is referenced occasionally by administrators if teachers face a behavior challenge. Ardene related this disconnect to the logistics of the PBIS plan, stating, “we feel there is a disconnect because there is no foresight, it is not planned out.”

Though it seems there has been little planning, the handbook provides background on school-wide PBIS and describes its focus on understanding why certain behaviors occur. It explains that “on a school-wide level, PBIS relied on accurate and reliable discipline referral data to understand the behaviors occurring across campus” (p. 1). The handbook further states how PBIS “provides a positive and effective alternative to the traditional methods of discipline. PBIS methods are research-based and proven to significantly reduce the occurrence of problem behaviors in the school...” (p. 1). However, these PBIS methods are not articulated in the PBIS plan. A problem-solving team is also identified as responsible for “identifying problem areas, brainstorming interventions such as where and what to teach, rewarding the students exhibiting the expected behavior and communicating findings to the staff, students and families” (p. 1). The last section of the background information introduces four PBIS elements associated with its school-wide implementation:

Outcomes: academic and behavior targets that are endorsed and emphasized by students, families, and educators. (What is important to each particular learning community?)

Practices: interventions and strategies that are evidenced based. (How will you reach the goals?)

Data: information that is used to identify status, need for change, and effects of interventions. (What data will you use to support your barriers?)

Systems: supports that are needed to enable the accurate and durable implementation of the practices of PBIS. (What durable systems can be implemented that will sustain this over the long haul? (p. 2)

Although these elements are outlined, they are not explicitly identified when reviewing North Beach Academy's school-wide PBIS plan.

Following the PBIS' background section, the handbook continues to identify behavioral expectations as "*Be Respectful, Be Responsible, Be Safe, Be Prepared and On Time*", otherwise known as the "*North Beach Academy Way*" or "*NBA Way*". In the Behavior Expectations Matrix (p. 4-6), the plan addresses different locations across school campus accompanied by the different expected student behaviors. Some examples include, the universal setting where students must show "Be Responsible" by "following adult directions", "Using appropriate language/volume with adults and peers", and "accepting individual differences". In the cafeteria setting students demonstrate "Be Respectful" by "Gathering utensils and napkins before sitting down", "Remaining in your assigned area", "Cleaning up your area and throwing away trash", and "Raising your hand for permission to leave your seat". These expected student behaviors continue across settings such as restrooms, the Media Center, walking in line, and during school assemblies.

The guidelines presented for teaching these expected student behaviors are outlined under "Teaching Positive Behavioral Expectations" (p. 7). This section explains teaching students in five steps as shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Guidelines for Teaching Positive Behavioral Expectations

Guidelines for Teaching Positive Behavioral Expectations (The Matrix)

1. How long should it take to teach the behaviors on the matrix?

-Plan to teach the expectations aggressively over the first weeks of school. Lessons will need to be repeated a few times initially and strongly reinforced at the onset.

2....and then I'm done...right?

-Not quite. Plan to teach "booster" lessons every day of the school year (3-5 minutes). If many problems arise in certain situation, re-teach the expectations. Having a new student entering the class is also a perfect time for a "refresher" course.

3. What do you mean by "teach" the expectations? I always go over the class rules.

-This is a little different. By teach we mean to show, as in model, demonstrate, or role play. Have the students get up and practice exactly what you have shown them to do. Have fun with it! Give them feedback on how they did. Lastly, praise them for their effort (and reward).

-Team up with a colleague to plan and teach lessons.

-Repeat this process as often as it takes students to learn the behaviors. The idea is to teach behavior the same way we teach academics. We know how important practice for mastery of academics.

4. How much time am I Supposed to commit to this?

- Keep lessons brief: 5-15 minutes in the beginning. After the first few weeks the overview should only take 2-5 minutes.

5. How do I fit this in with everything else?

-Accompany your students to the different areas of the school described on the matrix and plan to conduct brief lessons. Consider this an investment during the start-up phase that will pay off with more orderly behavior throughout the school year.

*The positive behavior expectations defined in the matrix may be included in classroom procedures, but they are grounded in the core North Beach Academy values: **Be Respectful, Be Responsible, Be Safe, Be Prepared and On Time.**

Following these guidelines, a schedule for teaching the expectations is outlined encouraging the implementation of these lessons at the beginning of the school year with "booster" lessons occurring after major holiday breaks and at the end of each school semester.

After expected behaviors are taught, the handbook has a prominent focus on its reward system. The “NBA ‘Hawk Buck’ Distribution Guidelines” (p. 9) details what the universal reward is (“Hawk Bucks”), how they are given out “fairly” along with the “Suggested # of Hawk Bucks per Incident”. Hawk bucks act as dollars students can earn across the school campus while demonstrating positive and expected behaviors. These reward guidelines explain hawk bucks as a reward intended to recognize students who demonstrate “random or extraordinary acts of kindness”, “positive character traits”, “significant self-improvements”, “meeting goals/expectations” and “consistent effort over time following the Code of Conduct”. Hawk bucks are instructed to be provided fairly “making sure that *every* student has equal opportunities to earn the cash” and should not be given out for “every little behavior” that meets expectations, but “randomly”. This section of the handbook provides a table of “Behaviors/Achievements” in correlation to “Suggested # Hawk Bucks per Incident” (p. 10) as shown as an excerpt in Table 3.

Table 3

Allocation of Hawk Bucks

Behavior/Achievements	Suggested # Hawk Bucks per Incident
Consistent appropriate classroom behavior without reminder	1
Extraordinary Random Acts of Kindness & Friendship	1-3 (depending on extraordinary nature of circumstance)
Consistent appropriate non-classroom behavior (hallway, cafeteria, playground) without reminder	1
Consistent , significant display of effort/self-motivation	2 or more (depending on significance of effort)
Meeting a set & stated goal (test, attendance, behavior)	1-Daily goal 2-Weekly goal
Consistent display of sportsmanship, teamwork, cooperation	1-2

Display of Self-Discipline (avoiding a fight, not engaging in inappropriate actions when others around are)	1-5 (depending on severity of situation in which discipline was displayed)
Display of positive attitude in a negative situation	1
Parent participation in events/conferences/meetings	2 per event
Exhibiting any of the six Character Counts! Pillars (Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring Citizenship)	5

These distribution guidelines were referenced numerous times during my follow up interviews with the teachers. At times, the frequency of rewards as well as the number of rewards presented to students seemed inconsistent and confusing to them. Although the guidelines explicitly state the plan's expectations of reward allocation, it has not been reviewed or discussed with the different grade levels. This miscommunication has led to misunderstandings surrounding the school-wide PBIS plan implementation.

Finally, the handbook showcases a "Behavior Correction Process" (p.17) that provides expected consequences to follow negative student behaviors. The "Behavior Correction Process" is shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4

Behavior Correction Process

NBA PBIS Behavior Correction Process

Step 1: Prompt, Redirect, Re-Teach

- **Prompt-** visual or verbal cue
 - **Redirect-** restate matrix behavior (proximity, active supervision)
Proximity
Active supervision
 - **Re-teach-** tell, model, practice, acknowledge
Teacher should remain....
-

Calm
Consistent
Brief
Immediate
Respectful

Step 2: Provide Choice, Conference with Student

- **Provide choice**- range of alternates
 - **Conference** with student
- Conference Procedures:**
Positive, private, using quiet voice
Describe the problem
Describe the alternative (what the student should do instead)
Tell why alternative is better
Practice (student should tell and/or model)
Provide feedback

Step 3: Logical Consequences/Classroom Intervention

- Non-verbal cues
- Time out in classroom
- Time out in buddy classroom
- Loss of privileges
- Detention
- Behavior Contract
- Restitution/ Apology

Step 4: Refer to Dean

- Issue referral
 - Contact parent (required)
-

These behavior correction expectations are utilized in each classroom across grade levels. Even though some grade levels implement some correction processes more than others, such as “time out in buddy classrooms” these guidelines are designed to help teachers support and remediate challenging student behaviors in the classroom rather than seeking support from the dean or administrators outside of the classroom. However, it is important to note that while behavior expectations and behavior correction processes are identified and outlined in the school-wide

PBIS handbook, the handbook does not offer fundamental universal PBIS practices teachers should implement consistently school-wide in classrooms to prevent unwanted student behaviors.

To help teach students expected behaviors and how they look, the PBIS leadership committee has designed a character development program that promotes parental involvement. This program enables teachers and parents to work with their students on modeling, demonstrating, and role-playing expected student behaviors while highlighting the character traits that are closely tied with the school-wide PBIS program.

Character Development

The *character development* subtheme was the most prominent subject from my discussions with the teachers. Each teacher discussed effective universal PBIS practices while referring to this foundation. North Beach Academy has designed a school wide PBIS program where all students experience character development instruction. Character development occurs in each classroom through consistent acknowledgement of character traits using common language and school-wide PBIS character lessons.

Character Traits. First, the school district provides six “pillars” that identify and encourage core values: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship. Each pillar, or character trait, is showcased in classrooms through posters, definitions and examples and celebrated by selecting students monthly who demonstrate the characteristics. As shown in the classroom through visuals each trait is described with real-life examples. For example, the character trait of “respect” states:

Respect Treat others with respect; follow the Golden Rule • Be tolerant and accepting of differences • Use good manners, not bad language • Be considerate of the feelings of others • Don't threaten, hit or hurt anyone • Deal peacefully with anger, insults, and disagreements

These pillars began years prior when the school district, local businesses, and youth organizations chose to implement CHARACTER COUNTS!, a national character education program (Character Counts!, n.d.) The program is a countywide initiative that educates and encourages positive character traits. Second, North Beach Academy provides character development lessons where parent volunteers read selected text and model lessons that demonstrate the monthly pillar. Third, students are encouraged to demonstrate the “NBA Way” around the campus, so they receive compliments from faculty. The “NBA Way” provides students the opportunity to earn whole class compliments from music, physical education, art teachers and administrators when they display expected behaviors around school.

Students become familiar with “NBA Way” through repeating a series of qualities during the virtual morning news each day: Be Respectful, Be Responsible, Be Safe, Be Prepared and On Time, as outlined in table 5. As classes receive compliments for acting the “NBA Way”, they obtain letters that spell out a selected character trait (i.e. RESPECT, FAIRNESS). After the entire character trait is spelled the entire class earns a reward of their choice.

Table 5

The “NBA Way

The “NBA Way”	Student Expectations
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Be Respectful	Follow all adult directions Use appropriate language/volume with adults and peers Accept individual differences
Be Responsible	Take pride in school environment Follow school dress code Accept consequences for your actions
Be Safe	Stay in designated areas Keep your hands, feet, and objects to yourself at all times Immediately notify adults with safety concerns
Be Prepared and On Time	Walk directly to class Arrive to classroom on time with all necessary materials

The character development aspect to North Beach’s PBIS program did not stand out at first. The participants referenced positive reinforcement strategies like hawk dollars and classroom rewards, bringing stuffed animals to class, before detailing *how* their students know expected behaviors. This is critical to note as character development cannot operate effectively in isolation of universal PBIS practices. Suzanne herself expresses her strong “buy-in” for the “NBA Way” language and that same attitude influences her students’ behaviors. During observations, Suzanne’s students showed an excitement for reciting the “NBA Way” during the morning news and through a song they wrote themselves:

Be respectful. Cha cha cha.

Be responsible. Hi-ya.

Be safe. Ooh la la.

Be prepared. One, two, three

And be on time [touch wrist 3x]

Therefore, these traits had been embedded into her classroom culture and way of being.

Ardene discussed how although character development lays the foundation for the school wide PBIS program, she felt it was not a “one size fits all” approach and should be differentiated. Rather than telling students to simply act respectfully and responsibly, Ardene used the CHARACTER COUNTS! initiative to explain character traits with definitions and real-world applications. Ardene teaches her primary students what character traits look like through age appropriate examples and feels the school wide PBIS program should follow the same guidelines:

I think school wide PBIS needs to understand what is socially acceptable, what is wanted at that time and what behavior you are trying to shape. Teaching a primary aged student to carry their backpack and be quiet in the hallway is being responsible. However, by the time students are older, expectations should change. By the time you get to middle school you need to show up to class on time to show responsibility. In the beginning they wanted all teachers to give hawk bucks for arriving to school on time. Well for a younger student, they don't drive themselves to school. They shouldn't be punished for being late. But if you are a middle schooler and late to class, that is your fault. I think these traits and rewards should be based on expectations of a student's age and it should match maturity level.

To help address this challenge of real-world and age appropriate application of character traits, character development lessons were realized. Nicole, who helped ‘spearhead’ the parent involvement piece explained that combining the district initiative of character pillars and PBIS was practical:

We wanted to incorporate character more and these character lessons, but no one was doing them because it fell on the shoulders of the teacher. So I said, if we involve parents who love to come in all the time, have a box and this is their lesson, and they just do a sign up and do a lesson and come teach it, they would love it! So, there were picture books for each character trait and our school ordered them. There is a binder from the district with all the activities for each character trait. We copied them off and when a parent volunteer signs up [someone in the front office] puts the materials in my office mailbox. The materials are a picture book with a whole lesson plan and worksheets to go with it. It goes with the character pillar for the month and parents will come in and teach the lesson. Which I thought was great! It gives the teachers like thirty minutes to work. And the parents love to come in. So, with that, after they do the lesson, we talk about what the trait means, and I have the kiddos nominate friends that display those character traits and they are the character for the month.

