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Behavior and Implementation of the Leader In Me Program

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Behavior and Implementation of the Leader In Me Program

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Northwestern College

A School Improvement Plan Project Presented

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of Master of Education

Abstract

This school improvement project explores behaviors exhibited in classrooms and how the Leader In Me program can assist in getting students to take the lead. Behavior is prevalent in schools, and it is an important topic to discuss. Leader In Me is defined and the program is explained. This school improvement project will explore the problem, educator roles, educator support, social and emotional programs, Leader In Me program, and Leader In Me implementation. The Leader In Me program is defined and explored. The program is imperative to student success in the classroom. An analysis of the Leader In Me program suggests that students take the lead and show leadership in themselves. Results of the program indicate that the Leader In Me program has a positive effect on teachers and students throughout the school building.

Keywords: social and emotional learning, resilience, elementary school, school-based programs, implementation, mental health, well-being, behavior interventions, SACD programs, teacher perceptions, emotional and behavioral difficulties, teacher-student relationships, emotional intelligence, school improvement, school effectiveness, leadership, principal perceptions, collaboration, empowerment, Leader In Me, Seven Habits, school-wide positive behavioral interventions and supports, positive behavior support, bullying, teacher emotional support, school climate, student engagement, behavioral regulation, classroom management, direct observation, consultation, school culture, challenging behaviors, disruptive behaviors, positive behavior support, lead, learn, serve, academics

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Behavior and Implementation of the Leader In Me Program

Children often enter the school environment with many behavioral challenges. Often times, students do not have control of the behavioral challenges at the moment they are exhibiting behaviors. The students may have behavioral challenges that affect their academics. Educators can help support students who face behavioral challenges. Student-teacher interaction patterns are strong predictors of behavioral and academic success (Reinke, Herman, & Newcomer, 2016). The problem is that students have behavioral challenges that affect their academic success and they do not have specific skills to overcome the behavioral challenges that they face. Everyday students arrive at school ready to learn, socialize with peers, and find a sense of belonging in a caring and supportive environment (Reno, Friend, Caruthers, & Smith, 2017). Students become at risk for academic delays to behavioral challenges because they are lacking the necessary skills for social and emotional development. It is important for educators to realize what behaviors are and how to help support students who have behavioral challenges. The sooner the problem is embarked on, the sooner we can have more positive behavioral experiences in schools.

The purpose of this school improvement project is to review behavior and behavior data in school and how the program, Leader In Me, can help students achieve success. The aim is to look at how all educators can implement the program and how effective the program can be. The hope is that the knowledge gained from reading the project will improve teaching, learning, and collaboration. Educators can influence student behavior by leading with love and showing all students that they control themselves (Leader In Me, 2022). Students who see that they can be a leader and help other students grow; will enable other students to follow along. The educators show the students how they can lead in school and be a positive role model for how to lead. The

educators are the front lines to the program and “drive” the engine seat for students to experience success.

This school improvement project will examine best practices for how educators can implement the Leader In Me program in their classrooms and best support students in their academic learning and with behavior struggles. It will examine behaviors that are exhibited by students and how social and emotional programs can affect the success of students. A few questions to be answered are: What are students currently facing in school? What behaviors are being observed in the classrooms? How can educators best support students who are exhibiting behavioral challenges? Can the Leader In Me program help students and educators develop a relationship where there is mutual trust and respect? What does the program involve and how does it work? Searching behavior and social and emotional learning found the articles that are used for this School Improvement project. An emphasis on programs was included. They are from peer-reviewed sources that are from 2009-2022. All articles were found in the DeWitt library proquest search tool.

When educators know what behaviors are and how to support students, they are more equipped to support the students. Developing relationships is a key to the program. Educators who express that they care for their students and make an effort to assist their students with their needs have more positive experiences (Mihalas, Morse, Allsopp, & McHatton, 2009). Educators who help support the behavioral challenges and implement the social skills programs like Leader In Me are better equipped to support student success in school. The program takes time and will be discussed in depth throughout this School Improvement project.

This school improvement project goes into detail about behavior and how it affects all students in the classrooms. It not only affects students who are struggling, but it also affects

those students around the students who are struggling. Each section has its own subheading and is outlined in the following order: Problem, Educator Roles, Educator Support, Social and Emotional Programs, Leader In Me Program, Leader In Me Implementation, Discussion, Future Research, and Conclusion. At the end of the paper, you will find numerous research resources that have been cited within this school improvement project.

Review of the Literature

Social and Emotional Learning

In the study by Ashdown and Bernard (2011), four teachers and ninety-nine first-grade students were assigned to complete a mixed-methods research about the You Can Do It (YCDI) Early Childhood Education Program. All four teachers completed two questionnaires for each student. An observer filled out a classroom observation form. Two classrooms were selected to implement the program and the other classrooms were the comparison groups. The results indicated that YCDI had a significant positive behavior effect on levels of social-emotional competence and well-being. They also noted a reduction in problem behaviors along with an increase in reading achievement. Similar findings were noted from Green, et al. (2021) when they implemented the SPARK program to ninety-seven fourth and fifth grade students.