Additionally, Nicole utilizes the same strategy of classroom jobs to incorporate responsibility and citizenship in the classroom as well as to increase motivation and feelings of accomplishment:

So, on Mondays, I pull the sheet from last week that tracks student behaviors and I pull all the job sticks and I lay them all out. Then I have students choose their jobs based on the best-behaved students first. So, I will look to see who showed expected behaviors the most and they will get first pick of the job for the week. Since they all want to be 'line leader' I explain, if you want to be line leader let's try to work on some behavior and if

you want to be ‘paper passer’ and ‘messenger’ you have to be well behaved so I can trust you to do it.

Furthermore, Ardene discussed a connection between character traits and her circle of tolerance, or her degree of tolerating student behaviors:

I am tolerant of kid appropriate behaviors, like age appropriate behaviors. I don’t mind too much calling out, movement, as long as it is not interfering with someone else. I do not tolerate the negatively impacting the learning or participation of others. I have a harder time with you answering for someone else, rather than you blurt out over me. But, with my students, for the most part, if they have been following expectations and being respectful then I can be more tolerant of little things.

I found the use of common language that came with teaching character traits was apparent across participants. The way Nicole and Ardene implement positive character trait language, such as “be respectful and quiet when your classmate is speaking”, encourages students to be responsible and trustworthy. Once they demonstrate good character, they earn something they want. This practice of habitually utilizing character traits is helping build community, positive citizenship, and feelings of fulfillment in the classroom.

This common language of embedded character traits carries over into the common areas on school campus. Nicole explained if she is monitoring the lunchroom or the hallway, she is aware of the character traits and qualities to praise. She also feels that her students have heard the same character trait language since they began school in kindergarten. By the time they reach her class in second grade, they are familiar with the language and expectations which is helpful for classroom management.

Additionally, this same character trait language is found throughout North Beach Academy's PBIS plan. As outlined in the PBIS handbook "great acts of character" should be recognized throughout campus along with a printed list of each character trait and their qualities. The hawk bucks themselves showcase the character traits of the "NBA Way" ("Respectful, Responsible, Safe, Prepared and On Time") as the justifications of why a student earned the reward. Therefore, students and teachers are aware of the expected behaviors that earn students' multiple rewards in classrooms and throughout the school as explained further below.

These expectations along with character development and common language plays an important role in the school's school-wide PBIS plan. These components provide the groundwork and content that educate students the different behaviors needed to earn rewards and thus form positive relationships and increase student engagement. Once teachers and students are aware of the positive behaviors that are expected, teachers are obligated to implement the school-wide PBIS plan to sustain these positive behaviors. The following theme describes how the participants implement the school-wide PBIS program effectively.

School-Wide PBIS Implementation

My second theme combines different categories that showcase how the teachers perceive their school-wide PBIS implementation. This includes realizations regarding how they choose their behavior management strategies with minimal administrative direction and resources, and what they feel is needed to help the program be successful. The theme School-Wide PBIS Implementation includes the categories *feasible PBIS practices* teachers implement that are practical and sustainable as well as *teacher experience* encompassing the participant's different backgrounds and informal collaboration with peers.

Feasible PBIS Practices

Through their perspectives I was able to create two sub themes from consistencies throughout the observations and conversations. First being *feasible PBIS practices*. Since North Beach Academy's school-wide PBIS plan does not include expected universal PBIS practices, each teacher shared with me different classroom strategies and systems they have created in their classrooms. However, these strategies each teacher has implemented are perceived as quick, easy, manageable, and sustainable. The primary goal of these strategies is to include every student on a Tier I scale. Second, the *feasible PBIS practices* described connect with the school-wide PBIS character development program as well as the school-wide PBIS reward system. Like the practices, these rewards act as a component of Tier I that all students can earn. These three components working together help provide a sense of school culture and continuity across the participants' classrooms.

Individual and Team Positive Reinforcement. Initially, each teacher shared with me how they felt immediate positive reinforcement was imperative for encouraging desired student behaviors and decreasing unwanted student behaviors. This type of positive reinforcement included providing students with individual feedback, praise, and rewards as well as team rewards. Research has shown providing positive reinforcement is an essential preventative PBIS practice and North Beach Academy's school wide PBIS program uses rewards in the form of hawk bucks. Hawk bucks can be spent routinely in the school store or on special treats and events like cookies at lunch or dance parties in the gym. As described in the school-wide PBIS handbook, hawk bucks are not to be used excessively as classroom rewards. Nicole described other aspects of PBIS reward implementation that involved bi-weekly and quarterly rewards:

We have quarterly rewards that are twenty-five hawk bucks. We just got the ‘Hawk Swap Shop’ back so we can bring our students once a month to the store and they buy things.

Also, twice a month, one day is cookie day where they can buy a cookie at lunch for two hawk bucks and another day is ice cream. Other grade levels allow their students to buy ‘brag tags’ with their hawk bucks as well.

Brag tags are keychains students can hang on their backpacks to show they received a reward for positive behavior. Brag tags, cookies, ice cream, items at the store as well as quarterly popsicle parties and dance parties make up the types of rewards students can purchase with their hawk bucks.

Suzanne described her different processes for providing different types of immediate positive reinforcement in the classroom. The first strategy she mentioned was using classroom “dimes” as tokens that could be spent or traded for rewards:

Our grade level does dimes for behavior because counting by tens, twenties is a grade level standard, and then also exchange of goods and purchasing things. When my students earn dimes, they can purchase different things. They mainly choose treasure box. They can also rent a chair in the classroom; they can eat lunch with a friend or something like that.

After conducting a classroom observation and noticing the upbeat and energetic environment that Suzanne provided, I asked her to elaborate more on the different positive reinforcement strategies she used, especially since hawk bucks were not the sole universal reward system. She shared with me how rewarding students with dimes, only touched the surface of all that she did. For example, Suzanne chooses one student per week as the “All Star Student

of the Week” based on their prior week’s behavior. This recognition honors the student for the week by letting them sit with a friend at a special desk in the classroom. Additionally, she explained to me other ways she rewarded students, but in teams:

The students sit in baseball ‘bases’, first base and second base, so front row, back row [of the classroom]. Sometimes it is in a clump, but this time it’s front row and back row. They can earn table points. Then the table captain who is in charge of clean up, or everyone having their papers, goes up to the baseballs [poster at the front of the classroom] and tally mark their points. By Friday we see which base has the most points and they have a choice for exchanging [the table points] for hawk dollars or for exchanging for exclusive use of my [special] chairs for a week when we go outside for snack or do ‘read-to-self’.

Both types of positive reinforcement, individual and team, were seen in classroom observations and discussed during follow up interviews. Suzanne felt that providing individualized feedback that was positive, whether verbal praise or rewards, improved her students’ confidence which positively affects their behavior. Additionally, the idea behind team rewards supports the idea of community and team building within the classroom. Ardene also mentioned similar strategies where students “working together as a class” helped them “feel they are making good choices”. Nicole added she agrees that providing students with recognition and rewards creates excitement and pride in the classroom:

They get excited about it. They are excited about the possibility of earning rewards.

When my students earn rewards, whether individually or as a class, they get excited to do kind things for others. They are excited about feeling good about what they did. The

assistant principal saw my class in the hallway last year and wrote a little note and compliment of how we acted in the hallway and put it in an envelope for my whole class with hawk buck rewards. My class did not want to spend them because they cherished this special recognition from the AP.

Furthermore, Nicole perceives the active involvement of administration providing positive reinforcement helps implement the school's PBIS plan successfully. For that reason she explained, "We need admin to acknowledge students more."

Another factor of effective positive reinforcement involved parent communication and participation. Even though parent involvement is not outlined in the school-wide PBIS handbook, Nicole explained that daily parent communication is part of her classroom system where students move their 'clip' (a clothespin with their name) up a chart of colored paper throughout the day based on their behaviors. Students can earn treasure box items or have their clip worn by Nicole herself for going "above and beyond". Students' behavior colors are recorded in their student planner for parents to see at the end of each day. She felt this resonated the most with parents and provided an opportunity for parents to reward their child at home based on what color their clip landed on daily. More importantly this relates to Nicole's belief that the connection between home and school, consistency, and rituals and routines are the most effective PBIS practices for her classroom:

I've learned the importance of repetition and repeated opportunities for mastery and the importance of schedules and 'heads up' and practice. Just not being rigid, but the kids know what to expect. Just keeping that regimented schedule. I spend a lot of time setting a lot of expectations like 'how do we read with a partner?' So, I do all of those lessons

and they are really helpful. Some examples are, ‘how do you get your materials?’ I will call one person at a time if I need to. But we spend a lot of time, and probably a good two weeks playing with manipulatives. I let them go crazy with them and then I explain, ‘well okay those aren’t toys they are tools’ and then they have to separate the two.”

It is important to note these practices implemented are developed individually by Nicole, and not collectively as part of the school-wide PBIS plan. Nicole’s use of rituals and routines as well as teaching expected behaviors has provided her students insight regarding positive behaviors. As a result, when these behaviors are shown by her students, they earn compliments in the hallway or in different resource classes. These types of positive reinforcement opportunities and routines help strengthen the tranquil and trusted environment that Nicole has created.

Ardene also utilized many different resources to provide positive reinforcement during the classroom observations. During our follow up discussions Ardene went into further detail elaborating on the different needs of her younger students regarding immediate positive reinforcement.

I’m big on responsibility and their jobs, so in the beginning, starting with kindergarten, if they are doing those routine things, that’s where they are getting their praise. So, we use hawk bucks now, but in the past, I used bugs or beads or things like that. That is individual. I also use character traits as a positive lever, so if they are being above and beyond in ‘caring’ and pulling attention to those character traits of being ‘respectful’, ‘responsible’, ‘perseverance’, those kinds of things, they get to move their magnet and then they get a note home and celebrated. But then I also have team building. We’ll have

table points. Working together as a class. So, I feel they need multiple opportunities to feel they are making good choices.

The way teachers are implementing PBIS practices has become intertwined with the character development subtheme described earlier. Thus, the focus of multiple positive reinforcement techniques relies on character traits like “respect” and “responsibility” along with sending positive, rather than negative, notes home. Again, these practices are not universal PBIS practices required by the school-wide PBIS plan, nor are universal PBIS practices identified. As a result, teachers are utilizing different techniques for administering discipline. When I asked what happened in situations where students displayed unwanted behaviors, such as disrespect, Ardene described a certain punishment strategy that many teachers have used at North Beach Academy. This strategy involved moving student clips, or magnets, down on the same color chart where students move their clips up for positive behavior. Ardene explained she felt punishment techniques were ineffective:

I feel like mistakes are how they grow, and they come in making mistakes. Maybe not always making the best choice and then if they move their [magnet] down, it's hard for them to see past that color. Especially with some of the higher behavior kids. If they see they are already on a color, they are going to kind of give up and quit. They think it's not attainable. I also dropped the color chart because I could tell parents a great story or anecdote where their child was brave on the playground or a good friend. Something that I thought was really bright that their child did, or problem solving, and the parents would just kind of be like, ‘oh great, what color are they on?’ I try to tell parents too, just like adults, the day for them is ebbs and flows. Sometimes we are going to have great

mornings and sometimes we're not and just because you made a little mistake here, doesn't mean you can't make 15 other good choices. So, I'm only kind of rewarding the positives.

As Ardene elaborated on why she disagrees with how she's disciplined in the past, I noticed a trend involving punishment across participants. Over time two of the teachers have reformed their perspective on the importance of consequences and how they are applied in the classroom.

Discipline and Consequences. While certain punishment strategies have decreased across grade levels, the participants described more suitable consequences they have found to be more sustainable. These practices include using "time out in buddy classrooms" where students are sent to a colleague's classroom for a break or for an opportunity to reflect on their actions.

Ardene described how she utilizes this time out approach with a written reflection piece:

Sometimes students have had multiple reminders regarding their behavior and it's a constant thing. So, when you're feeling done with the situation, you remove them from it. You let the student know, 'if you can't keep it together, I am going to ask you to leave'. 'If you aren't following the expectations in this classroom, you need to take a break in a different classroom and focus on what behaviors you need to change before you can come back and be with your friends'. I think it is helpful to send them to a buddy classroom. I feel like they need to be removed from the situation if it's become too much. There are so many times when you send a note home to parents and it might not be working. So a 'time out' in buddy classrooms is just another means of discipline or consequence. They understand they are going to miss out on whatever is happening in here and they will have to sit in someone else's classroom, write a note and reflect on

their behavior, then come back. In younger grades, changing atmospheres and changing the environment, talking to someone else about the situation and having to be responsible and take ownership of what you did, explaining it to the other teacher when you go to their room, I think it makes more of a difference.

Ardene pointed out that this strategy of requiring students to (1) take a 'time out' in a buddy classroom, (2) explain their actions to another classroom teacher, and (3) write a note reflecting on their behavior, has prevented the same behavior from reoccurring. Afterwards the note is sent home for parents to acknowledge, sign and return. Therefore, this disciplinary technique links parent communication and does not require assistance from administration.

Like Ardene, Nicole explained that her grade level manages discipline differently in each classroom. However, if she is feeling frustrated with an individual student and their challenging behavior, grade level colleagues offer their classroom as a place for that student to take a "time out". Nicole is then able to regroup and address the behavior later. Suzanne described her grade level as more cohesive in their implementation on consequences. Together, Suzanne's grade level has created a "Contract with the Dean":

Our 'Contract with the Dean' includes guidelines: Step 1. You get a warning from the teacher, Step 2. You pull the student aside and have a quiet discussion. We call Step 2 'door' and the student knows to go straight to the classroom door and sit. So it is a physical movement, away from what is happening, and they know the door is about to open and they are about to go out. So I think that is good for our students' age group because they need to know 'I'm not going to tell you again...'. So then Step 3. They have to walk to a buddy classroom, take a [reflection sheet] and write what choice they made

and how they are going to fix it for next time. The sheet is sent home and the parent has to sign it. If the behavior happens again after that, they have to go to the dean, and it is a written referral. This contract is straight to the point and we use it as a grade level. This is more efficient than using clip charts and having to write down students' daily behaviors. That was exhausting, I don't need to write down a daily smiley face or daily sad face to show how a student's day went. If I do draw a sad face that comes with an e-mail from the parent asking, 'what happened?' That process was exhausting to me, I hated writing daily reports at the end of every day.

By using the "Contract with the Dean" Suzanne strongly feels it saves her time in the classroom and helped provide effective discipline for students who need it the most. She further stated that just by saying 'door' as a reminder for students has made a big difference in keeping her instruction on track. Through more discussion of how Ardene and Suzanne's perspectives changed regarding punishment, the subtheme of *teacher experience* became imperative to implementing feasible strategies. The participants credited their changes in beliefs and discoveries of more efficient PBIS practices to the school-wide PBIS plan's emphasis of recognizing positive student behaviors, their teaching experience as well as trying new PBIS practices throughout the years.

Teacher Experience

During the data collection process, I continued to ask each participant to share how they implemented behavior management strategies that were effective and how they learned of such strategies. Each participant explained that their knowledge of positive behavior techniques did not come from the school-wide PBIS program or professional development, but instead their

own teacher experience. Thus, this subtheme works harmoniously with Social Learning Theory and the outcomes of learning from others. Since North Beach Academy's school-wide PBIS handbook does not identify PBIS classroom practices, the teachers have relied on their past teaching and their peers for ideas. This included learning about "classroom management from internships", "learning most from my peers and watching what works for them", "adding new strategies throughout the years" and reaching out informally to coworkers during lunch, resource and other free times. Additionally, using "trial and error" on their own to try out new strategies each year was viewed by participants to be effective.

Nicole stated although she did not attend college for an educational degree, she has utilized colleagues for behavior management ideas: "Everything I have done, I have learned through trial and error. I would see what other teachers are using and then I would try that." Furthermore, Suzanne gave credit to her mother who worked as an educator as well as working with "role model" teachers, "really good teacher role models and mentor teachers have helped a lot."

Like Nicole and Suzanne, Ardene claims her past experiences, particularly her internship and collaborating with peers, helped strengthen her behavior management strategies the most:

I feel like in college we had some classroom management courses, but I have learned the most about classroom management from my internship. I learn the most from my peers and seeing what works for them or going to ask them. Being hands on. You also try things you've done in the past. Last year I had a student who needed a wiggle bottom seat because he likes to move, last year someone needed Velcro in their pocket or a kicking rubber band on their chair. Some students are tactile so when they become frustrated, I

remember to give them errands. I'll have students take a folder to another teacher just to get them up and moving. I have learned those things over the years just by trying them out.

Working with their peers to develop ideas resonated across participants. All three participants agreed that recalling previous teaching experiences is needed when creating innovative and more efficient behavior management strategies today. However, when analyzing the different backgrounds of each participant, Nicole's past experiences differed greatly as she has a strong background in Exceptional Student Education. "I taught self-contained, kindergarten to second, and before that I taught at a private special education school". Nicole uses her special education experience to help students with behavior challenges in her general education classroom:

I think my ESE background in general has helped me with my classroom management.

It's very regimented and scheduled. So, when I started with the picture schedules in self-contained classrooms, I just carried those ideas over to my classroom now...It's made my life easier...it keeps everything orderly.

Since Nicole has more experience with special education as opposed to general education teachers, she feels confident in implementing an assortment of behavior management strategies. As a result, she has pinpointed these distinct PBIS practices she feels are preventative, strong, and suitable for students who need extra support concerning their challenging behavior. I noted in the classroom observations, these strategies range from picture schedules, using a soft voice to providing visuals throughout the room to show expectations like organized cubbies and student learning centers.

Related to this subtheme, teacher collaboration plays an important role in how the teachers work together and use their diverse experiences to problem solve efficiently.

Teacher Collaboration. As I continued to question the teachers on how they address new behavior challenges in their classroom, the participants asserted that collaboration with colleagues plays a more vital role than professional development. Nicole explained that informal conversations with colleagues over lunch breaks are resourceful:

We talk about the creative fun things you're doing in your classroom. At lunch someone will say 'oh, I did this really cool project', and I will ask them to tell me about it. Then I will try it. Even strategizing. Like one thing someone said, 'I make the students write AFC on their paper and they read it three times. First time for accuracy, second for fluency and third from comprehension'. I thought to myself, I have never heard of that. I need to try it. In book club, we were in another teacher's room and I saw she had puzzle pieces in her room. She had one for each group of student desks. Every time she caught them doing something positive you could fill in the puzzle piece and when that table's puzzle was complete, they got a celebration or reward. I had never seen that before, if I hadn't gone to book club, I wouldn't have seen it on her board. I don't think we have enough of seeing those things in practice.

Similar to Nicole, Ardene feels seeing strategies in action are more useful compared to more traditional professional development opportunities. Ardene credits this belief to her internship experiences:

I learned the most about classroom management from my internship and coworkers. Most of my experience or ideas are either from my internship back in the day, or just from my

coworkers and people that I respect as teachers. My peers. Things I observed during my internship I still implement like going over expectations every day even though we've been coming to school for months now. I learned about giving instructions in steps, like 'first you do this, then next and last' I use that a lot. I learned from my internship teacher to have pictures to show what activities the students should be doing, like a picture of a student cutting, then coloring. So my students know what to do next. Easy tricks like that, that save me time during the day.

Moreover, visiting classrooms were helpful:

I would like to see professional development with where our society is going regarding students being diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder and sensory issues, or even Autism Spectrum Disorder, any of those diagnosis. I think I would love to go and see strategies be implemented, real strategies in the classroom. From someone who is actually in a classroom. Not just a generic 'use a fidget spinner'. Something teachers have implemented in their classroom. Seeing it helps with me learn the new information.

Learning how students' little brains work, so I can implement those strategies. Even if it's just setting up the classroom different...I learn things I implement from the teachers on my team.

As a result, Suzanne, Nicole and Ardene have been unable to implement new PBIS practices that prevent current behavior challenges since recent professional development have been perceived as hollow "lectures" and presentations with little "takeaways". Therefore, discussing current topics with colleagues and visiting classrooms while observing strategies in action would be

beneficial for implementing the school-wide PBIS plan. Suzanne asserted that talking with her colleagues and asking for examples of their strategies has benefited her the most:

A lot of grade level support and mentor teachers have helped contribute to my classroom management practices. With my grade level, we are always having conversations about different situations and different ways to address behaviors. With our classroom reward system of dimes, we collaborate as a grade level a lot on how we want it to work. We just recently decided that dimes can be taken away if needed. Sometimes the students are acting out, but not enough to implement our consequences of sending them to the door. So talking about it and changing our system a little bit was nice. We also use flexible grouping each week, so we work together and make sure we are all on the same page and it makes everything run smoothly behavior wise.

Without this teacher collaboration piece, certain behavior management systems would not be successful. Additionally, new ideas and modifications to the implementation of these systems are consistently discussed amongst the grade level. These informal teacher collaboration opportunities have supported the different needs of both teachers and students.

These first two themes showcase effective and feasible PBIS practices that each teacher utilizes within their school and classroom's PBIS implementation. Furthermore, this school-wide PBIS approach of universal positive reinforcement and rituals and routines infused with character development has helped teachers encourage and motivate students in their classrooms to follow expectations. However, other aspects to the processes are not considered useful or sustainable. Therefore, the following theme addresses perceived challenges including lack of

school wide PBIS buy in, insufficient resources with problem solving Tier II and Tier III behaviors and ineffective professional development.

School-Wide PBIS Challenges

The third theme, *School-Wide PBIS Challenges*, answers my second sub question regarding the challenges of PBIS. This theme contains three sub themes the participants detailed in our interviews. *School-wide PBIS buy-in, frustrations with school-wide PBIS processes*, and *Exceptional Student Education (ESE)* were concerns brought to my attention during each meeting. Although there are many effective aspects described with school-wide PBIS, the challenges discussed in this section include differentiation of rewards, the MTSS process, managing students with special needs along with the lack of professional development have created frustration amongst the teachers.

School-Wide PBIS Buy In

A category that arose from my interviews included the lack of teacher commitment and buy in with the school wide PBIS program. This challenge ranges from the needs of different student ages, to complexity of reward schedules. Ardene expressed her feelings of frustration with school-wide PBIS buy-in and varied commitment since additional responsibilities fell on teachers' shoulders:

For our students we need rewards to be tangible, it has to be in our kids' hands. The rewards need to be constant, daily and motivating so it is hard for our grade level to get on board because teachers are the only ones handing out hawk bucks. I don't consider that 'school wide' ...the hawk bucks should be given out by everybody else, not just the teacher. My students don't get them at lunch. No one is handing them out in the hallway.

They don't get them from resource teachers. So, when the school has items my students can purchase, my kids don't have enough hawk bucks to use as money. So, if I'm not giving them hawk bucks, they don't have enough to purchase anything.

Suzanne, as a member of the PBIS team, felt there were different issues regarding the process of rewards and obtaining teacher commitment:

The teachers that work here don't think we have enough rewards. They aren't on the PBIS team and they don't think there is enough rewards, but I think it is because they aren't following through with the rewards. What we are working on is each grade level has quarterly rewards such as dance parties at the end of the quarter. Then we have the hawk swap shop once a month and students can go and buy items with their hawk dollars. Then biweekly, you can spend hawk dollars and get a cookie or brag tag. [Some teachers] aren't following through with the calendar schedule that lists the rewards. Then students devalue their hawk dollars and don't care to earn them anymore. I think teachers aren't giving hawk dollars frequently enough or they are giving them too frequent and that is what we are trying to figure out as a team.

It is important to note that the school-wide PBIS handbook outlines the allocation of hawk bucks per incident but leaves room for misinterpretation. For example, the handbook suggests rewarding students with "5" hawk bucks for demonstrating any of the six CHARACTER COUNTS! character trait pillars. This contradicts with the guidelines of "protecting the integrity of the Hawk Bucks" while only rewarding "Extraordinary Random Acts of Kindness" with "1-3" hawk bucks (p. 9-10).

While discussing the topic of buy-in and commitment further the teachers also felt that buy-in was improving as administrators and resource teachers provided compliments to classes, rather than handing out hawk bucks. Nicole also felt being consistent within her grade level is key, “As a grade level we get people to buy in and use the rewards by having students bring back their writing journal on Wednesdays. If they bring it back, they get a hawk buck, across our grade level”. Still, for younger students’ compliments are not as tangible as hawk bucks and dimes and may not have as great an effect.

Therefore, the different needs of grade levels have created some obstacles while committing to and implementing the program as pointed out by Suzanne, “...getting each grade level to abide by an outline or rules, or to be consistent on their grade level is a challenge. Like Ardene, Suzanne and Nicole only mentioned themselves as the primary faculty members responsible for providing the school wide PBIS positive reinforcement of hawk dollars, but that did not seem to be as great of a concern to them. In all, teacher understandings of school-wide PBIS expectations as well as the consistent implementation of these expectations varied across teachers. As a result, teacher buy-in is impacted. This is related to a multitude of factors raised by the participants outlined below.

As mentioned in the second theme, the three teachers implemented their own practices for positive reinforcement in their classroom. Therefore, adding on the responsibility of hawk dollar rewards caused some frustration. The competing school-wide and classroom reward systems were overwhelming at times for teachers. These competing systems consist of hawk bucks versus other token systems such as dimes and team points. For example, Ardene explained how she felt it can all become too overwhelming to keep track of:

It's too much. It might not be too much for my students, but it is too much for me to keep up with. We were not clear with hawk bucks this year. So, I used to give my kids other tokens and when they collected enough, they could choose a prize from our 'brag book'. Something like wear your pajamas to school. There were a lot of different options. But when we got the hawk bucks, it's just too much. Now I don't give out my own tokens anymore and my students miss those.

These competing reward systems has impacted Ardene's frustration level. Additionally, while this responsibility is perceived to fall primarily on the classroom teachers, Suzanne mentioned that additional resources, consistency, and clear expectations from administration would be useful:

It would be a good idea to have more Tier I resources and classroom management ideas you can implement. It would be great if the grade levels did all the same value of the rewards since we also [work with flexible grouping]. Then we could team them like they are all of our students. If I hand a student a dime as a reward, they know it correlates to a class point and hand it to their teacher. I think that's a big issue because it just makes it confusing. I don't think we need all the extra, clip charts, do this and do that. I would love for our administrators to say, 'our behavior management system for Tier I is hawk dollars'. No clip charts, nothing else.

While discussing administration's expectations, Nicole added that administrators are aware of the lack of buy-in but have not addressed the issue with clear expectations:

I think they want more consistency. Using it all among, everyone in the school. I think they get frustrated with certain grade levels. On average in my class maybe five students

will have enough hawk bucks to attend the quarterly reward event. But in kindergarten, all of the kindergartners go except maybe for two students. So it's almost like those two students are held back as punishment. It shouldn't be that way. It's a reward system, not punishment. So I think admin wants more consistency among all the grade levels (on the use of hawk bucks) and more buy-in. I will say we have more buy-in with other grades now, but we still have a long way to go in my grade level.