Similar findings were uncovered by Dowling and Barry (2020) when a mixed-methods research was completed on the implementation quality index and examining the variability in implementation quality. About seventy-five percent of the schools implemented the MindOut Program in its entirety. Thirty-two schools and four hundred ninety-seven students participated in the research study. When looking at the MindOut Program, all teachers were asked to complete quantitative and qualitative measures to assess the process of program implementation. On average, teachers reported delivering 71% of the key activities and adhered to 82% of the

sessions. Teachers reported having less social and emotional problems and increased academic achievement. Kelm, McIntosh, & Cooley (2014) had similar findings when they completed research with less than two hundred students. Their goal was to look at the effects of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and academic success with it implemented with fidelity. Problem behaviors were reduced by fifty percent when PBIS went from partial to full implementation. Academic achievement showed an increase when the program was fully implemented.

Berg and Aber (2015) uncovered those students who experienced a lack of community at school were less engaged and had more academic difficulties. Students who were a “good fit” for the school had more success. They uncovered the findings by placing each group of schools into pairs and one school became the control group, while the other school became the treatment group. Data was collected on social and emotional competence, behavior, academics, and perception of school climate. Four thousand two hundred twenty-five students in three hundred twenty classrooms participated. They were all from third, fourth, and fifth grades. In contrast, Poulou (2017) completed a study with ninety-eight elementary teachers from forty-three schools and three hundred eight students. He was investigating how teachers’ perceptions of their own emotional intelligence, as well as their own competence in implementing social and emotional learning (SEL) programs relate to their perceptions of teacher-student relationships and student’s emotional and behavioral difficulties. He found that teachers rated improving SEL skills high. Teacher commitment to improving SEL was rated the highest. Their perceptions of closeness in relationships were low, but significantly related to students and their conduct, hyperactivity and peer difficulties. Teacher perceptions did not appear to contribute to student perceptions.

Challenging behaviors are becoming more observable in schools. Implementing social and emotional interventions or programs in schools could provide teachers structure in order to meet the diverse needs of students. Students who have the “tools” in their toolboxes will help them to find different ways to cope with uneasy feelings. The tools can range from deep breaths to taking a break in an alternate setting.

Challenging Behaviors

Conroy, et al. (2002), established that young children who demonstrate challenging behaviors have been increasing in recent years. The increasing behaviors are from a variety of developmental and environmental factors. The goal is to address challenging behaviors as soon as possible so that students are not having problematic behaviors in adulthood. Evanovich and Kern (2018) references seven steps to address problem behavior. The steps are: 1.) identify the context and predictable challenging behavior(s), 2.) define the desired behavior(s), 3.) modify the context to promote student success, 4.) provide students with an opportunity to practice the desired behavior(s), 5.) provide students with strong reinforcement for demonstrating the desired behavior(s), 6.) create a prompting plan for students to engage in the desired behavior(s), and 7.) develop a monitoring plan for student progress to determine effectiveness of the program. Students who know what is expected of them and how the outcome will benefit them, will have a more successful rate of positive behaviors.

McDaniel, et al. (2018) completed a one-year mixed-methods study with thirty-three students from twelve classrooms. The target of the study was to compare two interventions. The interventions were a check-in/check-out (CICO) and Coping Power (CP). Teachers rated students at a pre-intervention level, post-intervention level, and follow-up. The results indicated

that CICO and CP decreased externalizing behaviors which decreased overall emotional and behavioral risks.

In contrast, Reno et al. (2017) completed a study with seventy-one students in first through fifth grade participated in a CICO system. Seventy-one other students were a random sample that served as a comparison group. Data was collected in three steps. The first step was to gather names of students who participated in Tier II behavior interventions. The second step was to gather STAR assessment results of those students who participated in Tier II behavior interventions. The third step was to employ a teacher perception survey of student Tier II interventions and student academic performance. The results indicated that students who participated in CICO did not have higher academic achievement than those who did not participate in CICO. A study by Reinke, Herman, and Newcomer (2016), revealed that CICO is a reliable and valid tool for assessing teacher and student classroom behaviors. Positive teacher attention predicted improvements in student prosocial behavior from fall to spring (Reinke, Herman, and Newcomer, 2016). Their study evaluated the utility of the CICO in elementary classrooms in predicting social behavioral outcomes. The study was completed with fifty-three teachers and eight hundred ninety-six students.

Hutchins, et al. (2016) studied articles from 1998-2014 that examined behaviors and how they can be implemented in social skills instructions. The goal was to find out the most common behaviors targeted for social skills improvement. There were seventy-five participants in twenty-four studies. Reliability and fidelity were not noted. They uncovered that reporting fidelity data ensures that interventions are provided as intended.

Teacher-student relationships are important to student success. When students observe teachers responding in positive ways, students are more apt to listen and cooperate with their

teachers. Teachers and students who work together toward a common goal can have far more positive relationships. It starts with the teachers getting to know their students and forming that positive relationship with them.