Suzanne, Nicole and Ardene agree that more administration involvement is needed. However, the school-wide PBIS handbook considers the PBIS leadership committee members responsible for instructing teachers on what reward systems are required and to implement those systems (p. 1). However, Suzanne stated those responsibilities are not sustainable due to low participation:

I think the PBIS committee needs to be a large group and it needs to have everyone on board and buy-in from everyone. Even during 'after school events', you want to see the good behaviors you want to be able to get kids attention and have that common language across the board. And have those behaviors and practices carry over to different environments, events, and things. We could be stronger in that area.

Nicole agrees that many school-wide PBIS challenges are PBIS leadership committee member responsibilities and acknowledges there is little planning and effort executed:

Our PBIS committee grade level representatives are responsible for helping teachers understand what to do and how to implement the plan. But we do not always have full representation at all meetings. Sometimes certain grade level representatives are absent. During our meetings we look at school data and referrals and compare to last year, discuss trends and groups of kids. Then usually the meetings are filled with complaints.

Typically we'll discuss the next rewards and events, but we'll get caught by complaints and ideas. So, nothing ever gets completed or finished.

Vital to school-wide PBIS implementation and buy-in, Nicole pointed out that agreed-upon PBIS practices and behavior management strategies are not examined during monthly meetings. The hawk buck reward system is the committee's only focus. Although there is some disorganization of the PBIS leadership committee, Nicole explains they have been flexible with allowing an array of rewards across grade levels. The PBIS leadership committee is attempting to address the different needs of student ages and the differentiation of rewards in hopes of increasing teacher buy-in and commitment.

Differentiation of Rewards and Follow Through. Providing ample rewards can increase students' positive behaviors but differentiating the types of rewards and how they are provided can be a struggle. Ardene continued to argue that logistics of the program has been a concern:

It's a disconnect. The logistic part is very hard for us. We will tell the students to keep their hawk bucks. 'Keep twenty-five because we are going to do something awesome at the end of the quarter, but we don't know what it is yet!' There is no foresight and it is not planned out. Last year if you saved your hawk bucks you could go to the park and have popsicles. But then right before we were supposed to go, they couldn't get popsicles, or they forgot them. Which to older kids might seem okay, but if I have a younger student who earned it and now, he can't have it, that can be disappointing. My frustration with the school wide thing is not everybody is on board.

This type of miscommunication between administrators and teachers was acknowledged and explained as something the school wide PBIS leadership committee had been working on.

Suzanne stated:

I think this year we worked really hard towards administrators being at our meetings and acting as representatives. Actually, sitting there when the PBIS committee members are having conversations. It is difficult to plan things when administrators are not present because we might agree on a reward, submit it to our administrators and then it gets denied. But I do think all of the teachers are aware of the expectations, but it is your choice if you want to follow them.

Not only is scheduling administrators' participation difficult but also the cost of rewards and space for special events that are promised to students as Suzanne mentions:

...Middle school, who receives a lot of our funding, is getting root beer floats and Chick-fil-let. That costs money when you are talking about 200-300 kids. It's also trying to find the time and space. There is a lot to request on the school calendar and we have a lot of kids.

Teachers agreed that getting administrators, teachers, staff, students, and parents, on the same page is challenging.

Administration involvement is known to be a crucial part of school wide PBIS. Although administration and the dean of North Beach Academy encourage teachers to implement the process, teachers felt that expectations are left unclear. Teachers are "aware of the expectations", but it is "your choice if you decide to follow the guidelines". Additionally, PBIS leadership committee representatives are responsible for providing PBIS recommendations for their grade

level colleagues. Therefore, with little time, instruction, and training in school wide PBIS resources teachers are left questioning PBIS expectations and must “apply” recommendations “in your own head”.

While this may honor teachers’ individual beliefs, the variability contradicts the underlying purpose of the school-wide PBIS program and leads to confusion and inconsistent implementation of secondary (Tier II) and tertiary (Tier III) support. The secondary and tertiary problem-solving processes, resources and frustrations are described in the next subtheme, *frustrations with school-wide PBIS processes*.

Frustrations with School-Wide PBIS Processes

The following sub theme that emerged entered on the limited number of new behavior management strategies recommended from the MTSS problem solving team. Additionally, the lack of formal collaborative processes used to implement PBIS practices was viewed as problematic by the participants.

Multitiered Systems of Supports (MTSS). According to all three participants there were few to no suggestions that were provided for supporting students with Tier II behavior challenges. “You just try things you’ve been told in the past” is how Ardene best managed students who were not responding to universal practices. This left the teachers feeling frustrated with the MTSS process and as a result demotivated them from utilizing it. Some of the behavior management strategies the teachers implement are ones they came up with on their own as Nicole describes, “Some students have needed a little bit more beyond the Tier I strategies. I implement behavior charts and point sheets on my own without bringing them up to MTSS.” As a result, Nicole explained she was torn with utilizing the MTSS process. Her frustration was a

result of two issues: being provided behavior interventions that are effective and finding students eligible for Exceptional Student Education services:

The process doesn't move quick enough. I have another student who I strongly feel has a Specific Learning Disability. She is not going to be found eligible before the end of the year because I know it's a process. It's written on paper, but it's nothing more. It's a lot of work for the teacher to bring students to MTSS and keep the data, submit the data and then it's all our responsibility. It's everything we are doing. Sometimes you want to just do what you know is right, without all of the additional paperwork, but then you also want to make sure you have the paper trail.

Each participant agreed that the MTSS process is needed but lacks efficiency and does not generate feasible solutions. Ardene explained the beginnings of the MTSS process is lacking and the way students are considered eligible for behavior problem-solving is problematic. While discussing one student with behavior struggles, she shared:

The problem with his behavior is sometimes it is not a hindrance enough yet. Since his behavior hinders him but does not hinder the rest of my class, I cannot bring him to RTI. It is not hindering my class enough. If the behavior is not dangerous MTSS will not take it on. With my grade level standards his behaviors don't affect his grades enough. But I know next year if his work isn't being completed, which is happening now, that will start affecting his grades. Then the MTSS team will be able to take him for problem solving. But right now, I can't bring him up to behavior MTSS because I don't have enough points on the RTI form. I feel there is an issue, but I don't have enough data points to prove there is an issue.

This consistent lack of support for teachers with students struggling behaviorally in classrooms adds to their frustration and confusion about the underlying goals, purposes, and implementation practices of the school-wide MTSS process.

Ardene also described how implementing the few behavior strategies suggested by the MTSS problem solving team were not feasible:

A lot of things the problem-solving team wanted me to do were not feasible and I have seventeen students. Like weighted walks, sensory breaks, ten minute one on one discussions after the sensory break and transitions. So, after lunch, recess and a transition from a music or PE resource I would have to be with this student one on one. Also, recommended was giving him five minutes to sprint to the fence outside and back when I notice he is frustrated with his work. Just not feasible when I am by myself. Maybe if I had a group of teachers in here, I could see that happening. A lot of times they will say giving time restraints such as letting them work for five minutes, then give a two-minute break with free time. I have a hard time making that work because two minutes is not enough for any type of free time. It didn't make sense. In the end the student did receive an IEP for behavior which was great because they now have the small group support and extra time for assessments, but I am not given much support until the end of the process. I am the data tracker; the point and tally marker and it takes all year for the team to decide if the student can have an IEP for behavior support. I don't think I have benefited from it much. It discourages me from following through with the MTSS process. I'd rather pull my own bag of tricks out.

Similarly, as pointed out by Suzanne bringing challenging students to the school wide PBIS problem solving team is a “lost cause” like the academic MTSS process:

If you are referring students for behavior the Response to Intervention process is a lost cause and we’ve been told that. You do Tier I since it is already what you’re doing in your classroom and then you’ve identified a behavior that isn’t responding. This behavior could be pretty severe and then the problem-solving team moves you to Tier II. You work on the Tier II plan which is elaborate and exhausting and then the team will change it. You have to change the plan and complete six more weeks of Tier II. At the end it shows the student literally needs one on one support, so they will suggest a 504 plan which is another additional thing you have to complete.

When asked how students receive the one on one instruction or support for behavior Suzanne responded “there is no support for that here. At other schools there are ‘next steps’ with the process. We do not have ‘next steps’ here, which is frustrating.” Suzanne further compared North Beach Academy’s MTSS behavior process to that of neighboring schools:

For instance, if you turn to RTI for a student’s behavior, like a severe behavior, other schools refer those students to a more structured classroom or school after Tier III. There was an intent, a purpose that you were doing all this extra work and it was going to make a difference. At our school you can call it a behavior plan, but you are just charting yourself. We have so many kids we work with but follow through doesn’t really happen. There is never ‘okay after you do this for months’, instead of saying okay we’ll do this...it was ‘let’s start over and do something you’ve probably already done like give treasure box rewards.

While Suzanne feels she is moving in circles with the MTSS process, Nicole elaborated more regarding the certain “next steps” needing to be considered:

Up to that point, they need social skills by an ESE teacher. I feel like behavior should be the focus more than academics. I think behavior, routine, just mental health and happiness should be the focus and then the learning can come.

One persistent challenge outlined by all participants that needs attention across the school is that students must qualify for Exceptional Student Education (ESE) through Tier III interventions. After students are determined eligible, they qualify for some services like small group or individual support.

Even though all three participants felt little support, they are still implementing strategies they view as useful. Ardene described different approaches she’s learned in the past such as “wiggle bottom seats” or “Velcro in their pocket” for students who are tactile and becoming frustrated throughout the day. Nicole listed “verbal prompting”, “picture schedules”, “point systems”, “special classroom jobs” and even providing special foods that one student would only eat during lunch to help students manage their day in the classroom.

Several of these students discussed during our interviews were students with special needs, but their Individualized Education Program (IEPs) and Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs) were not providing enough support. These conversations lead to the next sub theme of providing effective behavior management strategies for students already diagnosed with disabilities.

Exceptional Student Education (ESE)

Each participant shared they had students diagnosed with disabilities in their classrooms. These students needed “extra” behavior support that the teachers were providing in different

ways. In one case, Nicole's student diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder required "additional verbal prompting, a lot of proximity" and sits at the teacher's table most of the day. During my observations I noted a student with special needs sitting at a desk isolated from the class due to their "inattentiveness" and "distractive behavior". Nicole discussed her concerns with his behavior and the strategies she employed:

He took a downward slide with his behavior right around Christmas because he had family in town, and I do not think he was on his medication for a while. It was at the point I was taking pictures because he needed a visual schedule of unpacking in the morning. Now that medication is back on board he can unpack again. We were trying a point system for a while, but he was perseverating on the points and would not complete his work, so I had to take that away.

Although this student had a BIP the intervention was not producing results, "The plan is just on paper. It is not working. I've reached out to the district, but no one has come so I just keep chugging along."

This same struggle was shared by the other two participants. The lack of confidence in utilizing the MTSS process for problem solving new behavior strategies concerning students with special needs was problematic. For instance, Ardene claimed she has researched different strategies on her own when she felt she hit a roadblock:

I don't always understand students with sensory issues. Some students would crawl behind things and I didn't understand why. After I googled it, I learned that doing this, or 'tunneling' is what helps kids feel calm. So, first I was thinking they were trying to escape and be defiant, but then I realized they are trying to get to safety. So, I set up a

small area because sometimes those kids need a closed off, safe spot. I've learned a lot from online, doing research. Also, with students who have had anxiety, or Attention Deficit Disorder, I learned those can commonly be misdiagnosed with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and I find that interesting. Some students will start talking, or want to tell me a story, after I have told them to wait before speaking. They will keep talking after I've told them to stop and I thought they wanted the last word. But after doing my research and talking to our guidance counselor, I learned some students with disabilities need the opportunity to speak and get what they want off their chest first. Instead of saying 'do this, then you can tell me your story', I let them tell me their story first and then they complete the task after. After that suggestion and my research, it has made a world of a difference. For students with anxiety, I tell them they can tell me their story for two minutes before they get to work. Then they usually complete their work. It has prevented a lot of off task behaviors.

Moreover, when Suzanne refers students with special needs to the MTSS behavior problem solving team, she is provided little support to address learning and behavior challenges that occur for some students identified with disabilities:

With diagnosis of Attention Deficit Disorder my student has a behavior plan and individual accommodation plan, or 504 plan. For the 504 the teacher modifies and accommodates activities in the classroom. Sometimes the 504 can mask a behavior issue because the student is being provided additional support. But with my student, behaviors are still coming out like staring off, zoning out. I will provide accommodations and do

things step by step for them but then they will fall on the floor...RTI does not provide behavior supports when referring students for behaviors.

When students are provided individualized plans such as IEPs or 504 plans, accommodations in the classroom are mandatory. These accommodations can include small group instruction, clarified and paraphrased directions, verbal encouragement and more. Suzanne shared she is now required to provide these accommodations but has had little professional development and training in how to provide appropriate behavioral accommodations and modifications for students with disabilities. She lacks a full understanding of how ESE services should be implemented in her classroom.

Nicole further shared that teachers are responsible for some of the 'next steps' that would normally fall on different personnel like Exceptional Student Education teachers. This includes social services that are listed on her students' IEPs:

If it's on the IEP we are responsible. I am responsible for social groups for a student with an IEP. I have to infuse it. The hardest part is we are such a big school and the Exceptional Student Education teachers' caseloads are so big they do not have time to pull social groups for behavior support. So that falls on us as the teachers. They say 'you need to do it when it's a teachable moment, like when they are playing soccer outside. That is a teachable moment'. The ESE teacher will not be there. That is something teachers do naturally anyway, so it isn't something that is differentiated or 'extra' for the student with special needs.

As a result, the participants believe expectations of roles and responsibilities of teachers and ESE teachers are not clearly defined in the School-Wide PBIS program. Roles and responsibilities

become indistinct and support for general education teachers wains when ESE caseloads are high. This confusion of teacher responsibilities coupled with a perceived lack of support for teachers leads to inadequate behavior management implementation for individual student needs.

Furthermore, Nicole agreed that some resources, including created a sensory room for students, would be beneficial but are not available:

I do think if we had sensory room and extra personnel that could take students to the sensory room. I think my student would benefit from that. Aside from me giving them a heavy bag and saying, 'oh can you run this up to the media center?' I have seen benefits of sensory rooms and I think that would be more helpful.

Finally, when comparing the MTSS behavior process to the MTSS academic process, Ardene felt the two could not be farther apart in comparison:

I think academically there are more ideas thrown out to you. More interventions and you get to pick an intervention and you stick with it consistently. For behavior intervention plans, I don't think there is ever an intervention provided. I feel like every time I take someone for behavior to the problem-solving team, I am just the data tracker. I just track the behavior instead of providing an intervention to prevent the behavior. I am given 'this is how much time and I want you to tally how many times you see that behavior'. Then the team decides to implement a sticker chart. Well, we've already used a sticker chart, and nothing comes of it.

Like Nicole had mentioned before, behavior intervention tends to take a back seat to academic intervention. As a result, much of the school's resources are focused on academic supports and extra curriculum. Nicole and Ardene pose the argument that if behaviors were addressed first

then “the learning can come”. This separation of the MTSS process creates confusion and a perceived lack of support for teachers charged with implementing the PBIS school wide plan.

As a result of these challenges, each of my participants spoke of their ‘bag of tricks’, past experiences and needs to help effectively support their students. The strategies Suzanne, Nicole and Ardene rely on come from teacher collaboration and visiting their colleague’s classrooms. While informally meeting with colleagues and discussing behavior management strategies and outcomes is productive, it was brought to my attention that these types of collaborations are not included in the teachers’ Professional Learning Communities. Today, Professional Learning Communities (PLC) are utilized in schools to address current instruction and classroom strategies teachers wish to strengthen. Since PLCs are not being utilized in this capacity at North Beach Academy it leads to another challenge of the school-wide PBIS implementation.

Professional Learning Communities (PLC). Like most schools, North Beach Academy utilizes Professional Learning Communities (PLC) to set aside time every week for teachers to meet with their grade level and discuss student academic data. The intent of PLCs is to form a learning organization within the school that focuses on student learning. While certain faculty members, such as teachers, meet in groups they discuss student successes, data, classroom goals, and results. Since PLCs are founded on student learning, academics are the topic of discussion. Suzanne described the process as the following:

Our PLC meets every week and we can decide beforehand what we will be discussing.

Other times it must be our standardized assessment data. Our administrators come to our meetings. Sometimes they share new information or just observe.

When asked if PBIS was ever discussed during their weekly meetings, Nicole explained, “We share PBIS notes, that we learned from the monthly PBIS meeting”. Additionally, the participants described the schools PLCs as “regimented”, “talking about data” and “there isn’t enough time to talk about the things you’re doing in the classroom.”

Moreover, even though each participant noted relying on colleagues for support numerous times, Nicole felt that teachers were not expected to discuss PBIS during PLCs because if teachers have challenging student behaviors, rather than utilizing the MTSS process, they are encouraged to “send them to other classrooms” when the student acts out or is distracting others. Yet, PLCs are designed as practice-based learning opportunities, are intended to be “run by teachers”, and provide a formal opportunity to discuss their perceived needs.

Therefore, I inquire if student behaviors are barely being addressed through the MTSS process, how else could PBIS implementation be *practiced*? It is important to point out that according to Richard DuFour (2014) the purpose of a school’s implementation of PLCs is a school’s commitment to “working collaboratively” (p. 31) in continuing action research processes to obtain improved results for their students. Therefore when a school becomes a part of the PLC process, they provide job embedded opportunities for growth. For example, while in teams, teachers commit to the following:

...Monitor student learning through a process that includes team-developed common formative assessments; and use the results from the assessments to address the needs of individual students, improve individual teachers’ instructional practice, and discover areas in which the entire team needs additional training and support (DuFour, 2014, p. 31).

Revisiting the purpose and design of PLCs as well as the academic and behavioral MTSS processes to address the challenges uncovered in this study of PBIS implementation could be fruitful in addressing these concerns.

Likewise, Suzanne felt more collaborative opportunities could be developed and the PLC process tweaked. These changes could allow teachers to collaborate in a more welcoming and trusting environment. As a result, current concerns, and practical solutions to school-wide PBIS implementation could be tackled:

I see it two ways, opportunities where we can work with our students and colleagues using low-pressure observations. Teachers can observe you; you observe them, and it feels comfortable. Knowing you're not going to have some random observation that is rigid and strict. Also, having opportunities where you are in a stress-free environment. Then you can do stuff with your team without a strict agenda. Right now PLCs are 'here is the PLC, where there is already a rigid plan and you can't veer off it' vs. 'here is your 45 minutes or 2 hours where you get to plan what to work on'. That would be more helpful. There is a lot on me personally as a team leader too. I have to run the PLC each week and it is so stressful. Administrators will attend the PLC, so you feel as though you are constantly having a formal observation every week. You are running the PLC and your entire team is observing as well as admin. Everyone is making sure you are rigid and sticking to the agenda. So I feel like I'm being formally observed every week.

These strict PLC guidelines selected by administrators leave little room for teachers to collaborate on classroom needs they perceive as important. Furthermore, tightly coupling and clarifying the intent of these collaborative process would be been beneficial and allow the

teachers to fully implement PBIS with the support they need. More importantly, as research shows that as positive student behaviors increase so does student engagement and academic achievement (Algozinne, et. al, 2012). In all, the need for professional development in areas of universal strategies and supporting students with behavioral needs is still apparent.

School-Wide PBIS Professional Development. Not only did the participants share the lack of professional development surrounding their school-wide PBIS plan, but also the lack of professional development regarding universal preventative behavior practices. Suzanne and Ardene discussed their absence of awareness and information in different student behaviors that have become more prevalent such as “sensory issues” and challenges. Given that there have been “none, if any” opportunities for professional development in PBIS practices, teachers are expected to refer to the school-wide PBIS handbook whenever questions arise. However, the handbook lacks clarity on these actual practices. Additionally, PBIS leadership committee members are responsible for discussing student referral data and trends with student behaviors but do not have expertise to lead or provide ongoing professional development in this area.

First, Nicole articulated that her general experiences with professional development missed the mark as she did not feel her experiences were useful:

I have a hard time learning something and having a takeaway from trainings. That is always my goal. I want to learn something that I can use, and I feel like recently a lot of the trainings don't have any takeaways. I feel like they are wasted days. I feel like now there is training, and they give you so much information. There are so many tools, but I want to see it in action. Show me how you did it, and what it looks like in the classroom. Show me strategies.

Further, Ardene and Suzanne shared that there has been minimal to no professional development offered around how to implement school-wide PBIS and behavior management. Other than attending monthly meetings as a part of the PBIS team, Suzanne could not recall any faculty meeting or professional development concerning their school wide PBIS implementation. This is troubling as one key component of effective PBIS models is training on agreed upon strategies to implement across the school. For example, Ardene shared her grade level would like to see more professional development in the area stating, “We would like to see professional development with behavior strategies for students diagnosed with sensory issues. Especially since you expect to have students with those challenges in your class.”

Referring to Suzanne’s perspective of role model colleagues, Suzanne added that learning from other teachers has produced positive results:

I could go in to colleagues’ classrooms and say ‘hey, I don’t know how to get this child to stop spinning on the floor’ or you know, ‘this parent is giving me a hard time because their child is doing this or that’. Even here my grade level support has been helpful.

We’ve had conversations about methods to use with students and their different behaviors. Such as ‘how do you reward and give students who are meeting behavior expectations?’

Receiving professional development around universal PBIS practices and secondary and tertiary interventions was a need identified across participants. Suzanne detailed a “faculty meeting at the beginning of the year, a couple years ago, where the dean did a presentation on referral data” as the school’s only professional development opportunity. She explained they have not had a

similar meeting since nor any opportunity for PBIS professional development where she acknowledges a need:

I think if you could go and see either, how PBIS is introduced to a school, how its initiated, or go see in a classroom how it's being done but not rigid. Like a real-world application. Also, I am very visual, and I can expand from there. So for me, I like to see it or hear it. Even if I see a teacher struggle with it in real time, I can see that and apply it differently in my class because of those struggles. Even with new teachers, it's a bigger issue. We don't ever have faculty meetings, so new teachers don't even look at the handbook, because they are overwhelmed. No one has sat down with them to go over it. Since their faculty meeting did not focus on professional development, nor has administration addressed North Beach Academy's school-wide PBIS implementation, the teachers feel less confident and resourceful when applying new PBIS practices to help manage student behaviors.

Summary of Cross-Case Findings

The purpose of this study was to fill a gap in the literature revolving around teacher perspectives of using PBIS practices and MTSS processes in their classroom. After careful analysis of initial interviews, classroom observations, follow up interviews, and a concluding interview, three themes emerged: *Universal PBIS Practices*, *School-Wide PBIS Implementation* and *School-Wide PBIS Challenges*. This compilation of data provided more meaningful insight into the inner workings of school wide PBIS implementation as well as the challenges teachers face due to its processes.

Overall, the three themes answered my research question: *How do primary education teachers describe the PBIS practices used in their classroom and school?*

The data that I collected, transcribed, and analyzed touched on characteristics presented in the literature through perspectives of three teachers. The PBIS process and its school-wide application was presented in the first theme, *Universal PBIS Practices*. This theme showcased how teachers were implementing and applying PBIS practices in their classrooms effectively and efficiently. This included participating in the ample opportunities for students to earn rewards, the CHARACTER COUNTS! initiative, and utilizing parental involvement with teacher students positive character traits. Therefore, the first theme answered my first sub research question:

Which PBIS practices are effective? Although each teacher perceived numerous PBIS practices as effective, feasible and sustainable, they also found some practices less practical. These perspectives resulted in my third theme *School Wide PBIS Challenges*.

The second theme *School Wide PBIS Implementation* provided insight into how the teachers are implementing the school wide PBIS program despite identified obstacles. This theme used sub themes including experience, teacher collaboration and the school's commitment to PLCs to demonstrate how each teacher manages to provide effective PBIS practices through their own problem-solving techniques. Theme *School Wide PBIS Challenges* answers my second sub research question: *Which PBIS practices are challenging?* This third theme details new responsibilities that fall on teacher shoulders with little professional development, training, and collaboration. Certain roadblocks included the lack of teacher commitment, minimal resources involved in the MTSS problem solving process and the concerns of managing students with

special needs. As a result, *School Wide PBIS Challenges* introduces the query of the MTSS' sole purpose.

As a result of these findings, the crucial benefits and obstacles teachers face became evident. These benefits included being provided with a universal positive reinforcement resources (hawk bucks and “NBA Way”), providing opportunities for parent involvement and character development through CHARACTER COUNTS!, as well as creating grade level appropriate discipline plans with that were efficient. The major obstacles that the participants faced included managing the differentiation needed for student expectations and rewards, as well as teachers' experience and availability of resources concerning Exceptional Student Education. The following chapter discusses key factors affecting teachers and their classrooms, the obstacles they faced, implications of this research for policy and practice as well as provides recommendations for professional development and further research.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The objective of this study is to inform others on the PBIS systems and practices that primary educators perceive as effective when implementing school-wide PBIS in their classroom. Due to previous literature asserting that additional research is needed describing the implementation of school-wide PBIS' tiered interventions (Rodriguez et al., 2016), this research describes how school-wide universal PBIS and MTSS frameworks affect teachers' perspectives, buy-in and commitment. Moreover, further research should focus on school leaders investing in professional development and training regarding PBIS and "organizational structures" that encourage the implementation of evidence-based practices (Sugai & Horner, 2006, p. 257). Therefore, the findings of this study will educate school administrators, leadership teams, teachers, and specialists on recommendations for increasing school-wide PBIS teacher buy-in and program sustainability.

Summary of Study

Today it is crucial that teachers provide classroom management strategies, or prevention practices, that encourage positive student behaviors and support a safe and inclusive classroom (Roberts & Simpson, 2016; Walker, Bauer & Shea, 1998). Therefore, the purpose of this study was to uncover the perspectives of primary educators implementing school-wide PBIS practices across the MTSS framework in their classrooms. Using a case study method, where three participants were bounded by the specifics of their school's PBIS program it was my goal as the researcher to answer the following research questions: *How do primary education teachers implement the PBIS practices used in their classroom and school?* This research question presents two sub questions: (a) Which PBIS practices do primary educators perceive as effective

in primary classrooms and (b) Which PBIS practices do primary educators perceive as challenging in primary classrooms?