Teacher-Student Relationships

Mihalas, et al. (2009) references schools creating a climate that values and emphasizes caring relationships. They go on to explain that teachers who value and develop caring teacher-student relationships provide schools with a solid foundation to build on when implementing systems-based approaches such as school-wide positive behavior supports. Garbacz, et al. (2014) references how problem behaviors in preschool students negatively affect teacher-child relationships. They completed a study with three teachers from four preschool classrooms. There were fifty-one child participants, with fifty-one percent being female. Teachers rated the children on a five-point scale with six dimensions. The dimensions were from a Teacher-Child Interaction Training (TCIT). Teachers also completed a thirty-seven-item behavior rating scale for assessment of social-emotional strengths and behavioral concerns. The last item utilized were teacher observations. TCIT observers observed teachers in their classrooms. The results indicated that teachers rated strong in satisfaction with the TCIT intervention. The observed teacher skill use and high teacher satisfaction ratings appeared to have high success with participants.

Similar findings were uncovered by Hatfield and Williford (2016) when a mixed-methods research was completed on assessment of children's activity in the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis in an intervention designed to improve a teacher's interaction quality with children. One hundred eight-three classrooms and four hundred forty children participated in the research study. Teachers completed baseline student behavior surveys within three weeks at the

beginning of the school year. Parents also completed a demographic questionnaire after indicating consent to participate. Teachers and children participated in Banking Time sessions in seven-week cycles. The research staff collected children's saliva samples at childcare twice in the morning in the winter and twice in the spring. Primary questions researched were, "do cortisol levels play a role in disruptive behavior?" and "how does cortisol levels affect relationships between teachers and children?" Results indicated that sensitive and responsive teacher-child relationships are important for healthy development of their stress response levels.

Shin and Ryan (2017) uncovered that average levels of student's disruptive behaviors were not significantly different with teachers of low emotional support compared to those teachers of high emotional support. Their research was conducted in two parts. The second part of the research uncovered that student's levels of disruptive behaviors were higher in classrooms where there was low teacher emotional support. Their research consisted of forty-eight classrooms. Student surveys were collected and observations of disruptive behaviors in the classrooms were noted. A classroom assessment was utilized to analyze interactions between students and their teachers. The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) was used for an observational tool that focuses on interactions between teachers and students in the classrooms. Observations were conducted once in the fall and once in the spring. A research study completed by Roorda, et al. (2011) confirmed that teacher-student relationships (TSR) influence student's school engagement and achievement. The research was completed with one thousand twenty-nine four hundred twenty-three students from preschool to twelfth grades. They utilized PsychINFO and Educational Resources to retrieve relevant studies. The purpose of the research was to look at positive and negative aspects of the TSR and engagement and achievement.

Similar findings by Fatou and Kubiszewski (2017) revealed that emphasis should be placed on proving teacher-student relationships. The study was completed with nine hundred fifty-five students in fifth through twelfth grades. Students rated questions related to behavior and academic achievement and their perceptions to school climate. There were seventeen questions that were rated by students on a scale and the mean was calculated. The results indicated that low levels of perceived justice or security were closely associated with low behavioral engagement among students with a higher social background.

Andreou, et al. (2014) uncovered that continuous teaching was perceived as a strong method to enhance PBIS sustainability. They revealed that positive reinforcement is an important factor in PBIS. The qualitative study was completed with seventeen teachers. The teachers were involved in sustaining Tier I PBIS over several years within a school district and were asked what events affected the long-term implementation.

Behavioral interventions are incorporated in the classroom to promote positive interactions between students. There are a wide variety of interventions that can be implemented in the classroom. Leader In Me focuses on leadership and life skills. The program starts with the adults in the building. The adults engage in training for the program and incorporate the program into their classrooms and building. Leader In Me establishes a culture of trust between students and staff.

Behavioral Interventions (Leader In Me)

Miller (n.d.) references the Seven Habits with Muriel Summers and how it came to play in her role as an educator and an administrator. She references being offered a position at AB Combs. The Seven Habits is the heart of the program Leader In Me. The Seven Habits of

Highly Effective People is an influential management book (Leader In Me, 2022). The Seven Habits are incorporated into the Leader In Me program by guiding teachers to implement the principles into the program. Muriel references reflecting on how different her life would have been if she had learned about the Seven Habits earlier in her life. She wondered if the habits could be taught to students. She eventually went up to the creator, Steven Covey, and asked if he thought that the Seven Habits could be taught to students. She is an influential part of the process Leader In Me and how leadership can be incorporated into the students' classrooms (Miller, n.d.).

In the study by Bennett (2020), ten school principals from Hawaii utilized a mixed-methods research to compare academic effects and behavioral effects of Leader In Me and behaviors in school. All of the principals were interviewed and asked questions about Leader In Me. Data was collected on school academic and behavioral success from Leader In Me implementation and after Leader In Me implementation. All of the principals noted improvement in academic success and behaviors in students. Both parent and teacher involvement increased with the Leader In Me program implementation. According to Bennett (2020), research has indicated that the Leader In Me process has shown success in raising academic scores and reducing behavioral referrals in multiple schools. Similar findings were noted from Green, et al. (2021) when they implemented the SPARK program to ninety-seven fourth and fifth grade students.