While using the PBIS conceptual framework and Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977), qualitative data were collected through classroom observations and semi-structured interviews to fully encompass how the participants perceived PBIS practices. A cross case analysis was chosen so that I could conceptualize the data across participants to form new information that would provide value to the literature regarding PBIS implementation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 234). By reading, rereading and reflecting on observation field notes and interview transcripts, a constant comparative method was utilized to find similarities, as well as differences, across participants which then created overarching themes and generalizations (Merriam, 1988; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This final section describes the generalization of this study's findings as well as implications for practices and recommendations for future research concerning school-wide PBIS implementation.

Discussion of Major Findings

Although the teachers participating in this study brought different experiences, behaviors and feelings to the classroom observations and interviews, there were many similarities regarding their perspectives to their school-wide PBIS implementation. Three overarching themes emerged from the data collection and analysis: *Universal PBIS Practices*, *School-Wide PBIS Implementation* and *School-Wide PBIS Challenges*. After careful analysis that included re-reading observation notes and interview transcripts, multiple codes appeared which created subthemes across participants. These subthemes were used to create the overarching themes. The first theme, *Universal PBIS Practices* provided insight concerning PBIS practices that are

perceived effective. The second and third theme, *School-Wide PBIS Implementation* and *School-Wide PBIS Challenges* interacted to explain how PBIS practices are executed and considered challenging for classroom teachers. As a result, the three overarching themes described PBIS practices used in this school and its primary teachers' classrooms.

After considerate examination and reflection on the three overarching themes, key similarities are highlighted to help illustrate these participant's perspectives of school-wide PBIS implementation in their school and classrooms. These key areas include recommended PBIS practices, roles and responsibilities, the complexity of the MTSS process, ESE training, and areas for growth in professional development.

Recommended PBIS Practices, Roles and Responsibilities

The initial theme, *Universal PBIS Practices*, discussed the PBIS expectations of teachers and the character development program that was developed to help sustain the school-wide PBIS initiative. This first theme provided different classroom PBIS practices that were perceived as useful, feasible and sustainable by primary educators. Previous literature has asserted school-wide PBIS, aims to provide a "prevention-orientated" framework of behavior supports teachers and their students (Cressey, Whitcomb, McGilvray-Rivet, Morrison & Shander-Reynolds, 2014). Additionally, PBIS provides research-based recommended practices and interventions that support students in meeting the school's behavior expectations (Gelbar, Jaffery, Stein & Cymbala, 2015; Maximize Positive Outcomes for Students, 2016). North Beach Academy's PBIS framework has a lack of explicitness which each participant raised in this study. Clear expectations and providing explicit, recommended practices and tiered interventions are vital to the implementation sustainability of school-wide PBIS. In all, the role of administrators within

the PBIS framework is critical. It is strongly recommended that administrators embrace collaborating and researching different PBIS practices, universal and tiered, regarding student needs (Bruhn, Gorsh, Hannan & Hirsch, 2014; Sugai & Horner, 2009; Sugai & Simonsen, 2012).

The data gathered from this study provided a similar framework where prevention-oriented practices were encouraged, and teachers utilized these PBIS practices. Some examples included Suzanne's arrangement of classroom furniture into baseball bases and teams, Nicole's consistent practice of rituals and routines, and Ardene's character trait references and teaching of expectations. Furthermore, all three teachers utilized the school-wide PBIS positive reinforcement piece of hawk buck rewards which is considered an imperative PBIS universal practice.

However, universal PBIS practices are not outlined or recommended in the North Beach Academy's PBIS handbook, nor are specific practices expected to be implemented by teachers school-wide. As a result, teachers are implementing a range of universal PBIS practices as they see fit from their different experiences, trial and error, and informal teacher collaboration. While this allows for individual teachers to tailor their PBIS implementation to their beliefs, this lack of consensus also created confusion and a lack of clarity around the allocation of hawk bucks. Since universal PBIS practices have not been clearly defined or identified, there is less consistency school-wide when applying the school-wide PBIS reward system. This can and has directly affected teacher buy in, commitment and overall program strength (McIntosh, Kelm & Delabra, 2016; Sugai & Horner, 2006).

According to Sprague and Horner (2007) one key step to implementing school-wide PBIS is setting and promoting school-wide expectations. This step includes teaching both

teachers and students' universal skills for compliance. The participants were all in agreement that little PBIS training has been provided and clear expectations of these PBIS practices are lacking in the school-wide plan. Ardene stated that being provided recommendations towards preventative practices, such as more strategic ways to setting up her classroom's space, would be beneficial. Suzanne agreed that being provided more "resources" regarding reward systems would be a "good idea". Furthermore, Ardene felt that clear direction regarding implementing "behavior strategies for students with sensory issues" was needed. Similarly, Suzanne shared challenges she faced when providing effective PBIS practices for students identified with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD). While she was providing accommodations for a student diagnosed with ADD, she perceived the experience as a "hard time" for her. Even though she provided PBIS practices "step by step" it has not been effective for her students diagnosed with attention disorders. These examples highlight the need for the school to revisit school-wide expectations for teachers and students to clarify this confusion.

Two of the participants pointed out the parent involvement component of the school-wide PBIS program where character traits are taught to students. Through their character development program parents participate with PBIS by coming into the classroom, reading a children's book highlighting a character trait and then teaching a lesson on how that character trait can be applied realistically. Suzanne and Nicole felt "proud" of the character development program and felt it helped "teach" school-wide expectations, character traits and provided those "booster" lessons the school-wide PBIS handbook describes. This is a strength of the model as it increases buy-in across stakeholder groups.

Each grade level also provides consequences differently. School-wide PBIS recognizes the need for a consistent discipline plan (Sprague & Horner, 2007), but that plan should be clearly communicated and implemented by all (Bradshaw & Pas, 2011). Suzanne's discipline system involves participation from all her grade level colleagues as well as the dean. Each teacher on her grade level implements three steps that include identical language when providing consequences for undesired student behaviors. Once the third step is reached, the dean intervenes with a written referral. This is an example of teachers working together in one grade level to develop a system that models effective PBIS practice. Ardene's grade level discipline procedures also include participation from her grade level colleagues. Ardene's grade level utilizes sending students to "buddy" classrooms where they complete a written reflection to be sent home. Yet, her grade level's system is not clear as to when the dean should, if at all, be involved. Nicole's discipline system is not parallel across her grade level. Her discipline includes using a student clip system that often serves as punishment while documenting negative student behaviors. However, she is unaware of how others on her grade level carry out consequences in different situations.

Despite the lack of clear expectations on universal PBIS practices, North Beach Academy's school-wide PBIS plan places strong emphasis on the reward system of hawk bucks. Previous studies have pointed out the importance of this component. Sugai and Horner (2006) explain that not only should positive reinforcement be carried out by teachers, but also by administrators and school staff such as resource teachers, teaching assistants and custodians. The reward system should be part of the school culture and embedded across all settings of the school (Bradshaw & Pas, 2011; Sprague & Horner, 2007; Sugai & Horner, 2006). However, Suzanne

explained that even though hawk bucks have been declared the school-wide PBIS positive reinforcement system, her grade level also implements a token system of dimes. Although she felt her two systems of classroom rewards was effective, she shared it would be “great” if all teachers “did the same value of reward” since they have flexible groups. This way teachers could treat students as if “they are all your students”.

Different hawk buck expectations were noted during interviews as well. Nicole described hawk bucks as being utilized for more “above and beyond” behaviors. Additionally, Nicole utilizes her student clip chart to help reward students for their positive behaviors with daily parent communication. On the other hand, Ardene perceived hawk bucks as an “every day, all the time” reward, especially due to the age of her students. She has implemented other tokens as rewards since she feels scheduled hawk buck reward treats and events are not reliable. These examples of challenges and miscommunications were credited to the murky roles and responsibilities of administration and teachers. Nicole explained that as a PBIS committee member, it is her “responsibility” to address “implementation” needs for her grade level colleagues. However, due to the minimal resources and professional development, there are few PBIS recommendations to share. Suzanne demonstrated she has clearly communicated the expectations and follow through for her grade level, however she wished her administrators would say “our behavior management system for Tier I is hawk dollars, not student clip charts or anything else”.

One area shared during this research was the lack of administrators’ expectations with unclarified roles and responsibilities of PBIS leadership committee members and the MTSS process. As a result, confusion and exasperation is noticeable amongst the teachers. The

participants in this study have been applying several PBIS practices such as reward systems in the classroom that can be tiresome and overwhelming. Ardene described the implementation of reward systems as “a lot”, and Nicole said it mostly “fell on the teachers’ shoulders”. While Suzanne rewards students with dimes, Nicole rewards with the colors on her clip chart and Ardene rewards with different ways her students earn points. All three participants provide hawk buck rewards on top of those practices as well. Due to the competitive classroom reward systems, teachers are less likely to implement hawk bucks with sustainability.

Overall this theme highlights that North Beach Academy’s school-wide PBIS program has the foundation in place that is warranted for success. This foundation includes the positive reward system of hawk bucks, as well as the character development program that successfully includes parent involvement. However, it lacks the clear expectations from administration that is necessary (Gelbar et. al, 2015; Sugai & Horner, 2006; Rohrbach et. al, 1993) when initiating the processes.

Beyond Tier I: The Complexities of MTSS

The second and third theme, *School-Wide PBIS Implementation* and *School-Wide PBIS Challenges* provided a deeper look into the three teachers’ perspectives regarding the effectiveness of PBIS in their classrooms. As a result, these two themes answered the two sub research questions: *Which PBIS practices are effective and which PBIS practices are challenging?* These two themes consisted of many categories which created multiple subthemes including feasible strategies, frustrations with the MTSS process and Exceptional Student Education (ESE).

Fairbanks and colleagues (2007) describe evidence-based classroom management practices that PBIS can implement as universal practices to help prevent and address student behaviors. These practices include differentiated instruction, recognizing positive behaviors, allowing various opportunities for students to participate and provide immediate and individual feedback. As described in the second theme, immediate individual and team positive reinforcement, practice or ritual and routines, teaching of character traits, creating physical spaces in classrooms for “sensory breaks”, using physical movement to respond and providing student jobs and “errands” has helped Suzanne, Nicole and Ardene embed feasible strategies into their classroom that prevent challenging student behaviors. The implementation of hawk bucks and providing “numerous opportunities” to earn “fun things” has also encouraged students to follow expectations and “make good choices”.

However, like Ardene, Suzanne sees a need for more “constant reminders” for some students who have behavior challenges. Ardene and Suzanne both agree that the current system of hawk bucks does not provide enough reinforcement for those students. The literature states when students are identified as needing further support beyond Tier I universal prevention practices, a series of data collection and progress monitoring occurs. As a result, school-wide PBIS’ side of MTSS becomes necessary. During this stage of providing behavior supports, secondary and or tertiary intervention is required where students receive different levels of intensity in the classroom (Rodriguez et al., 2016; Fairbanks et al., 2007).

Functional Behavior Assessments (FBAs) and Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs) are available and expected steps when addressing more challenging student behaviors and recommending interventions that are useful (Fairbanks et al., 2007; Scott & Cooper, 2017).

Teachers utilize this data collection process and progress monitoring to monitor student progress while they receive Tier II or Tier III behavior intervention. This framework of progress monitoring allows the MTSS problem solving team to generate data-based goals and next steps for students not responding to universal PBIS practices (McDaniel, Bruhn & Mitchell, 2015). Just as the research outlines this purpose and framework of MTSS, so does North Beach Academy's school-wide PBIS handbook.

The school-wide PBIS handbook presents information regarding the “systems approach to school-wide PBIS”. This information includes defining “four PBIS elements” as “Outcomes”, “Practices”, “Data” and “Systems”. Practices, data, and systems describe the MTSS process and problem-solving steps that are included within the school-wide PBIS plan. This description includes “interventions and strategies that are evidence based”, “Information used to identify need for change” and “supports that are needed to enable the accurate and durable implementation of the practice of PBIS” (p. 2). These definitions are generally applied within the handbook and do not provide the application specific to North Beach Academy. As a result, Suzanne, Nicole and Ardene feel there are no “recommendations” or “next steps” when addressing Tier II and Tier III situations.

Suzanne felt that the MTSS' Response to Intervention (RTI) process “does not provide behavior supports” and is therefore a “lost cause”. She explained that the only recommended practices the MTSS problem solving team suggests are practices “you are already doing in your classroom and now you've identified this student's behavior”. Nicole agreed that bringing students to the MTSS problem solving team seemed meaningless when she felt “there is nothing more I can do”. She credited this perspective to the time management concerns of MTSS as the

process takes “the entire school year”. Additionally, the progress monitoring component has caused Nicole to feel overwhelmed: “It’s a lot of work for the teacher to keep the data, submit the data and then it’s all on us.” Since the process is “not quick enough” and requires multiple sets of data tracking, Nicole, Ardene and Suzanne all perceived the process similarly. They felt they were merely “data trackers” rather than interventionists providing support for their students.

Ardene stated that when recommendations are made by the MTSS problem solving team, they are unrealistic and not feasible. These recommendations included providing a different classroom schedule for an individual student that allowed “free time”, “weighted walks” and “sensory breaks”. Therefore she is discouraged from utilizing the MTSS process since she lacks the resources and support. She felt if she had a co-teacher or paraprofessional, certain interventions could be practical. Furthermore, when asked if she is inclined to bring students to the MTSS committee for problem solving she stated that most times she is incapable since certain behaviors are not a “hinderance enough”. When behaviors do not “hinder the whole class” she is left problem solving on her own. However, she feels some student’s exhibit behaviors that she believes will become more of an hinderance the following school year. Yet nothing was initiated with her as their teacher.