Leader In Me is a program that is evidence-based, social emotional learning process that empowers students with leadership and life skills to thrive in the 21st century (Leader In Me, 2022). It is a whole-school model that integrates leadership development and serves as a foundation for improving relationships. Staff is educated on the program, and it expands to

students learning how to incorporate the solutions into their daily lives. Students learn a variety of skills such as: self-confidence, teamwork, responsibility, communication, problem solving, and more.

Summary of Literature

Students learn best by observing adults. Leader In Me is an evidence-based program that is designed to assist teachers in implementing skills that will assist students in positive interactions. The program is designed to boost student's self-confidence and influence teamwork, responsibility, communication, creativity, problem solving, critical thinking, and most importantly leadership (Leader In Me, 2022). Teachers and parents can assist in the process by engaging in student-led conferences, student-led events, leadership notebooks, and workshops. When the Leader In Me program is implemented with fidelity, the school engages students and families with leadership roles and setting and achieving goals.

Leader In Me seeks to observe improvements in leadership, culture, and academics. The program has a Measureable Results Assessment (MRA) to help measure performance in these areas (Leader In Me, 2022). The MRA is used annually to collect, analyze, and report student, staff, and school-level outcomes related to the focus of leaderships, culture, and academics (Leader In Me, 2022). It can be utilized to help schools identify strengths, weaknesses, develop improvement plans, and monitor school progress.

The research completed by Roorda, et al. (2011) revealed that students who have positive interactions with staff would have more success with academics and behaviors. Leader In Me is relatively new and more schools are starting to implement the program. In order to gain new insight on effectiveness, more studies could be completed. Students at Fairview and Adams

Elementary would be a good fit to implement the program. Behaviors are rising in the schools and having a program that can make a positive impact on academic success and behavioral success will help decrease the amount of office referrals due to negative behaviors.

School Profile & Baseline

School Characteristics

Carroll Community School District (CCSD) is a public school district in Carroll, Iowa. It serves approximately 1,800 students populating pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade. The district has two elementary buildings, one middle school building, one high school building, and ROAR high (alternative school). There are approximately 114 certified teachers on staff in all buildings. Students attend school at CCSD from Carroll and smaller surrounding towns, such as Arcadia, Breda, Dedham, Glidden, Halbur, Templeton, and Willey, among others.

Student & Community Characteristics

As stated above, CCSD serves approximately 1,800 students across the five buildings. There are roughly 780 students between the two elementary schools. Students at CCSD are comprised of Caucasians, African Americans, and Hispanics. Minority enrollment is at 12%, with the majority being Hispanic and African American following closely behind (Public School Review, 2022). CCSD has roughly two percent of students who are of two or more races (Public School Review, 2022). Roughly ninety-five percent of students at CCSD graduate (Public School Review, 2022).

Carroll community houses roughly 10,000 people. The smaller surrounding towns house anywhere from 100-600 people. Carroll is comprised of multiple races and ethnicities, including Caucasian, African American, Asian, Hispanic, and Pacific Islander. Carroll has two school

districts, including one public school and one private school. Carroll is also the home of one of the many sites for Des Moines Area Community College (DMACC).

Carroll offers many recreational activities. The town has an aquatic center, bowling alley, theatre, skate park, tennis courts, an indoor recreation center, two golf courses, public ball fields, hiking and biking trails, and a state park with a lake (carrolliowa.com, 2018). Carroll also offers a library with many amenities. The town has a local newspaper and roughly five radio stations between public and catholic radio. There is a wide range of churches available for people to attend service.

School Mission & Vision

Carroll Community School District's mission is to inspire learning and excellence for all. The vision statement is to inspire excellence in learning to prepare all students for success. Carroll Community School District's goal for social and emotional learning is that all PK-12 students will become knowledgeable, responsible, caring, and contributing members of society through evidence-based social and emotional learning. Student learning is affected when students are experiencing emotional and behavioral concerns.

Student Performance

Data for this School Improvement project is based on the elementary level academic and behavior data. The reason for elementary data is because the Leader In Me program is being presented at this level. Students in Kindergarten through fourth grade take Formative Reading Assessment System for Teachers (FAST) tests for reading. These tests are completed in the fall, winter, and spring each year. The scores of students' proficient on the assessment range from

51% to 75% proficient. Students in Kindergarten are proficient at 75% and students in second grade are proficient at 51%. These scores are based on fall data from 2021.

Students start taking the Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress (ISASP) assessment in third grade and take that assessment yearly until they reach twelfth grade. The percentage of students proficient in English Language Arts (ELA) (3rd grade) at CCSD is 39% (carroll.k12.ia.us). The state average for third grade is 45% (carroll.k12.ia.us). The percentage of students proficient in ELA (4th grade) at CCSD is 68% (carroll.k12.ia.us). The state average for fourth grade is 63% (carroll.k12.ia.us). These percentages are based on data from spring of 2021. Data from spring of 2021 reveals that students in third grade who are proficient in math are at a 39%, while the state average is at 45% (carroll.k12.ia.us). Data from spring of 2021 reveals that students in fourth grade who are proficient in math are at a 68%, while the state average is at 63% (carroll.k12.ia.us).

Parent Involvement

Parents are encouraged to be involved in as much as their child's education as possible. They are encouraged to attend open house in August and attend conferences twice per year. CCSD recently added a curriculum director and started the School Improvement Advisory Committee (SIAC). This committee met three times this year and has addressed the following areas: 1.) major educational needs, 2.) student learning goals, 3.) curriculum, assessment, and instruction, 4.) long range and annual goals the address reading, mathematics, and science achievement, 5.) bullying and harassment prevention goals, programs, and training, and 6.) other issues that relate to school improvement. The committee is a cross-section of the community and reflects diversity in ethnic groups, gender, disability status, age, local businesses, and agencies. Parents were asked to participate in the committee.

Current Student Learning Goals

Carroll Community School District has the goal of all PK-12 students to feel safe and connected to school (carroll.k12.ia.us). All PK-12 students will also achieve at high levels (proficient or beyond) in reading prepared for success beyond high school. All PK-12 students will achieve at high levels (proficient or beyond) in mathematics for success beyond high school. All PK-12 students will achieve at high levels (proficient or beyond) in science prepared for success beyond high school. The district's goal is to have all students be prepared for success (proficient or beyond in all academic areas) as all students enter the collegiate world or workforce.

Curriculum, Instructional Strategies, Assessment practices, & professional development

CCSD is working on their curriculum to make sure it is aligned so that students receive the best possible instruction without interruptions. Assessment practices are discussed during daily Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings between grade levels. The elementary buildings recently structured their days to have time during the day to meet and plan for instruction and assessment. The times vary based on when students have specials and teachers attend while the students are in specials.

Professional development (PD) ranges in topics from assessment, curriculum, social and emotional learning, among other topics. The goal for professional development is to provide effective communication and collaboration for teachers to deliver instruction to students. Professional development is delivered once per month for a full day on Mondays. At least an hour on professional development days is devoted to Leader In Me and the program.

Leader in Me is always on the agenda on PD days. Leader In Me is a program that is based on a framework around culture, academics, and leadership. It evolves around a See-Do-Get cycle. When you change the ways you view things, it influences what you do and the results that you get (Leader In Me, 2022). It starts with the adults in the building teaching leadership to every student and creating a culture of student empowerment. When this successfully happens, it aligns the system to drive academic results. It also helps decrease student behaviors. Students learn best from modeling and that is exactly what this program is designed to do. Teachers model how to take charge and be a leader and create the positive environment. This is important to success for students and their achievement in academics.

Needs Assessment

What is the Problem?

Challenging behaviors are becoming more prevalent in schools. Teachers have so much to do in such a short number of hours that students are not able to form relationships and positive qualities with the teachers or other peers. The goal for this School Improvement Plan is to allow all staff and students within the Carroll Community School District Elementary buildings to work toward a common shared leadership to make a positive impact on student behaviors. The purpose of the Leader In Me program is to develop relationships between staff and students and to develop shared responsibility in making choices. The Leader In Me program offers guidance on how to form relationships with students and model to students how we can and should respond in certain situations.

Students will receive more positive guidance when they are observing teachers who model how to react in situations. When students are able to model how a teacher acts and have

responsibility, they can help create a more positive environment in school. Teachers can help with the guidance of the responsibilities that students can take on. When they have an agreed upon responsibility, they can demonstrate to other students how we can still have fun and work toward a common goal. Teachers are informed how the program works and how they can best support the diverse needs of their students. When teachers model the positive interactions and behaviors, they become the “light” of the students and students want to be around them. The students want to engage in positive reactions and have a choice in what happens. Working toward a common goal will help students to have a better academic course and better behaviors in school. It is all about being a leader in school and how being a leader can change the whole mindset of students.

CCSD is not an exception to behaviors in school. The behaviors start to impact academics when they are not handled efficiently and in a timely manner. The Leader In Me program has a motto of change starting with yourself (Leader In Me, 2022). When students are being disruptive, it impacts the learning of not only themselves, but also students around them. The adults in the building teach leadership to every student, create a culture of student empowerment, and align systems to drive results in academics (Leader In Me, 2022). This holistic approach will refine schools and measure success. Students at CCSD exhibit many behaviors ranging from passive refusals to more aggressive behaviors, such as kicking, biting, and biting.

School Data & Analysis

How do we know?

Students at CCSD are expected to be safe, respectful, and responsible. Students who are at Adams Elementary exhibit a wide range of behaviors and the scores on report cards examine

how the students are doing while in school. A score of “3” on the behavior report card means that students are meeting behavior expectations of CCSD. A score of “2” on the behavior report card means that students are progressing toward meeting CCSD expectations. A score of “1” on the behavior report card means that students are not meeting the CCSD behavior expectations. The data (figure 1) of a student behavior report card shows that they can vary in expectations across the school year. The first number is from the first quarter, the second number is from the second quarter and the last number is from the third quarter. The data (figure 1) examines how students start out with meeting expectations and or, but they slowly progress toward not meeting expectations from quarter one to quarter three. This is not true of all students, but this shows how some students progress throughout the school year.