On the other hand, Nicole and Ardene shared a similar belief concerning the MTSS problem solving team when students struggle academically. Ardene perceived the academic MTSS process was much more reliable as there were “more ideas thrown out to you for intervention” and you get to collaborate on “one intervention” that you think will be useful. Nicole agreed that she felt obviously academics are imperative, if we address student behavioral struggles “the learning” can follow and students can be more confident, engaged, and successful

academically. Instead Nicole, Ardene and Suzanne are left pulling from their “bag of tricks” concerning providing behavior interventions as the MTSS process provides “no benefits for teachers or students”.

The literature has shown the MTSS, Response to Intervention process should be implemented “early” and provide supplemental instruction and supports that include research-based programs and ongoing progress monitoring (Rodriguez et al., 2016). This process should include collaboration amongst teachers, special educators, guidance counselors and even behavior specialists to help recommended comprehensive interventions for teachers (Sugai & Horner, 2006). Nicole stated that she has tried to involve more experts in helping her provide useful and feasible interventions. After reaching out to “district personnel” regarding her students’ behavioral needs, she had yet to hear back or receive any additional support.

Since Tier II and Tier III interventions are designed around students’ specific needs, they should include varied instruction, resources and supports (Carter, Carter, Johnson & Pool, 2013; Hoyle, Marshall & Yell, 2011; Rodriguez et al, 2016). Suzanne, Nicole and Ardene believe that North Beach Academy’s behavior MTSS process has not been effective at providing recommendations for interventions to support teachers and improve student progress that is a necessary component of a school-wide PBIS program (Carter et al., 2013). Furthermore, due to the feelings of discouragement of reaching out to the MTSS problem solving team, the teachers implement their own Tier II strategies without proper documentation. These strategies include “a lot of additional verbal prompting”, “close proximity” and parent communication. This method of intervention implementation can create obstacles down the road as students continue their

behaviors the following year without proper identification and progress monitoring (Carter, et al., 2013).

It is important to note that Suzanne, Nicole and Ardene each declared themselves “data trackers” and identified the MTSS process as useless, especially when students with special education services were still experiencing behavior struggles. This declaration relates back to unclear school-wide PBIS expectations and its lack of vision and motivation. Barrett, Bradshaw, and Lewis-Palmer (2008) found schools and teachers who implement school-wide PBIS, communication of the vision, clear definition of roles and responsibilities and professional development are the elements needed for successful student outcomes for *all* students. Principals and assistant principals are responsible for providing the motivation for school-wide PBIS sustainability (McIntosh, Kelm & Delabra, 2016). When administrators display the importance of PBIS and its justification, the school buy-in and strength of the program itself increases (McIntosh, Kelm & Delabra, 2016; Sugai & Horner, 2006). Therefore, North Beach Academy’s school-wide PBIS program needs to include clear expectations and training regarding managing behaviors of those students with special needs (Rohrbach et al., 1993).

Professional Development

The final theme, School-Wide PBIS Challenges, highlights the different frustrations and obstacles the teachers face when implementing PBIS practices in their classroom. Many obstacles were identified as subthemes including teacher buy-in, differentiation of rewards and the frustrations associated with MTSS. While discussing these subthemes with the teachers, they each linked their insecurities to school-wide PBIS professional development.

During data analysis categories involving the managing of students with special needs and applying BIPs for students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) became apparent. These categories became interrelated with each participants' PBIS classroom implementation under the subtheme Exceptional Student Education. Tobin, Horner, Vincent and Swain-Bradway (2012), assert that school-wide PBIS implementation can decrease discipline referral rates among students with special needs. Additionally, PBIS implementation utilizes professional development and coaching that improves the practices general education teachers use when addressing student behaviors (Gelbar, Jaffery, Stein & Cymbala, 2015; Gelbar et al., 2017). Previous research has claimed one of the biggest challenges of successfully implementing PBIS is teachers' perspectives regarding if they believe they can implement PBIS practices that were once only provided by special education teachers (Richards, Aguilera, Murakami & Weiland, 2014).

Oakes, Lane and Germer (2014) state that when teachers work together through professional development and collaboration, they can implement interventions more confidentiality. To help build teacher confidence, feelings of self-efficacy, and effective execution of new practices, Desimone and Pak (2017) explain there are five features professional development should hold. These features include *Content Focus, Active Learning, Coherence, Sustained Duration, and Collective Participation*. These five elements include opportunities for teachers to observe others and analyze work, professional development goals that are relevant to teacher perspectives, ongoing development throughout the school year and interactive learning community. Thus, Desimone and Pak (2017) suggest coaching as an effective professional

development method to connect these characteristics. Coaching seems like a fruitful endeavor for schools wrestling with PBIS implementation.

Further, the PBIS literature asserts teachers should be trained on materials and through professional development and coaching (Sugai & Horner, 2007; Technical Assistance Center of PBIS, 2018). As described in the third theme, *School-Wide PBIS Challenges*, no training and little ongoing professional development has been incorporated in the school-wide PBIS plan. The three participants in this study strongly believed professional development was needed in the area of Exceptional Student Education, as well as more opportunities for teachers to work in collaboration. When questioned about how each participant learned and began applying preventive PBIS practices, they listed “role-model teachers”, “internships”, “talking with other teachers” as their main resources. These examples described more informal teacher discussions, meetings and observation of practices colleagues implement in their classrooms. This type of collaboration is addressed in Desimone and Pak’s fifth element (2017), Collective Participation. Collective Participation involves an interactive learning community where teachers of the same grade or subject area work together.

These five elements have encouraged schools to embrace Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), where they embed these elements into their school culture. Richard DuFour (2014) illustrates the purpose of a PLC is a school’s devotion to “working collaboratively” (p. 31). This involves action research amongst teachers to obtain improved student outcomes. Therefore when a school acts as a PLC, they embed opportunities for growth into the school’s philosophy. Suzanne explained that although their school was a PLC, their “PLC meetings” were “rigid” and “stressful”. Teachers are not “allowed” to “veer off” the

agenda, nor discuss topics they perceived as important. These weekly PLC meetings are designed to solely discuss student academic data and “assessment scores”. As a result, the three teachers feel their needs for teacher discussion, informal classroom observations and collaboration opportunities concerning PBIS practices are being overlooked. Revisiting the intent and structure of the PLC process is an opportunity to move towards enacting job embedded professional development (DuFour, 2014) that has the potential to improve PBIS implementation.

Implications for Practice

The findings of this study and answers to the research questions are important for administrators, leadership teams, teachers, and fellow educational researchers as they study and implement school-wide PBIS practices that are feasible and sustainable. After identifying the major obstacles these teachers faced, implications for practice resulted from these findings. These implications include initiating a school-wide PBIS program with administrator buy-in, compassion and clear expectations and communication, outlining and applying clear objectives of the MTSS process, providing more opportunities for general education teacher training in ESE, providing additional job embedded professional development and coaching to support teachers in applying PBIS practices for students with more challenging behaviors and lastly, understanding the different perspectives of teachers.

Obstacles Teachers Face

Crucial obstacles became evident through the findings of this study. Managing differentiation of student expectations and rewards as well as applying ESE strategies and approaches to student behaviors were the major roadblocks the participants encountered. These

obstacles directly impacted North Beach Academy's school-wide PBIS teacher buy in and the teachers' perspectives of administration's support and follow through. Teacher buy-in and PBIS differentiation based on student grade level arose as an obstacle when all three participants referred to the connection between the subsequent grade levels as being a challenge with the PBIS program.

The teachers believed administration have not clearly communicated expectations for both students and teachers, per grade level, nor have they followed through with age appropriate rewards when expectations have been met. Thus, teachers felt unmotivated to entirely implement school-wide PBIS practices, when they believed student rewards would not be provided in a timely manner. Furthermore, the administration has only provided a school-wide PBIS handbook, rather than participate in routine faculty meetings. Therefore, these grade levels lacked clear direction and next steps concerning managing and reinforcing student behaviors.

Clear Expectations and Responsibilities of the Process

It is imperative that a school provide clear expectations for themselves, students and teachers when initiating and implementing a school-wide PBIS program. This includes administrators' providing the motivation for program sustainability (McIntosh, Kelm & Delabra, 2016). Principals that are more informed and demonstrate the importance of PBIS and its visibility and justification in their school increase the strength of implementation. Furthermore, classroom teachers are more likely to adopt new systems when clear instructions, and preparations are carried out by principals and assistance principals (McIntosh, Kelm & Delabra, 2016; Sugai & Horner, 2006; Rohrbach et al., 1993). This study showed that the participants felt

they were confused on their expectations, the expectations of their grade level, as well as who was responsible for researching and recommending evidence based PBIS practices.

As a result, North Beach Academy's administration could hold a faculty meeting, or participate in grade level meetings where the expectations are stated, explained, modeled, and followed through by all staff on campus. This includes identifying specific PBIS practices and the hawk bucks reward system as the only universal reward system, where all faculty participates in rewarding students, not just teachers. Hawk bucks could be used when rewarding students individually and working in teams in the classroom, rather than using classroom dimes, points, and student clip charts as token systems. This sole reward system would benefit teachers and students with flexible grouping and occasions when students and parents participate in after school activities. On the other hand, two of the three participants felt the events, lunch treats like ice cream, and school store where students can spend hawk bucks were unreliable. Therefore, at the beginning of the school year these events and treats should be collaborated, planned, and reach a full consensus between the PBIS leadership committee *and administration* before sharing the planned events with all grade levels.

When the universal reward system of hawk bucks does not meet the needs of individual students with behavior challenges, all three participants shared the lack of resources concerning the MTSS and problem-solving team process. Students that are identified early should receive Tier II interventions within 2-3 days (Rodriguez et al., 2016). These Tier II interventions must be tailored to the specific needs of the student. These recommended interventions could be more varied instruction, resources and supports (Carter, Carter, Johnson & Pool, 2013; Hoyle, Marshall & Yell, 2011; Rodriguez et al., 2016). It is the responsibility of the MTSS problem

solving team to research and recommend these interventions for teachers. As of now, Ardene was completing research on her own on how to manage students that required more support for anxiety, frustrations and “sensory issues”. These student behaviors should be on the radar of the MTSS problem solving team and they should brainstorm different interventions together with Ardene to find a solution. Therefore, administrators should clearly define the responsibilities of the MTSS problem solving team.

Furthermore, data tracking and progress monitoring with fidelity is a key component to MTSS, and it is needed to help guide interventions for students in hopes of improving student success (Carter et al., 2013). The three participants in this study all agreed they were merely “data trackers” rather than interventionists when it came to applying Tier II behavior interventions. Therefore, administrators should provide teachers with the *why* behind data tracking and progress monitoring. This includes the importance behind FBAs and collecting data when BIPs are no longer working. Without understanding the importance of these practices’ teachers are less likely to buy-in to MTSS recommendations, interventions, and next steps.

The behavior aspect of MTSS is designed to meet the needs of all students behaviorally using a “comprehensive” and “systematic” process (McDaniel, Bruhn & Mitchell, 2015, p. 10). Yet, Suzanne and Nicole felt North Beach Academy’s MTSS process was “not quick enough”, a “lost cause” when students do not qualify and does not provide “next steps” when students reach the tertiary tier of behavior MTSS. Suzanne felt students may need “self-contained” classrooms once they surpass Tier III intervention with inadequate progress, but that is not usually an outcome. This perspective indicated North Beach Academy’s teachers and administrators disagree on what “next steps” should be, and what kinds of student behaviors require “next

steps” and which do not. Therefore, the MTSS problem solving team should review their Tier II and Tier III eligibility requirements to see if there is a lack of clarity regarding which behaviors are considered “more severe” and thus needing more intensive intervention.

Professional Development in Exceptional Student Education

As referenced in the previous section, this confusion in classification of student behaviors could also be due to the lack of teacher training in ESE and working with students who have classroom accommodations. Each teacher in this study mentioned at least one student with special needs that engaged in challenging behaviors consistently. Ardene stated she wished for more professional development in diagnoses that are common today, while Nicole utilized her ESE training to bypass the MTSS process altogether. Suzanne also described a situation where certain 504 accommodations one of her students received felt “unfair” when considering the other students in her class. Therefore, the general education teachers would benefit from professional development in ESE including information on exceptionalities, their characteristics, the importance of IEP accommodations and implementation and ESE strategies when teaching students with special needs.

This school’s administrators need to develop and provide professional development pertaining to implementing these ESE strategies. The professional development should include progress monitoring, data tracking and the implementation of different PBIS preventive practices (Brujn, Gorsh, Hannan & Hirsch, 2014; Sugai & Horner, 2006). Some examples of PBIS practices, that are preventive, can include social skill groups and self-monitoring techniques that are included within BIPs (Oakes, Lane & Germer, 2014; Rodriguez, Loman & Borgmeier, 2016). While Nicole asserted the ESE teachers were overloaded with high case numbers, she explained

she was “responsible for teaching social groups” for her students with IEPs in her classroom. These social groups were rarely provided as “there is not enough time” for one general education teacher to teach them. Instead, Nicole infused social groups into “teachable moments” like on the playground during recess. Suzanne, Nicole and Ardene were not comfortable in providing these practices due to fidelity issues with time constraints and “not enough experience” in managing students diagnosed with disabilities.