Figure 1

Behavior Report Card Expectations

Demonstrates respectful behavior	3	2	2
Participates appropriately in class and group activities	3	3	2
Uses classroom time effectively (works independently)	3	2	1
Completes work neatly and on time	3	2	1
Shows effort and persistence	3	2	1
Exercises self-control	2	2	1
Follows directions (oral and written)	2	2	2
Demonstrates organizational skills	3	3	2

CCSD is committed to providing the best educational experience for students. When you look at the data, there are some questions that should be answered. The first question that should be answered is “what does the data tell you?”. The data from the elementary buildings at CCSD tell us that behavior is a concern for some students. While some students may receive a “3” all

year for behavior, some students decline in behaviors further in the school year. When systems and/or programs are put in place, teachers can support students in making better choices while in school. Leader In Me not only teaches teachers to support students, but it teaches students how to take the lead and be a leader in school.

School Strengths

“What areas of strength are apparent?” is another question that should be answered. CCSD elementary data shows that participation during class is a strength. The assessment data shows that students are completing work. While students may need support during class time, they are completing work and receiving the necessary supports during class. During the behavior data collection, the data (figure 2) exhibits technology violations, theft, and property damage to be strengths at Fairview. When you look at the data, you notice the decline in behaviors after the first quarter.

School Challenges or Weaknesses

Another question that should be answered are “What areas of weaknesses should be addressed?”. During the collection of behavior data, the CCSD elementary behavior data (figure 2) implies that that exercising self-control should be addressed. Students in elementary school tend to be aggressive when playing and it often leads to more problems than originally intended. The aggressiveness often leads to behavior referrals. This is especially noticed during unstructured times throughout the school day. The data (figure 2) exhibits students who have specific behaviors. The data tells us that physical aggression without injury is a problem.

Figure 2

CCSD Elementary Behavior Data

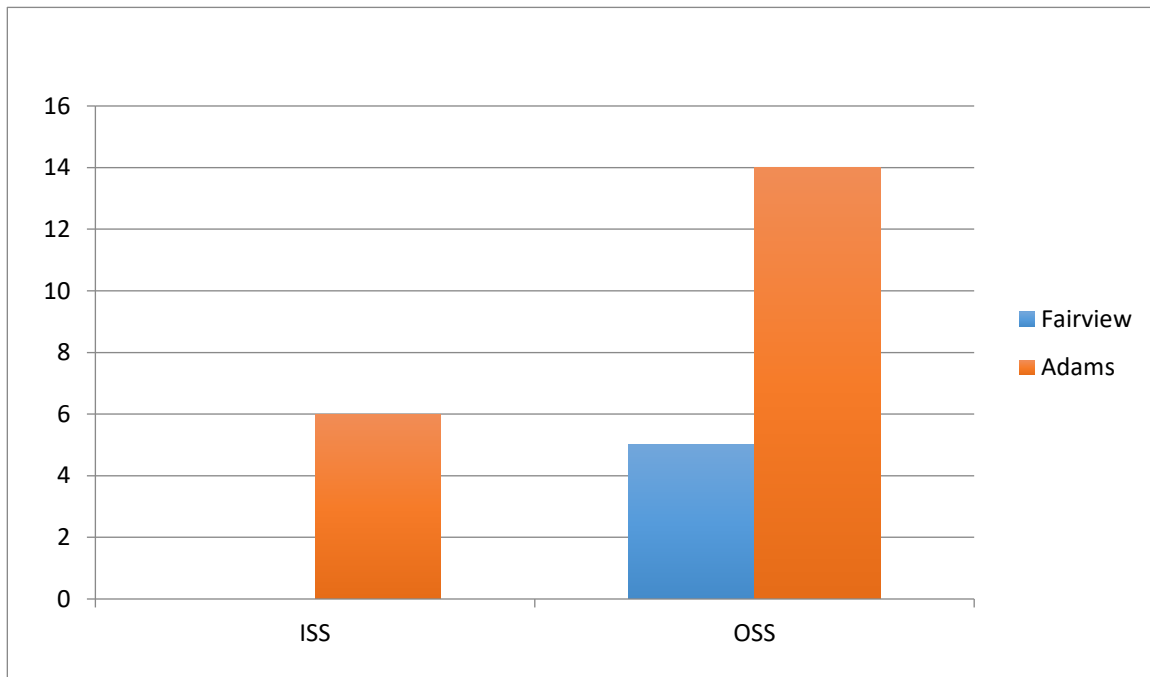
Fairview	210 referrals				
Behavior Type	Record Count	Location	Record Count	Grade	Record Count
Inappropriate display of affection	1	Bus	89	Kindergarten	18
Physical fighting without injury	1	Classroom	72	0	89
Disrespect	3	Playground	30	1	57
Skip class	6	Hallway/Breezeway	11	2	46
Physical fighting with injury	6	Cafeteria	2		
Abusive or inappropriate language, profanity	7	Bathroom/Restroom	2		
Defiance, insubordination, or non-compliance	25	Bus Loading Zone	2		
Disruption	28	Gym	1		
Physical aggression without injury	41	Other Location	1		
Other	92				
Adams	360 referrals				
Behavior Type	Record Count	Location	Record Count	Grade	Record Count
Physical aggression without injury	108	Classroom	109	3	157
Disruption	59	Playground	109	4	203
Other	53	Bus	50		
Defiance, insubordination, or non-compliance	33	Gym	26		
Physical fighting without injury	25	Cafeteria	25		
Disrespect	23	Bathroom/Restroom	14		
Abusive or inappropriate language, profanity	22	Hallway/Breezeway	14		
Physical fighting with injury	15	Other Location	6		
Skip class	12	Parking Lot	3		
Inappropriate location	4	Library	2		
Theft	2	Commons/Common	1		

		area			
Technology violation	2	none chosen	1		
Property damage/vandalism/misuse	2				

During the collection of the number of suspensions, the graph (figure 3) shows the number of suspensions based on each elementary building. As discussed earlier, Fairview ranges from pre-school to second grade, while Adams has third and fourth grade. For the school year (2021-2022), Fairview has had five suspensions and Adams has had twenty suspensions. Leader In Me will help with behaviors and reduce the number of suspensions. When students can take charge, they can make a difference. The hope is to have all students be a leader at some point.

Figure 3

Number of Suspensions



Assessment Needs

The last question that should be answered is “what assessments would be necessary?”. An assessment that could be completed is a personal interest survey for students. The survey could consist of academic areas and student interests. Student interests can change from one quarter to the next and by having student complete interest surveys, teachers are supporting students with their interests incorporated into daily tasks.

Another assessment that can be administered is an exit ticket. Exit tickets can be administered at the end of the lesson for the day. It can tell the teachers if students understand the concept that is delivered. Teachers could administer a pre-test to students to find out what they think are the problematic areas in school. The pre-test would help teachers identify what areas they would like to incorporate into the lessons. Leader In Me does not have specific testing for students and teachers, but it guides teachers in the direction of success for behaviors.

Action Plan

Steps to Solve the Problem

Behavior is apparent in classrooms across America. It is the responsibility of teachers to help students see their worth and what they can contribute to in school. The Leader In Me program offers to guidance for teachers and students to make educated decisions based on actions. Students learn best from the teachers and what better way to help students achieve success than observing and following the lead of teachers. The plan should be well thought out and presented in a fashion so that all participants get the maximum amount of support to deliver the instruction and drive results. The teachers start by receiving information on the program. The information is presented during professional development days.

The process for students should start out small. Teaching students how to act appropriately in certain situations will help them to achieve the success that the program looks for. Teachers will start by having professional development days to learn about the program and how it can benefit the entire school. The table in figure 4 below shows dates and the process for learning about Leader In Me. Once all professional development days are completed, teachers will bring the knowledge that they learned to the classroom to explain and demonstrate how the program works. Teachers will start out by defining unfamiliar words to the students. Each week there will be a new concept taught to the students. The concepts are based on the seven habits of effective children. Posters will be displayed around the school so that students can see the language and program expectations no matter where they are at in the building.

Figure 4

Professional Development for Teachers

Date:	Process:
August 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers learn about the program and what it is on the first contracted day of school. • Teachers also learn about the 7 habits and how to incorporate them into the daily lessons.
September 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers report how the process is going. • Teachers also learn more about habit 1. • Committee teams are formed and start to meet once per month.
October 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers report how the process is going. • Teachers also learn more about habit 2. • Committee meeting – discuss how plans are coming along for certain tasks.
November 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers report how the process is going. • Teachers also learn more about habit 3. • Committee meeting – discuss how plans are coming along for certain tasks.
December 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers report how it is going. • Teachers also learn more about habit 4. • Committee meeting – discuss how plans are coming along for certain tasks.
January 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers report how it is going. • Teachers also learn more about habit 5.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee meeting – discuss how plans are coming along for certain tasks.
February 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers report how it is going. • Teachers also learn more about habit 6. • Committee meeting – discuss how plans are coming along for certain tasks.
March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers report how it is going. • Teachers also learn more about habit 7. • Committee meeting – discuss how plans are coming along for certain tasks.

Strategies to be Applied

There will be a few strategies to get the Leader In Me program implemented. The first strategy will be a cooperative learning approach. While the teachers are learning about Leader In Me and how to implement it, students are learning alongside the teachers. Cooperative learning will take place with the new concepts each week. Teachers will provide students with opportunities to practice the new skills. Students will also learn through observing interactions between adults in the building. They will have opportunities to practice “good” and “bad” ways to complete certain tasks. Students would also complete a survey about behavior and how it impacts them at school. The survey would consist of questions such as: 1.) what is the most important rule to follow at school, 2.) what behavior is the worst in school, 3.) what behavior would you like to work on, 4.) what questions do you have about the Leader In Me program, 5.) how can teachers best support you at school. When students are involved in the decision-making process, they are more prone to help support themselves and students around them to succeed.