This ongoing professional development in ESE that is desperately needed could be in the form of coaching as described by Desimone and Pak (2017). Coaching could be implemented one-on-one or with grade level participation, and the teachers receive immediate feedback of their implementation practices. Additionally, through the key tenets described earlier (*Content Focus, Active Learning, Coherence, Sustained Duration, and Collective Participation*), coaching would encourage the teacher collaboration component each participant credited for their successful implementation of preventive PBIS practices, as mentioned in the school-wide PBIS implementation theme. Suzanne explained that fewer faculty meetings have taken place at North Beach Academy to allow more time for “PLCs”. Since PLC meetings are strictly standards-based, the three participants explained they can only discuss PBIS practices and implementation techniques in passing with their colleagues. By redesigning the purpose and structure of schools acting as PLCs, teachers could be provided more opportunity to receive coaching, or job embedded professional development that would improve their perspectives of self-efficacy when implementing PBIS practices and interventions. Furthermore, PLCs can address the different needs of teachers grade levels or subject areas.

Differing Perspectives of Teachers

The outcome of this study provided three themes that described similarities across the participants in perspectives of school-wide PBIS. Additionally, there were differing perspectives that should be taken into consideration when designing school-wide PBIS plans. Previous research has shown that teachers struggle with implementing and sustaining PBIS practices due to lack of training in classroom management, the complexity level of behavior interventions, other teaching responsibilities that take priority as well as remembering to implement expected practices (Collier-Meek, Johnson, Sanetti & Minami, 2019). Similar to perspectives analyzed in prior research, this study identifies other teacher perspectives that are imperative to consider including differentiating PBIS practices to meet the needs of students, providing consistent discipline plans and different teaching preparation.

During the initial and follow up interviews, Ardene frequently mentioned providing developmentally appropriate PBIS practices as critical, while the other two participants did not recognize the same need. Through multiple conversations, Ardene shared she felt PBIS helps to shape behaviors for primary aged students. Therefore, the implementation of PBIS should be age appropriate. As a result, Ardene felt school-wide PBIS needed a stronger emphasis on building character, teaching character traits such as responsibility, and learning about how actions affect others. Furthermore, Ardene felt strongly that the school-wide positive reinforcement of hawk bucks did not capture the attention of her kindergarten students and as a result had a minimal effect on their behaviors.

Another different perspective included providing a consistent discipline plan across grade levels. Although Suzanne, Nicole and Ardene all implemented the school-wide PBIS plan on

some level, they did not all utilize the same discipline plan. In fact, Nicole was the only participant who still utilized a punishment system, or student clip chart, to provide consequences rather than only drawing attention to positive behaviors through PBIS. It can be argued that by not utilizing the same discipline plan school-wide North Beach Academy does not have complete teacher buy-in with school-wide PBIS implementation. While Nicole utilizes the student clip chart, Suzanne and Ardene collaborated with their grade levels by integrating a grade level discipline plan that they believed was efficient and effective.

The last perspective across participants that differed included teaching experience and background. Suzanne and Ardene have been primary educators, teaching in the general education classroom for at least ten years. Nicole was the only participant who had experience in teaching Exceptional Student Education as a self-contained educator. Additionally, Nicole related this experience to her philosophy behind her behavior management practices. She frequently referenced incorporating rigid structure, consistent rituals and routines and slow-moving processes when teaching new expectations to her students since she believed those practices were suitable for students with special needs. She perceived her experience was responsible for her calm and welcoming classroom environment.

North Beach Academy's school-wide PBIS plan needs to take these perspectives into consideration. According to Stormont and Reinke (2012) research has found that teachers need ongoing support when incorporating new practices in their classrooms and sustaining those practices over time. Hence, it is critical to consider that individual teachers "may not have an accurate perception of his or her own fidelity of implementation of new practices (p. 11)." Ongoing support, or coaching, can provide support regarding teachers' individual perceptions of

their PBIS implementation and the challenges they feel they are facing. Therefore, according to the participants' perspectives, NBA can have a more successful PBIS program by including meaningful ongoing support like coaching, acknowledging developmental approaches for differentiation and meeting the needs of students, and encouraging complete school buy-in by involving all staff.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study provided an answer to how primary teachers perceive their implementation of school-wide PBIS practices in their classroom, however further research is warranted. First, this further research is needed regarding the perspectives of primary educator's implementation in a more diverse school. Since North Beach Academy is comprised of 78% White students, and only 13% "low income", this study could have much different implications concerning more diverse populations. A replication of this study in a more diverse school would allow for more meaningful results concerning teachers supporting students of different cultural backgrounds and socio-economic status.

Additionally, research is needed that not only examines teacher perspectives but also its connection to outcomes for students. This study has shown that in the areas where teachers felt insecure, they were less likely to implement PBIS practices. These areas included teacher utilization of the school-wide reinforcement systems including hawk bucks and steering away from student clip charts. Further research is warranted regarding how teacher perspectives directly impact student outcomes with PBIS.

Another recommendation for future research is to provide a deeper understanding into the perspectives of administrators when initiating and implementing school-wide PBIS. After

reviewing the perspectives of teachers, it would be interesting to study the perspectives of administrators while implementing the program. This different approach could provide additional strengths and weaknesses, success, and challenges to school-wide PBIS implementation.

Lastly, it would be beneficial to provide more information into community involvement and this study's PBIS approaches that were "effective". Observing and describing character development at the forefront may uncover how community programs, like CHARACTER COUNTS! are successful. This could also expand the literature focusing on local community and parental involvement when initiating a school-wide PBIS program.

Conclusion

This study provided a meaningful understanding of the perspectives of primary educators regarding their school-wide PBIS practices in their school and classrooms. The main goal of these findings is to fill a gap in the literature concerning how school-wide PBIS is implemented by primary teachers as well as the challenges and success it entails when managing student behaviors. A conceptual framework was introduced and utilized to describe the intricate details of school-wide PBIS including the MTSS process, role of administrators and leaders, role of teachers and professional development. After information was provided describing the background of PBIS and its current literature, three participants were selected to help describe how they implemented their PBIS practices.

The results of this research related back to the literature review and foundation of the school-wide PBIS system. Certain school-wide PBIS expectations lacked clarity and clear communication which left the participants frustrated and confused. This led to different PBIS

practices being implemented and discouraged teacher buy-in. On the other hand, a strength of this setting's PBIS implementation involved community and parental involvement with a strong character development program. This character development program encouraged commitment and sustainability. Furthermore, the complexity of MTSS, the tiered layers of PBIS interventions and ESE support shed light on leaders who lacked clear roles and responsibilities. Previous literature has stated that clear roles and responsibilities is imperative when problem solving and providing research-based behavior interventions.

Although the primary educators in this study have felt overwhelmed at times with their school's PBIS application, they have provided useful, feasible and sustainable practices in their classroom so that they can support *all* of their students. Therefore, providing coaching as a professional development opportunity will increase teachers' feelings of self-efficacy when implementing school-wide PBIS and thus provide more positive outcomes for their students. Not only can schools, administrators, teacher leaders and most importantly primary educators learn from the success and challenges of North Beach Academy's school-wide PBIS implementation, but by telling the story of these three participants' perspectives, North Beach Academy can strengthen their PBIS program. More importantly, North Beach Academy's teachers can strengthen their school's culture of instilling the positive character traits they already cherish.

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APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL



Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
 1 UNF Drive
 Jacksonville, FL 32224-2665
 904-620-2455 FAX 904-620-2457
 Equal Opportunity/Equal Access/Affirmative Action Institution

MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 2, 2020

TO: Ms. Melissa Ley

VIA: Dr. David Hoppey
 Exceptional, Deaf, and Interpreter Education

FROM: Dr. Jennifer Wesely, Chairperson
 On behalf of the UNF Institutional Review Board

RE: Declaration of Exempt Status for IRB#1406094-1
 "Dissertation.Ley"

UNF IRB Number: 1406094-1 Exemption Date: 01-02-2020 Processed on behalf of UNF's IRB

Your research study, "Dissertation.Ley" was reviewed on behalf of the UNF Institutional Review Board has been declared "Exempt" under categories 1 and 2.

Please be advised that any subject complaints, unanticipated problems, or adverse events that occur are to be reported to the IRB as soon as practicable, but no later than 3 business days following the occurrence. Please use the [Event Report Form](#) to submit information about such events.

While the exempt status is effective for the life of the study, any substantive changes must be submitted to the IRB for prospective review. In some circumstances, changes to the protocol may result in alteration of the IRB review classification.

To submit an amendment to your approved protocol, please complete an [Amendment Request Document](#) and upload it along with any updated materials affected by the changes via a new package in IRBNet. For additional guidance on submitting an amendment, please contact the IRB administrator.

Upon completion of this study, please submit a [Closing Report Form](#) as a new package in IRBNet. Please maintain copies of all research-related materials for a minimum of 3 years following study closure. These records include the IRB-approved protocol, approval memo, questionnaires, survey instruments, consent forms, and all IRB correspondence.

Should you have questions regarding your study or any other IRB issues, please contact the Research Integrity unit of the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs by emailing IRB@unf.edu or calling (904) 620-2455.

APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT

Informed Consent to Participate in Human Subject Research –
Interview and Observation Study

Melissa Ley, Doctoral Student in Educational Leadership at the University of North Florida is conducting a study Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports, concerning primary educators' perspectives of PBIS implementation and sustainability in their individual classrooms. Your participation in this study would be greatly appreciated, as it will inform leadership teams and administrators in effective inclusive schools.

As part of this study, I would like to conduct five semi-structured interviews regarding educators' viewpoints and ideas about PBIS practices they are implementing. Interviews will discuss your involvement with the school's PBIS program, the different methods you use to implement PBIS practices in your classroom and how you describe PBIS sustainability. Furthermore, I would like to conduct three classroom observations, only to observe how PBIS practices are embedded within lessons and transitions. I do not anticipate the study will present any social risk to you. While there may be no immediate benefit to you, I anticipate that the results of this study will help teachers, school leadership teams and administrators improve instruction and classroom management through providing resources and appropriate professional development.

The information I gather through interview will be recorded privately and your name will be replaced with a pseudonym. I will not release information on you to any other administrator, district leader, or to anyone else in a way that could identify you.

If you want to withdraw from the study at any time you may do so without penalty. The information on you up to that point would be destroyed.

If you have any questions, please contact Melissa Ley at n-----@unf.edu or (###) ###-####.

If you have questions about your rights as a participant in the study, you may call the staff of the UNF Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects at (###) ###-####.

I have received a complete explanation of the study and agree to participate.

Name _____ Date _____
(Signature of subject)

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Initial Interview Protocol

Background Discussion:

How long have you been working in education?

How long have you been working at this school?

Question 1:

How do you define PBIS?

Question 2:

Why do you think SW- PBIS was implemented in your school?

Question 3:

Describe your preparation you received around classroom management.

Follow up: What are your core beliefs about classroom and behavior management

Question 4:

How long have you been implementing PBIS practices in your classroom?

Question 5:

Describe some examples of how you implement PBIS in your classroom?

Follow up: From your point of view, what are some strengths of the SW-PBIS implementation at (name of school).

Follow up: From your point of view, what are some challenges of the SW-PBIS implementation at (name of school).

Question 6:

Describe your administrators' expectations for PBIS implementation.

Question 7:

Explain some of the professional development you have received pertaining to the PBIS program.

Follow up: What were the positives and drawbacks of the professional development.

APPENDIX D: OBSERVATION CODE SHEET

Mount Saint Mary College

Newburgh, NY

Academic and Behavioral Support Plan: Observation of the Classroom Setting:

Classroom Environment	Observed	Not observed
1. Classroom furniture was arranged so students could see teacher and visual presentations, teacher could easily monitor student behavior, and movement within room was possible without disrupting others.		
2. The classroom environment was set up so the teachers and students could easily access materials, and clutter was minimized.		
3. Expectations for student behavior were visible to everyone in the room, clearly defined using student-appropriate language, and stated positively.		
4. Routines appeared to have been established for common daily activities (e.g., transitions, gaining student attention, collecting homework, passing out materials, signaling for a choral response, asking for help, turning in work, selecting partners, using restroom).		

Start Time: _____ : End Time: _____ : Total Number of Minutes Observed: _____

Responses to Appropriate Behaviors		Responses to Inappropriate Behaviors
Specific	General	

APPENDIX E: CHARACTER TRAITS

TRUSTWORTHINESS

Be honest • Don't deceive, cheat, or steal • Be reliable — do what you say you'll do • Have the courage to do the right thing • Build a good reputation • Be loyal — stand by your family, friends, and country

RESPECT

Treat others with respect; follow the Golden Rule • Be tolerant and accepting of differences • Use good manners, not bad language • Be considerate of the feelings of others • Don't threaten, hit or hurt anyone • Deal peacefully with anger, insults, and disagreements

RESPONSIBILITY

Do what you are supposed to do • Plan ahead • Persevere: keep on trying! • Always do your best • Use self-control • Be self-disciplined • Think before you act — consider the consequences • Be accountable for your words, actions, and attitudes • Set a good example for others

FAIRNESS

Play by the rules • Take turns and share • Be open-minded; listen to others • Don't take advantage of others • Don't blame others carelessly • Treat all people fairly

CARING

Be kind • Be compassionate and show you care • Express gratitude • Forgive others • Help people in need • Be charitable and altruistic

CITIZENSHIP

Do your share to make your school and community better • Cooperate • Get involved in community affairs • Stay informed; vote • Be a good neighbor • Obey laws and rules • Respect authority • Protect the environment • Volunteer