Implementation of the Plan

How will we Know it Worked?

The Leader In Me program is a program that takes some time to implement. In order to see results, you will need to look at data over a couple of years. The first year will be to train the

teachers on how to use the program and have them start to implement the program in the classrooms. The second year will focus more on implementation and discussing behaviors that are exhibited. Adjustments to the program will be made during the second year. Subsequent years will reveal what behaviors are still being exhibited. This will assist administration and teachers in delivery and implementation of the Leader In Me program.

Resources to be Utilized

Trained staff from the Leader In Me program will support teachers. Teachers will also have their own copy of the book that is geared toward their specific grade level (Leader In Me, 2022). The website is a great resource and can be referred to as often as a teacher needs to refer to it (Leader In Me, 2022). The website offers coaching in the form of handouts, posters, videos, etc. (Leader In Me, 2022). The trained staff from Leader In Me will assist in finding materials to utilize in the classroom. Teachers will also create their own posters for their individual classrooms. The posters will have information from the weekly grade level team meetings and from the Leader In Me website.

Responsibilities for Implementation

When the program is first started, the building administrators will send out a survey to find out who is willing to be a member of three teams to help guide and implement the training for staff. The three teams will consist of a variety of staff members, and they will be responsible for executing the part of the plan that they are in charge of. They will be the direct support for staff if any questions arise. The three teams will meet monthly to discuss how things are going and what modifications need to be made. After the meetings are held, the staff members will take the information back to other staff and explain what the next steps will be.

All other teachers will be responsible for implementing the Leader In Me program in their individual classrooms. Each teacher will communicate with their teams at their weekly PLC meetings and discuss what lessons will be taught. Each teacher will be responsible for making their own props for their classrooms. The other adults in the building will be responsible for using the same language as the teachers. This will create consistency throughout the buildings. The other adults will have a document that they can refer to from grade level team members to reference what is being taught on certain days and weeks. Each grade level team will update the document weekly.

Monitoring Success and Failure of Interventions

The Leader In Me program is designed to help staff and students with creating a positive culture at school. An important part of the process is monitoring how the program is going. Behavior data will be monitored and looked frequently. The frequency of behavior data observations will be weekly in grade level team meetings. Specific behaviors will be discussed, and implementation will be based off what the behavior data is displaying. The behavior data will be kept in a log so that administrators can share the data with staff at the meetings. Graphs will be created to show what behaviors have decreased.

Administration will assist in keeping record of daily behaviors. The behaviors will be discussed, and certain measures will be recorded and discussed at the grade level team meetings. If a trend is noticed in a particular area, the area will be discussed with all teachers in both buildings and adjustments will be made to the plan.

Barriers and Challenges that Could Impact Leader In Me Success

As with all programs, there are some barriers and challenges that can impede success of the implementation. One challenge would be finding time that all members of a team can meet. Teachers are busy and have a lot to accomplish and when they are asked to add one more thing to their day, it can potentially throw something off their plan. Teachers can also end up with a lot on their plate and decide that they can no longer be on a team and that can alter the affects of the program being implemented with fidelity.

It is imperative that all teachers stay on the same track for daily implementation so that all students are learning the same concepts the same days. This will take planning and preparation to decide what and how to implement on specific days and weeks. If teachers happen to be absent when items are discussed at the daily and weekly grade level team meetings, it will be imperative that team members discuss the implementation with them.

Another barrier could be the cost of the program. The program is costly when it is first being implemented. When a school starts to implement the program and use materials provided by the organization, it will be a challenge to figure out where the cost will come from and if the school board will approve the cost. The program costs roughly \$40-\$50 per student for the first three years and roughly \$14-\$19 per student after the third year (Leader In Me, 2022). The cost is based around the number of staff and students served at each school. As you can see, the cost can be a large barrier to implementing the program. Administration would need to go to the superintendent and the school board to discuss the program, how it works, and how the program can be funded to receive the approval to implement the program.

Conclusion

This school improvement project is a multi-layered approach to executing an organized and effective implementation of the Leader In Me program. While there are many programs out there, teachers were looking for a program that not only focuses on behavioral needs, but also enhances academic achievement by handling behaviors effectively. In addition, teachers were looking for ways to help them be more of a role model and the Leader In Me program starts with the teachers.

This project utilized cooperative learning, peer interactions, and observations as a means to achieve the stated goals. The goals that were presented are how educators can implement the Leader In Me program in their classrooms and best support students in their academic learning and with behavior struggles.

The results of this project will impact teachers and students at CCSD in a variety of ways. While the teachers will learn about the Leader In Me program and how they can be the role models for how the program impacts students, the most impacted group will be the students. By having a clear and organized approach on what Leader In Me is and how to implement it in the school buildings, the students will have clearer expectations. The teachers who implement Leader In Me with fidelity and feel confident about the program and how it impacts the students, will have a higher success rate of students with fewer behaviors and that leads to higher academic scores.

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